

Little Elms

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*.

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 Elms was established in 1978 and registered in new premises in 2011. It is a registered charity and is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of some of the children who attend the setting. It operates from new purpose-built premises in the village of Elmswell, Suffolk. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school opens each weekday during school term times. Sessions are from 8.45am to 11.45am and 12.15pm to 3.15pm, with a lunch club from 11.45am to 12.15pm. Children, including those over five years, are also able to attend a breakfast club from 7.45am to 8.45am and an after school club from 3pm to 6pm. During most school holidays, the setting runs a holiday club for children aged from two to 13 years. These sessions operate each weekday from 7.45am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions and can be escorted to and from the local nursery and school.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register, and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 82 children on roll, 60 of whom are in the early years age range. The staff are currently supporting a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and have strategies in place to support children who have English as an additional language. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

There are eight members of staff. All staff hold relevant early years qualifications to at least level 3. One member of staff holds Qualified Teacher Status. The setting has achieved accreditation through the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children feel extremely safe and secure at the setting. They make good progress in their learning and development as they engage in a wide range of play opportunities, which are planned effectively to meet their individual needs and interests. The staff promote inclusive practice and link up very well with parents and outside agencies to provide effective support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Partnerships with parents are highly valued and there are excellent opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's learning. The manager and staff regularly reflective on their practice and self-evaluation is used generally well to bring about future improvements to the provision for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- draw on the full range of quality improvement tools available in order to assess what the setting offers against robust and challenging quality criteria, and to prioritise key areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting's practice in relation to safeguarding children is exemplary. Many of the staff have completed relevant training courses to ensure they have expert understanding of child protection procedures and are confident in meeting their duties. All required checks are completed to confirm the suitability of all staff, volunteers and students. Children play in a secure setting where excellent procedures are in place to keep them safe. For example, staff move around and deploy themselves well to ensure children are always well-supervised, both indoors and outdoors. Risk assessments are given utmost priority to ensure children are protected from any new hazards as they arise. For example, staff vigilantly check for the growth of prickly weeds in the garden and ensure these are removed. Children benefit from the newly built premises which has been designed to fully promote their freedom and independence. For example, they can access low-level sinks to wash their hands and have plenty of space to explore the wide range of toys and resources available to them.

The manager and staff are dedicated to ensuring the setting is fully inclusive. They actively promote equality of opportunity and ensure that any issues with prejudice and discrimination are sensitively challenged. The key person system works effectively to ensure that staff get to know children well and can identify and meet children's emerging additional needs. The staff have excellent knowledge of the support services available and do not hesitate to use them where necessary. For example, they link up with the local children's centre to provide one to one support for children with special educational needs. Partnerships with parents and carers are also very strong as the staff clearly value their involvement in many aspects of the setting. Everyone is made to feel very welcome by the friendly and approachable staff and as a result, parents are at ease when discussing their children's needs. Important information is gathered and shared from the outset. For example, parents are invited to an induction evening and often stay for their children's initial settling in sessions. The manager takes time to foster the skills and expertise of parents. For example, she invites them in to play musical instruments to the children and appreciates their offer to help to landscape the outdoor area.

The manager and staff team are reflective in their approach and often take time to discuss new ideas at regular team meetings. Since moving into the new premises they have worked hard to review the layout of the space, furniture and resources to ensure they meet children's needs and maximise their involvement in activities. As yet, the setting is not making the most of a range of quality assessment tools, such as regular parental questionnaires or the Ofsted self-evaluation form. This means that they are not yet assessing their practice as rigorously as they could be to ensure their actions for development are targeted to the most appropriate outcomes for children.

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

Children receive plenty of direct support and attention as the staff listen and respond to them throughout their activities. Children show they feel extremely safe as they make choices, help themselves to toys and readily approach the staff if they need help. For example, they confidently request their favourite dressing up clothes and ask staff for help to do up zips and fastenings. Younger children settle very quickly when they are new to the setting. This is because the staff are mindful of their needs from the beginning and are able to provide toys and activities that engage them when they are a little unsettled. After a short while, they grow in confidence and are happy to explore their new surroundings and to interact with the wider group. Social opportunities such as group stories and snack times enable children to develop their friendships and social skills. Their behaviour is very good as they share popular ride-on toys and offer others a chair to sit at the table.

Written observations of the children's achievements, skills and interests are supported well with photographs in their learning journey records. These show that children are making strong progress from their starting points. Each child has individual plans in place to ensure their learning and development is unique to them and activities are adapted to meet their individual needs. Children are inquisitive thinkers as the staff are skilled in their questioning to inspire them to think about what they are doing. For example, staff introduce concepts such as floating and sinking as children play with ducks in the water. Children have good opportunities to practice their mark making skills from an early age as they enjoy using brushes and water to scribe on the fence. Older children are confident in writing their names on their finished drawings. Children delight in accessing the outdoors and exploring their interest in minibeasts. They like to watch the ladybird as it walks up their arm and using magnifying pots to look at crickets more closely. The staff foster this interest as they encourage children to count the number of spots on the ladybird and to compare their captured creatures to those shown on a poster. Children are developing good skills for the future as they use a wide range of information and communication technology in their role play. For example, they enjoy pressing the buttons on the telephone before making a call in their role play situation, and show confidence in using a child-friendly camera to take photographs of their friends. A sound range of resources and activities are provided to promote children's awareness of the wider world such as sharing books featuring different languages, using chopsticks to eat a Chinese New Year feast, and making traditional diva lamps during Diwali.

Children are developing a secure understanding of the importance of following a good personal hygiene routine. They wash their hands after using the toilet and make healthy choices at snack times. Children have plenty of access to physical exercise and fresh air because the setting has a free flow system which allows them to play outside during most of the session. Staff encourage children to consider their health needs in the warmer months as they talk about wearing a hat and sun cream to stay safe in the sun. Children demonstrate highly intuitive awareness of their own safety. This is because the staff create opportunities for

them to be involved in risk assessing for themselves. For instance, older children confidently remind the younger children that they must walk carefully with the scissors. There are valuable opportunities for children think about safety scenarios in their role play as they build fire engines with chairs and talk about fire safety issues.

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