

Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	127285
Inspection date	20/04/2011
Inspector	Susan Scott

Setting address	Just Learning, Ragstone House, 48 College Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6SA
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Just Learning Day Nursery opened in 1998. It operates from a large house located near Maidstone town centre. The younger children are cared for downstairs, and the three to five year olds are cared for upstairs. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 79 children, from babies to pre-school aged children, on roll. This includes 34 funded children. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting is currently supporting several children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens all year round. Sessions are from 8:00am until 6:00pm (except bank holidays and a week at Christmas). There are 16 members of staff who work with children, of whom 15 have an early years qualification to NVQ Level 2 or above.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The uniqueness of each child is recognised by staff who provide good support for individuals, ensuring that all children make progress in their learning and development. Children feel extremely safe and confident because there are excellent systems in place to safeguard their welfare. They benefit from easy access to a wide range of specialist services and appealing activities and visits which take account of their interests. Children's welfare is successfully promoted through well understood procedures and proactive systems for evaluation. The managers and staff work closely together to evaluate the provision and their capacity to keep improving is good. Children's good progress is underpinned by exemplary relationships with parents and carers and comprehensive systems to involve and communicate with them.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide activities and opportunities for children to share experiences and knowledge from different parts of their lives with each other, for example, by encouraging siblings to spend some time together during the day
- find out from parents the greetings they use either in English or in other languages. Encourage staff, parents and children to use the greetings.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Some aspects of Leadership and Management are outstanding. This is due to the meticulous attention paid to safeguarding children in the nursery and working closely in cooperation with parents and other professionals to secure the highest levels of welfare possible for the children. The managers and staff have a very good understanding of safeguarding as they all attend training and have established well understood procedures for dealing with any concerns. The staff are aware of how and when to share information with compromising confidentiality or children's safety. There is clear information provided for staff and parents on how to raise complaints or concerns and questionnaires used by the setting are used successfully to respond to any issues in a professional manner. The through induction system for new staff ensures they are aware of safe practice and all staff are extremely vigilant in their care of children. There are extensive risk assessments and systems in place to minimise identified hazards and the recent response to an emergency shows effective preparation. Children are cared for in an attractive and well maintained environment at all times.

Play resources are age-appropriate and in good condition, allowing children to experience play and learning which is adapted to suit their ages and stages of development. There is a good range of resources catering for the interests and needs of the children who attend. For instance, there are plenty of interesting and versatile resources in the outside play areas, including a areas to dig and summerhouses to accommodate a range of imaginative play. There are varied resources reflecting diversity and showing different written languages but staff are not yet confident in using the different languages spoken by those who attend to provide recognition and extend the welcome. Children with additional needs are able to make good progress and are supported by the attention and priority staff give to their individual needs. The manager has completed a self-evaluation using the suggestions from staff and they identify improvements they intend to make; for example, the outdoor area has recently been improved with many additions and trees have been planted to provide more shade. The continual review of provision allows staff to keep building upon the quality of the provision. A good awareness of the needs of children and constant participation in a variety of training invigorates the practice and enthusiasm of staff.

A good two-way flow of information ensures staff regularly make parents aware of children's achievements and discuss any concerns they may have. Information is shared when children first begin at the nursery, and the use of frequent, shared summative assessment sheets and unique stories enable continuing parental contributions. This enables staff to support and include all children with success. Parents benefit from frequent opportunities to access written and verbal information about their children's progress and achievements. The staff have exemplary relationships with parents which enables them to work together to meet the needs of individual children. Parental contributions are valued; for example, through use of questionnaires, and as a result of the responses, a dedicated parent room has been provided to enable private discussions with staff and opportunities to socialise with each other. All parents spoken to at the inspection expressed their

great satisfaction with the service they receive and described how much progress their children had made due to the good efforts of staff. There are excellent opportunities for children to meet teachers from nearby schools which enables smooth transitions for children who are moving on. There is extensive contact with a variety of organisations in the community who support the children and their families in a variety of ways. Children benefit from these relationships, for example, by attending local drop in clinics.

