

Little Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

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28/11/2011

Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

The school registered Little Learners preschool in 2010. It operates from a base unit within Meadows Primary School Lincoln and is run by the school governors. There is ample parking available for parents and ground level access to the premises. The setting takes children from the surrounding area.

It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The setting may care for 24 early years age group children aged three and over at any one session. There are currently 42 children on roll. The first sessions run from 8.45am until 11.45am and the second session from 12.30pm until 3.30pm. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting receives support from the local authority. The staff team consists of a manager, a deputy and one full time early years practitioner and one part time early years practitioner. All staff hold relevant qualifications for their roles and all are currently undertaking further training to achieve the next level in their specific qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting is highly effective. Children thrive and make rapid progress in their learning and development. Well-established partnerships between the setting, parents and other agencies ensure children's individual needs are met and their protection assured. The management and organisational systems are thorough. Self-evaluation is reflective and improvements are continuous. Targets are clearly identified and have a positive outcome for children and the quality of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- planning greater opportunities for children to learn about their local community.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is safeguarded by extremely knowledgeable and well-qualified staff. All staff have a clear understanding of the procedure to follow if they have concerns about a child. They have highly effective systems and policies in place, which they effectively translate into practice. These are shared with parents so

that they are fully aware of how the setting is organised and the duty staff have towards keeping children safe. Thorough employment and vetting procedures are implemented to assess staff suitability, with an induction programme and appraisals to monitor ongoing suitability. Comprehensive risk assessments, daily safety checks and regular emergency evacuation drills maintain high standards of safety. Staff routines and practices ensure excellent standards of hygiene are maintained through the setting.

The staff have an exceptional knowledge and understanding of child development, which enables them to provide an excellent quality of care and learning. All staff are highly proactive with regard to their professional development, and regularly attend purposeful training. The staff team successfully gain extremely diverse knowledge and skills that they cascade to each other. Staff organise space and play resources effectively to meet children's needs and have an excellent understanding of children's individual abilities and preferred learning styles. This enables them to provide learning experiences and activities to support each child's growing skills. The setting has highly effective strategies in place to care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They reflect and evaluate their practice continuously to ensure that all children have stimulating and vibrant experiences and make rapid progress in their learning and development. Self-evaluation provides a comprehensive and accurate account of the setting's strengths and areas for development. All staff, parents and children contribute to self-evaluation and their views are fully considered in decision-making and ways to drive the setting forward.

Staff have established excellent partnerships with parents and others involved in the children's care and learning. Comprehensive information is provided to parents to help them make an informed choice. Parents provide staff with detailed information about their child's needs and have excellent opportunities to be included in the setting and to contribute to their child's learning. For example, parents regularly volunteer to help in the setting and they also send a wealth of observations from home to go on the 'Special Moments Tree'. They have ongoing access to their child's special books and are invited to three, yearly parents' evenings, which are extremely well attended. Parents are given regular questionnaires to complete so that their views are addressed in the ongoing development plan, and they have a noticeboard, news letters and can talk to their child's key person every day. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and key persons link effectively with both parents and external professionals to ensure children's additional needs are met consistently and well. In addition to this, the manager is an active member of the local transition cluster and is a Special Educational Needs mentor and member of the Assessment and Record-Keeping group.

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

Children thrive in this highly stimulating and vibrant setting. They make excellent progress in their learning and development and are extremely capable and independent children. Staff have extensive knowledge and expertise and deliver

learning to children with great skill and a full understanding of how young children learn. They are an extremely solid team who are highly motivated and enthusiastic, and have high aspirations and a shared vision for providing children with the highest quality of learning they possibly can. As a result, children receive consistency in their routine, purposeful support and continuity in how learning is delivered to them. The children in this setting are very secure and confident children. They are fully included in all aspects of the setting and are extremely able to plan and organise their own ideas. They make their own choices and use the wide range of resources extremely well. Staff regularly observe children and have highly effective systems in place for tracking their progress and planning around their next steps. Every child is treated as a unique individual and is supported and challenged extremely well to achieve their maximum potential.

Children demonstrate an excellent sense of belonging and well-being through their positive interactions with staff and peers. They make clear friendships within the group and play extremely well together, sharing, taking turns, negotiating and inventing imaginary situations. A wonderful example of this is a group of children who enjoy playing in the 'dark cave'. One child dressed in a bear costume decides that the cave is now a tunnel and tells the staff how they are all having to wear wellies, big wellies, as the cave is full of deep water. The rest of the children in this group all follow this lead and use mobile phones to contact each other to help rescue those in need. They use torches in the cave to light the way and magnifying glasses to explore their surroundings. Children in this setting are articulate communicators and highly proficient with using technology; in particular, computers. They use headphones with the computers, load their own programmes, click, drag and print with ease. Children ask for little help because they are so capable. Children also develop their mark-making and numeracy skills extremely well and use number lines, counting, measuring and writing in their everyday play. They have excellent opportunities to do all activities indoors and outdoors, which fully promotes children's preferred learning styles and the needs of both boys and girls in the setting. As a result, children are developing the skills they need for their future extremely well.

The outdoor area is equally as stimulating as the indoor area and a place where children can play more actively on a larger scale. They learn about nature, grow their own vegetables, which they use for their snacks and investigate and explore bugs, for example, taking their scraps from snack time and burying these in the woods to investigate later to see which bugs have been attracted. The opportunities for children to develop their knowledge of the local environment are currently less well planned for; however, they have many visitors to the setting who develop their understanding, such as, builders, who help them to mix concrete so they can build a small wall, the police, who come to talk to them about safety, paramedics and health visitors who talk to them about health and also parents, who share their skills with the children.

Children demonstrate an excellent understanding of developing healthy lifestyles and of safety. They are extremely active children who enjoy outdoor play, fresh air, gym sessions in the hall and music and dance. They eat healthy snacks and understand the difference between healthy foods and occasional treats. They engage in many activities that support their learning, such as growing and

harvesting their own vegetables for snack time, which develops their understanding of the origins of food. They help to prepare snacks and participate in many cooking activities, which promotes their enjoyment of food. Children are extremely aware of safety. They constantly sweep up flour from the floor, move around the room safely, follow simple rules without prompt and tidy away their toys and treat them with respect. Their behaviour is exemplary and a credit to the quality of support and consistent guidance they receive from the staff.

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	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	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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

Met