

Little Clowns Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY300167
Inspection date 06/06/2011
Inspector Timothy Butcher

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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

Little Clowns Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by a limited company. It opened in 1990 and operates from two levels of a large Victorian house in Clevedon, North Somerset. There is a fully enclosed area for outdoor play for older children. The baby unit operates from a separate annexe in the grounds, and it has its own outside area that has an all weather surface. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery may care for no more than 48 children under eight years; of these, not more than 48 may be in the early years age group, and of these, not more than 12 may be under two years at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday, for 51 weeks of the year, from 8am to 5.30pm, or to 6pm by special arrangement.

There are currently 71 children on roll. The setting is in receipt of funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. There are 11 members of staff who work directly with children. Eight members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 3, one member of staff holds a level 2 qualification, and one member of staff is working towards a level 3 qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and enjoy their time at the nursery. They currently make satisfactory progress in their learning and development overall, because the attentive staff team support children well. However, the planning processes require further development for children to make even better progress. Children enjoy a safe environment in which to play and their welfare is successfully promoted. The nursery do not keep a daily record of children looked after on the premises, because their hours of attendance are inconsistently recorded. There is a clear commitment to the continuous improvement of the provision and this leads to improved outcomes for children. However, the breach in requirements and current weakness in planning and wider partnership working, undermines the secure improvements made in other areas of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- keep a daily record of children looked after on the premises that includes their hours of attendance. (Documentation)

20/06/2011

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

- develop the observational assessment process to more clearly identify children's next steps in development
- develop further the partnerships with other settings to further enhance the continuity of care for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff have a suitable awareness of safeguarding issues to protect children. All adults working directly with children have been suitably checked or else they are suitably supervised to ensure children's safety while checks are being carried out. The nursery carries out a thorough risk assessment of the premises and for outings. Potential hazards to children are successfully minimized. Records show that a visual check is undertaken daily. An accurate record of children's attendance is not always kept, and this is a breach of a Legal Requirement. The provider has been asked to take action to remedy this. The impact of the breach on children is small as the setting has other checks on attendance at other times in the day. The majority of policies and procedures are comprehensive and ensure the smooth and safe running of the nursery.

A particular strength of the setting is the well-established relationships with parents and carers. They are kept well informed about all aspects of their child's day and wellbeing, and this provides good continuity of care for babies and older children. Parents report positively about all aspects of the care provided, such as shown through their responses in questionnaires. They comment positively about the staff's warm and positive relationships with the children, and on the range of activities provided. Information about children's progress is regularly shared through discussion and through children's learning journals. Information about the activities of the day is on a display for all to see. Wider partnerships with other settings who also provide care for the children that attend are less well established, but the nursery is beginning to make these links with other settings through attendance at cluster meetings.

Resources are good, fit for purpose and often used well to achieve the planned goals in learning and development. The staff team work hard to ensure a welcoming, stimulating and child-friendly environment. Information displays are regularly updated to show children's creativity and learning. The outside areas for both babies and older children provide stimulating areas of activity for children across each area of learning. The staff are well deployed to support children's learning and are often proactive in providing additional resources in response to children's play. Equality and diversity is adequately promoted because the adults have a secure knowledge of each child's background and needs. Outcomes for individual children are improving and adults take suitable steps to close identified achievement gaps. Children learn about the community that they live in, such as through a visit to a nearby church, and through invited guests to the nursery who share their knowledge and expertise. The nursery is taking suitable steps to ensure resources and that the environment is sustainable.

Leaders and managers communicate ambition and drive satisfactorily. Evaluative processes provide an accurate diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. Actions taken are well targeted to bring about improvement to the early years provision, such as shown through the improvements to the outside area and the updating of resources. Since the last inspection the nursery has successfully developed their use of observation and assessment documentation. The nursery identified further improvements they wish to make to key elements in the planning process, and are seeking guidance from other professionals to address this. However, currently the staff are not wholly confident in planning processes and, as a result, children's progress is ineffectively tracked. This currently prevents children making more significant progress.

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

All children make at least satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals in most areas of their learning and development, because the overall system for the observation, assessment and planning for children's progress is adequate throughout nursery. The staff team have a secure knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and of child development. However, sometimes, weaknesses in the planning processes in both the baby unit and the main nursery rooms mean the quality of the planning is variable, children's next steps in development are inconsistently identified and children's progress is inconsistently tracked. This currently prevents children from making greater progress.

All children strongly benefit from the warm interactions with the supportive staff team. As a result, children are relaxed, confidently seek out adults and are happy and content. They suitably enjoy and achieve. Babies and older children display a strong sense of belonging. Babies show, by their facial expressions upon waking, that they feel secure. They show by the sounds they make in response to affection that they are forming secure relationships with the adults around them. Older children work well independently, as well as cooperating with their peers. For example they have great fun at the water tray, exploring and handling the objects that float and sink. They spontaneously share the whale figures and make space for each other to touch the ice cubes.

Children make satisfactory progress in their communication, literacy and numeracy skills. For example, a group of children are very well supported to count from one to six when helping to make up the paint for a creative activity. Each child takes a turn at spooning the paint into the pots, naming colours or adding the liquid. They extend their numeracy skills and are asked to think about 'one more'. They are thoroughly involved in the activity and take part confidently. They know to take turns, and spontaneously make space for each other so that others can have their turn. Older children generally secure the skills they require for future learning. They have regular access to the computer and take programmable toys into the garden to steer, and this helps them to suitably develop their information and communication technology skills. Babies are beginning to vocalise, repeat words

and to use sounds, squeals and giggles in response to the adults around them. They are generally beginning to learn early skills to support future learning.

Children are well supported to learn independence skills and about healthy lifestyles. They take themselves to the toilet and enthusiastically show adults that they have washed their hands. They learn about healthy eating through cooking activities and at snack time, which is a relaxed and social time for children. Children and babies thoroughly enjoy the free flow activities to the outside in their respective rooms, and the good opportunities to be active and exuberant. Babies set themselves challenges to crawl or toddle over the step and outside, to a tray filled with shredded paper to explore the feel and the touch. They are attentively supported by staff to be safe when using the swing and slides. Older children regularly take their play outside and have great fun using the tyres to balance and to jump off, practising control of their bodies as they do so. Babies and young children show that they are content and settled because their health, physical and dietary needs are well met. The nursery is well-organised, free from hazards and the routines help children to be safe and secure.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
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	3

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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