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

Children enjoy a varied and interesting range of play activities to support their progress towards the early learning goals. There is a clear and well understood system for making frequent records of children's achievements and experiences. Records note observations of children's development and staff use these to assess progress and to plan for the next steps in children's learning. The key staff construct weekly plans for children that take account of children's interests. Staff offer good opportunities for children to develop and learn by identifying activities that can be used to extend individual progress effectively. Staff have a good understanding of the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this confidently, identifying children's learning styles and welfare needs well.

Staff successfully support children's independence and promote opportunities for babies and children to make their own choices. For instance, babies and toddlers enjoy playing in the garden, using the push along or sit and ride toys or they can play in the summer houses with the play cooker and dolls. Some like to spend time sitting with a member of staff in the shade of the summer house and watching others play. Children play happily in this safe environment and staff ensure children are able to fully participate and enjoy their play by ensuring activities are developmentally appropriate and accessible to all.

Babies like to see their siblings and staff recognise the importance of these opportunities, as this has a soothing effect on them. However, these opportunities are not consistently used for babies or toddlers experience the comfort and support of older siblings to make connections between different life experiences. Overall, activities and routines promote their confidence and enable them to feel happy and secure in this homely environment. Children enjoy their time at the nursery as staff recognise their abilities and needs and praise their achievements, extending their play and encouraging further contributions. Children's relationships with each other reflect the good role models of the staff who value the children and treat them with respect. Children's behaviour is very positive as they are sensitively reminded to be kind and share with each other if the need arises.

There are excellent measures in place to ensure children are kept safe. Recently they had to evacuate the building and did so efficiently, waiting at a neighboring organization while the building was checked. The nursery's head office contacted all parents and informed them about the unexpected emergency and where to collect them. Staff are very safety conscious and have clear and thorough

measures to ensure all aspects of safety. For example, even the youngest children are taught to use safety rails when using the stairs from the garden. Children's health and well-being is supported effectively through routines that take account of their individual needs. For example, babies and toddlers can sleep in cots or on mattresses on the floor with individual bedding at a time that suits their individual needs, although most toddlers sleep after lunch.

Children develop an awareness of their own health by enjoying opportunities to discuss the foods they eat and they learn the benefits of a healthy diet. Their dietary needs and preferences are noted and used by staff serving the food to ensure their health and safety. Staff use an outside catering company to provide cooked meals for children and are able to offer children second helpings if children are still hungry. Children enjoy growing plants and recently visited the local market where they have bought tomato and bean seedlings. Older children learn how to care for these and all children will be able to see these growing and being harvested for them to eat. Children build their knowledge and skills by weighing ingredients to cook food to eat. For example, they have made chocolate Easter eggs today by weighing and melting the chocolate coating ingredients. This promotes their mathematical skills and their knowledge and understanding as they are learning about celebrations. They enjoy arts and crafts and are excitedly discussing the Easter hat competition which will take place tomorrow.

Babies and children benefit from frequent opportunities to experience the outdoor environment by using the outdoor play areas and going on local outings. For example, they go to see the ducks by the river nearby and older children enjoy visiting the library where they can choose books to bring back to the nursery. Children access a range of play including, bikes, sand and water play and a large climbing frame which encourages vigorous physical activity. Children enjoy exploring a variety of natural objects and investigating the science and nature resources, such as those displayed in the pre-school room, including large glass beads, small bells and wooden discs. The older children learn how to use the computer and enjoy a fortnightly music and movement session taken by a visiting specialist. This promotes their confidence and understanding of different activities and adults who visit.

Babies and children learn how to use cutlery and scissors through practical activities such as, feeding themselves and cutting items for craft activities. Staff assist them and provide good support and supervision. Children enjoy using the resources for imaginative role play, including the dolls and dressing up clothes which enable them to learn about real life situations and provide opportunities to explore varied cultures. Staff extend children's skills by encouraging their counting skills at registration times and effectively build upon children's enjoyment of books. Children talk about books they like and staff build upon their understanding of reading and develop their vocabulary by reading to them. Staff provide materials and activities, such as making Easter cards, to develop children's writing and creative.

Children enjoy a range of visits, going on local trips to the river and the library enabling them to build upon their knowledge of the locality. They learn how to take care and show kindness in helping each other, such as holding hands when

they go out and helping other children finding their coats or shoes. All children are extremely happy ad well settled, showing familiarity with the routines and confidently helping themselves to play resources and engaging in discussions with staff who give very good support to them.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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	1
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met