

Little Nightingales

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Little Nightingales Nursery is a privately owned nursery which opened in 2007. It operates from a spacious cottage on two levels in London Colney, St Albans in Hertfordshire. The setting has use of the whole building and three areas for outside play.

The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am until 6.30pm for 51 weeks of the year. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 40 children aged from three months up to five years. Children may attend for a variety of sessions through the week. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

Little Nightingales Nursery employs twelve staff. The nursery manager holds a level 4 qualification. She is supported by a staff team of eleven who hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 3 and above.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery staff team have a good understanding of each of the children's individual needs, as a result they are proactive in promoting children's welfare, learning and development to a good standard. Comprehensive Learning Journals show the children's achievements, most of the information gained is used to promote their learning. Toys and equipment are of very good quality but some resources are not used appropriately. Children play in a safe and secure environment. Partnerships with parents is effective in supporting the children's learning and play. The proprietor and nursery manager have established an effective evaluation process and documents to monitor practice and identify areas for future improvements to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review the planning and use of resources to promote all areas of learning especially for the outside play areas
- review the children's portfolios to ensure they show starting points so planning for their next steps is more effective.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and welfare is strongly promoted through good practice and effective policies and procedures. Children are safeguarded as staff have a good

understanding of their responsibilities. Information from the Local Safeguarding Children Board is readily available and on display for parents. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures alongside regular training, staff appraisals and team meetings develop the staff's professional development. Comprehensive risk assessments for all areas of the setting and outings ensure any potential risks to children are recognised and minimised. Site security is of high priority, staff manage the use of the large garden for parent parking very effectively. Staff are vigilant with regards to the children's well-being. Children learn good personal hygiene procedures such as teeth brushing and hand washing through every day routines. The setting provides nutritious and healthy meals and snacks that are cooked on site. The nursery cook monitors the children's individual dietary requirements, to ensure their needs are met in full.

The setting is laid out to enable children to have free choice about their play. They access good quality resources from the low level storage around the home rooms. The three outside areas provide good play space for children of all ages. A small, safe space is fenced off for the babies to play. The impact absorbent surface and large hard standing areas are well resourced. However, some of the toys especially in the garden areas are not used to the best advantage for the children to become absorbed in their play and explore the opportunities around them. The planning for these areas and the use of the resources is not effective. Children's imaginative play is not fully promoted in the play house and camp in the garden. Where children freely access large footballs in a confined area this impacts on the children playing nearby.

Children greatly benefit from the good relationships that have been established with parents. A regular newsletter, parent forum, regular parent consultation evenings and every day information on display around the nursery ensures they are kept well informed about the setting. The children's sense of belonging is further established with families being involved in charity fundraising, summer fairs and outings to the local park. Parents can find out more about the setting through the web page. Email is used to share information with the parent's forum. This ensures senior staff are fully involved in any queries and suggestion that are used to promote improvements in the nursery.

The staff team work well together. Regular training and professional development is a strong aspect of the setting. Staff give feed back to the team to ensure every one benefits from any training attended. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been met in full. This has improved the overall practice and had a positive outcome for the children attending. The manager and proprietor are pro-active in reviewing and evaluating the nursery and documents on a regular basis. The staff team is involved in the robust self-evaluation process which identifies areas that are to be developed and builds on the good practice around the nursery.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy and settled at the nursery. Staff are attentive, they work closely with the children in order to promote their personal and social skills appropriate to their ages and stages of development. The home rooms are interesting and well resourced. The well qualified staff team have a range of experiences in promoting children's play and learning. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play that is shown in the planning. Children are developing personal qualities that enable them to take responsibility for simple tasks. A small group of children helped in laying out the soft play mats so the babies could play in the garden. They are able to negotiate and cooperate to work towards a final outcome. They showed great delight as they put the squares together. This spontaneous activity promoted their problem solving skills as they talked about the shapes and how they could put them together without and gaps. They had good support from staff who extended their language and understanding.

The observations and records of achievements in the children's portfolios are based on the Early Years Statutory Framework. They show that children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. However, some aspects of the children's records such as their date of birth and starting points are not in place. This means that the planning for the children's next steps is not fully effective. Parents are encouraged to share in their children's learning. They provide articles and resources from home linked to the weekly themes. The Early Years Development Report provided by the nursery gives parents a summary of their children's achievements and show the activities they have taken part in.

Children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle is promoted through every day routines. They are confident in their own personal care skills such as teeth cleaning and hand washing. They manage to wipe their noses and understand the importance of throwing the tissues away in a hygienic manner. They are beginning to understand about a healthy diet as they are able to see their meals being prepared. The nursery cook and staff talk to them about what is good for them and will help them to grow. Effective procedures are in place to record and meet children's individual dietary requirements. Their manners and table skills are good. Staff are good role models, they praise and support the children in all aspects of their social development.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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