

Little Cottage

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

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*.

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Description of the setting

Little Cottage nursery was registered in 2011 and operates from a bungalow in a residential area of Tunbridge Wells, Kent. The setting is served by good transport links. There are three playrooms available for children to move around independently as well as an enclosed outside area. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. It is registered to care for a maximum of 12 children in the early years age group. Currently there are 15 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and English as an additional language. The nursery operates for 38 weeks of the year and is open from 8am to 5.30pm each day. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four. A team of three members of staff work at the nursery. These include the manager who has an Early Years degree and Qualified Teacher Status, her deputy who holds a relevant level three qualification and the assistant who is qualified to level 2 in early years.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are flourishing in all areas of their learning and development as a result of the nursery staff's comprehensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their personal approach to education ensures an individual childcare and education programme is developed that fully meets each child's requirements. The nursery provides an excellent standard of childcare practice in a vibrant and enriching environment where children can play, learn and develop using an extensive range of activities. Strong partnerships with parents/carers and developing partnerships with others involved with the children fully support the children's needs. The setting constantly reflects on their practice and plans for future development, demonstrating an excellent capacity for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- extending partnerships with outside agencies and other settings delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively within the nursery as the staff team demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities towards recording and

reporting any concerns of abuse or neglect. Rigorous vetting procedures are in place and all staff have undertaken the required checks. Risk assessments are detailed and clearly identify hazards and any action taken by staff to minimise these. Accident records are reviewed regularly to ensure that any patterns are identified and potential hazards to children and adults are minimised. Children practise the emergency evacuation procedure each term so they are prepared for an emergency should it arise. Staff clearly record any concerns that occur following a fire drill practice. For example, at a recent fire drill some of the children tried to put on their outdoor shoes before leaving the setting. Staff have discussed the importance of evacuating quickly and safely in an emergency. These practices fully promote children's ongoing safety.

The staff team work extremely well together and are fully supportive of each other. They have a shared vision to provide a personal, enjoyable approach to learning and their excellent deployment ensures that children's safety and individual learning needs are effectively met. Recent parental questionnaires and verbal feedback praise the staff team with positive comments such as 'its small and personal' and 'they know my child so well'. The key person system ensures that staff know each child individually and can effectively plan for their needs through observation and assessment in line with the starting points.

Partnership with parents is outstanding and a key strength of the setting. This significantly contributes to children's well-being. Parents are involved in their child's learning from the outset and staff value and respect their suggestions as their child's first educator. These are incorporated into the setting's ongoing plans for development. For example, following a suggestion from parents the setting now displays information regarding the current theme and colour in the foyer in addition to the information sent out in newsletters.

The nursery demonstrates a positive approach towards diversity and inclusion. Child record forms and initial settling-in sessions are used to establish any dietary, religious, cultural or linguistic needs. A wide range of resources are enjoyed by the children depicting positive images of diversity and these are used well during play activities to incorporate any specific cultural backgrounds or needs. Staff demonstrate a thorough awareness of the differences between how boys and girls learn and develop and provide opportunities to enhance learning opportunities. When planning for individual needs staff team take into account their age, gender and individual character.

Resources are deployed extremely well to support children's welfare, learning and development. The indoor and outdoor environments are arranged creatively and include an extensive range of innovative, stimulating activities and resources that meet the different needs of the children.

The nursery manager communicates ambition and drive to secure continuous improvement, motivating the staff team highly effectively. Self evaluation reflects rigorous monitoring and analysis of what the nursery does well and what needs to improve. The views of all users are sought as part of the self evaluation process and their ideas valued highly. The staff team also take opportunities to visit other settings to share ideas and staff say this has helped to enhance the nursery

provision. Partnerships with childminders who share the care of the children work very well to ensure continuity of care for the children. These partnerships also provide effective support for children's learning, because information shared is used in future planning so that the experiences they have here enhance those they have elsewhere. There are also plans in place to form links with the local school nursery as several children will be going there in September as well as attending the nursery.

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

All of the children are very happy, contented and settled within the nursery, as they are cared for by an extremely motivated and enthusiastic staff team. This helps children to become fully engaged in the different activities they enjoy. For example, during a singing session children enthusiastically join in with singing number rhymes using the visual prompts provided. Children experience an extremely broad and well balanced range of activities and experiences in the indoor and outdoor environments and there is a balance of adult directed and child initiated activities. Staff implementation of planned activities is extremely flexible and they respond really positively to children's ideas and creativity. For example, following a planned colour mixing activity children alter another creative activity in the garden using rollers to mix colours into a feet printing session. This leads to a hilarious period where the children and staff squeal with laughter at the different prints and colours they make. The activity ends with the children washing their painted feet in the water tray to more hilarity.

Children learn about colours, shapes and number through the different activities available. The staff team actively contributes to and extends children's learning through skilful questions and the introduction of new vocabulary. For example, staff introduce the names of different vehicles such as bulldozer and sidecar when children play with the small world people. Children develop lively and enquiring minds through the numerous opportunities they have to be inquisitive, discover new skills and solve problems. For example, a sensory tray introduces children to different smells such as coriander, basil, garlic and lemon. Many of the children are able to recognise their own name and identify initial letters and sounds because staff ensure that they have opportunities to see their names displayed on coat pegs, during registration and on their artwork throughout the nursery. Staff have worked extremely hard to create a stimulating, enriching environment for children. Children are provided with an extensive range of inspiring activities and play experiences extending the different areas of learning in a fun and stimulating way. For example, to celebrate the end of term they enjoy a range of activities based around their teddy bears' picnic. These activities include making and decorating bear shaped biscuits, decorating brightly coloured bunting and reading an abundance of bear themed stories. Parents were invited to attend the teddy bears' picnic.

An extremely successful key person system is in place and the child's key person comprehensively tracks children's individual developmental progress. Staff use the

Early Years Foundation Stage framework to highlight progress in the six areas of learning and clearly target next steps of development. This information is used to inform future planning, making sure all areas of learning are incorporated. Parents are invited to look at their children's records and talk to their child's key person throughout the year to discuss any concerns or share any information. A photo journal is available in the foyer for parents to look through or take home at any time and more comprehensive observations are kept in the child's developmental profile. Parents really value these learning journals, feeling that they really gain a flavour of what their child is experiencing. Comments in the learning journals and in recent parent questionnaires are extremely complimentary, 'You have created a wonderful nursery' and 'our child is learning a great deal, you clearly make it a wonderful play experience'.

Children thrive from being cared for in an environment where a high standard of hygiene practice is maintained. All children learn about hygiene routines through washing their hands at appropriate times throughout the day, for example, prior to cooking activities and meal times. Pictures and posters at their level provide children with gentle reminders regarding good hygiene and safety in the sun such as washing their hands and wearing sunhats. Children develop valuable healthy eating habits as staff encourage them to try different foods and constantly talk to them during meal times about foods that are good for them. Meals and snacks are very well balanced and nutritious, offering a wide variety of foods from around the world. Favourites include Mince Massala with poppadoms and chicken curry. Individual dietary needs are very well met by staff who are highly aware of their allergies, cultural and religious restrictions and dislikes.

Children are exceptionally well behaved within the nursery because the staff are firm and consistent in their management of any inappropriate behaviour. Strategies used are relevant to the age and level of understanding of each individual child. Staff continuously encourage good manners and turn taking which helps the children to establish close relationships with their peers.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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