

Little Explorers

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Parm Sansoyer

Setting address

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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 Explorers opened in 2002 and operates from St. Anne's church hall in Weeping Cross, Stafford. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting serves children from the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 48 children from two years to five years at any one time. There are currently 32 children on roll of whom all are in the early years age group. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. They are in receipt of funding for the provision of free early years education to children aged three and four-years-old. The setting supports children with English as an additional language. The setting is open each weekday from 9am to 3pm during the school term. Some children attend fulltime and others 9am to 12pm or 12pm to 3pm.

The setting employs eight staff. Of these five hold a qualification at level 3 in early years and three are unqualified. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, content and comfortable within a safe and secure environment and their individual care needs met very well. The resources, planning systems and teaching methods help children make satisfactory progress in their learning and development. Children are fully safeguarded because all of the staff team have good knowledge of child protection issues and take positive steps to secure the children's welfare, health and safety. There are satisfactory partnerships with parents and carers and well established links with the local feeder schools and other early years professionals and agencies. Self-evaluation is largely undertaken by the leader and identifies most of the strengths and areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- plan and provide a broader range of experiences across all six areas of learning, paying particular attention to children's problem solving, reasoning and numeracy development
- utilise more fully the varied range of resources available and plan more clearly their use and learning intention to help further extend children's play and learning
- make better use of observation and assessment systems to help plan more effectively for the learning needs of the older and more able children to

- further extend their learning and development
- develop and build on the systems for monitoring and evaluating the early years provision to more effectively secure continuous improvement in children's achievement and progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leader and staff place a clear emphasis on securing the children's safety and welfare at all times. All staff clearly understand the written policies, strategies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children. There are effective vetting, recruitment and induction procedures in place to ensure adults caring for children and volunteers having access to them are suitable to do so. All records, policies, procedures and risk assessments required for the safe and efficient management of the service and to meet the needs of all children are in place and regularly reviewed.

Staff mostly plan a well organised educational programme across most areas of learning to offer a varied range of experiences for children to invest their curiosity and explore at their own leisure. Staff set up the hall daily with a balance of adult-led and freely-chosen activities and experiences. However, staff do not fully enough utilise the varied range of resources and experiences available to them and provide a clear enough learning intention for their use, to help further extend children's play and learning. Adults are deployed well and in particular support the younger and less able children very well to become involved and take part in new experiences. Staff know the children well as they make regular observations of what children do, like and enjoy and therefore plan interesting activities and experiences for their enjoyment. However, this information is not used effectively enough to inform planning, especially when planning for the needs of the older and more able children, to help further extend their achievement.

Parents, carers and their children are warmly welcomed and staff make the time to discuss and share information about the children's day. Parents are kept well informed as they receive detailed information about the provision, curriculum and its policies. Systems to keep parents informed about their children's progress and achievements and the extent to which their views are sought are satisfactory. Partnerships with the local feeder schools, agencies, professionals and other settings that the children attend are strong and help support their care, education and transition.

Since the last inspection there are some new staff, a new committee and a new person in charge. The person in charge works directly with the children and is part of an enthusiastic staff team who work well together. The leaders are motivated to seek improvement and are effective in focusing the settings efforts on priorities identified, such as, accurately monitoring the children's well-being, welfare and health. However, target setting in relation to monitoring the children's progress and the quality of teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge. Regular appraisals, staff meetings and training helps support staff to further raise their

skills and knowledge.

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

Children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered very well and the extent to which children make a positive contribution is good. All children are happy and confident due to the well organised routines and the close relationships they develop with both adults and each other. Staff use registration time well to encourage children to share how they are feeling and to reinforce the topic and prepare them for what is on offer. Children enjoy the familiar routine. For example, they immediately respond to the gentle ringing of the bells and happily get ready for their snack. Children develop their confidence well as they busily move around their environment deciding what to do both outdoors and indoors. Most children show sustained levels interest in their chosen play.

Children's communication, language and literacy is developing. Many children begin to recognise their name from their name cards as they self-register and as they choose their name at snack time. The environment outdoors incorporates opportunities for children to use writing materials at the easel and on mounted chalk boards. Indoors children have use of a writing table which is used by some children. However, they have fewer opportunities to use mark making during their play, such as, in the role play area. Children develop a fondness for stories as they benefit from a daily story session which is often linked to the topic and children's interests. There is a cosy book area made available, however, resources, such as, puppets and the various story aids are not made freely available to spark the children's interest in this area.

The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is building well to help them make sense of the world. Children begin to learn about their natural environment as they are encouraged to observe changes in the weather and seasons. Daily children complete the weather board and help dress the 'weather teddy' appropriately for the weather. The current topic on ice, rain, snow and wind means children are beginning to consider their natural environment as they walk to the setting. For example, children have been collecting conkers, acorns, fir cones and leaves. They have been actively involved in planting trees in pots and transferring them to the school garden. Children have some meaningful first experiences to care for the pet African snails as they feed them and help clean their tank. They have also been involved in creating favourable conditions, such as, using logs, to attract insects and begin to show an interest in investigating them closely. Children begin to question why things happen as they use the dark den to consider light, shadow and reflection.

Children's problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy is developing. They seek patterns, count, sort and match through using a varied range of construction toys, puzzles and games. Staff use the daily routine and children's play well to encourage children to count and consider early calculation. However, older and

more able children have few opportunities to recognise numerals during their play and consider concepts, such as, weight, capacity and measures to further extend their learning

Children enjoy varied range of experiences to express their creativity and imagination through using a variety of arts and crafts materials. Many children thoroughly enjoy the role play areas and small world toys to increase their imagination. Children use their senses well as they use the jelly, dough, spaghetti and cornflour mixed with water to consider texture and smell.

Children are well behaved and learn about sharing and taking turns and respond well to reminders and direction from the staff. Staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management, which helps children learn right from wrong and how to stay safe. The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles is good. Children benefit from the access to fresh air and the outdoor environment where they use a good range of physical play resources to extend their physical skills. Children benefit from a healthy snack of fresh and dried fruits, bread sticks and milk and water. Children learn about the importance of keeping healthy through discussion and themed activities and making healthy choices as eat and drink. For example, they are encouraged to make healthy choices from their lunch boxes. Staff and children adopt effective hygiene practices in place to prevent the spread of infection. Children develop satisfactory skills for the future as they become active and independent learners.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

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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