

Little Explorers

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Yvonne Layton

Setting address Broomfield College, Morley, ILKESTON, Derbyshire, DE7
6DN
Telephone number 01332836620
Email enquiries@derby-college.ac.uk
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

Little Explorers Day Nursery registered at new premises in February 2011. The setting is owned and managed by Derby College. It operates from three playrooms within a purpose built single storey building on Broomfield College Campus on the outskirts of Derby. The nursery offers places to the children of students, staff and the local and wider community. There are two fully enclosed play areas available for outdoor play. A maximum of 54 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 67 children attending who are all within the early years age range. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early years provision. The setting also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years in the school holidays.

This setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The setting currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The group opens Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year and sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The setting employs 14 members of child care staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 2 and above. One member of staff holds, and two are working towards, Early Years Professional Status. The setting receives support from the local authority and has strong links with other providers of early years care and education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and content because the staff liaise closely with parents to ensure continuity of care and learning. Generally, planned and free-choice activities are suitable and all areas of learning are visited so children have fun and make sound progress. The staff and management have strong knowledge of how to safeguard children. There is a proactive commitment to develop the quality of the setting and to make continuous improvement. However, the recently amended systems are not fully incorporated into practice, therefore, the impact on children is not able to be easily assessed.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- embed and consistently implement the educational programmes devised with particular reference to the planning of activities and assessments of children's achievements
- support further the balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities with particular reference to developing the variety of free-choice resources available with particular regard to mark-making, art and craft and natural activities

- support further a rounded approach to child development through planned, purposeful play by making sure all provided activities contain sufficient resources to provide challenge and stimulation
- extend the provision of positive images that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture and special educational needs and disabilities by providing more visual images throughout the setting.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are effectively protected as the staff have a strong knowledge of their responsibility for safeguarding children supported by a clear safeguarding children policy. Children's welfare is promoted well as all required and many additional records, policies and procedures are in place. Children are kept safe as the staff are strongly alert to their safety, both in the nursery and on outings. Detailed risk assessments ensure children are protected. The staff are clear about their individual responsibilities and there are established procedures for visitors to the setting. Security is robust with only permanent staff having access to key code pads for the external door. Children's health is supported strongly as there are well-established hygiene procedures and routines. The nursery provides locally sourced food for nutritious meals and snacks.

Detailed daily discussions with parents develop partnerships which are enhanced by good quality written information they share and receive. A two-way daily diary for young children and a daily feedback sheet for all other children are used to detail individual care and activities for each child. Information about events in the children's lives and their progress at home is shared and used within the child's assessments. Parents are able to view their child's individual file informally and during 'Parents' Week'. There are ongoing discussions about children's care and learning. Parents are actively involved in a Parent Forum and their ideas are implemented. Parents are encouraged to be involved within nursery activities, such as cooking and the 'Forest School'. These links support staff in knowing children's needs in order to meet their individual requirements.

Children's individuality is respected and they are all included in activities. Staff respond positively to their individual personalities and development. Links with other settings and professionals are secure with joint working to meet the children's individual needs. Continuity and cohesion in children's educational development is appropriately supported as links with schools are in the process of being established.

The nursery, management and staff have undergone major changes and challenges since the last inspection. Recognition is given to the substantial work undertaken by the management and staff team to secure improvement. The management team have strong aspirations and commitment to develop the setting and to increase the quality of the care and learning of the children. Their drive is reflected by the staff team who are actively responsive. The actions from the last inspection have been addressed effectively and overall the recommendations have

been met. Areas to develop are well targeted and changes are made in workable stages. However, currently the amended systems and procedures are not consolidated and embedded, therefore, it is not possible to identify the full impact on the children.

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

Children are happy and settled at the setting. The staff are warm and caring, providing positive interaction between them and the children. Children are helped to make satisfactory progress and their development is encouraged as the staff are appropriately knowledgeable about implementing all aspects of the learning and development elements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Planning is led by children's development needs, and their interests and ideas are acted upon. Children have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of activities that encourage their learning and are linked to the early learning goals. The balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities is generally effective. Individual assessments are in place which detail children's progress and development. However, the recording of children's next steps in order to plan further activities is not consistent throughout the nursery, therefore, continuity in children's educational development is not ensured.

Good relationships are evident between the staff and children. Throughout the nursery children are warmly cared for. Children develop a sense of belonging as they see a wide range of displays of photographs of themselves undertaking activities and visits outside the setting. However, the range of positive images that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture and special educational needs and disabilities are limited. Routines are used to support children's independence skills, for example, older children are encouraged to serve their own meals. They are learning sound social skills as the staff promote positive behaviour.

Children's knowledge of colour, letters, calculation and mark making is supported appropriately well within spontaneous, child-led or focussed/themed activities. In the main, children are able to self-select resources which are available indoors and outside. However, the selection of mark making, art and natural resources available in the free choice areas limits their ability to explore and be creative. Overall the activities provide a sound basis to support children's learning. However, in some activities the resources are not always suitable to provide a stimulating experience, such as, in a hair dressing activity resources are limited and some pencil crayons are blunt and broken. Children are appropriately supported to be imaginative and staff follow and develop their ideas and interests. For example, throughout the nursery children are avidly interested in the construction site in the grounds. Staff support this by developing activities, including, printing with toy cranes and trucks, enabling linked imaginative activities, using photographs to discuss events and children create their own site using mud and a puddle outside.

Children's health, well-being and learning are effectively promoted as the importance of outdoor activities is a key part of the setting. Within the setting

there is free-flow play between inside and outside and the outdoor classroom supports children's ability to be outside consistently. Within this area there is art and craft, for example, painting with twigs, table top activities and a home-made music corner. Children enjoy group singing and stories outside. All children have extensive opportunities to visit the attached working farm, sensory garden and are actively involved in planting and growing organic vegetables and flowers in the allotment. They learn about nature by visiting the animals in the farm and watch lambs and piglets being born. Younger children actively search the woods for natural items and their senses are stimulated as they investigate texture and smell in the garden. Weekly 'Forest School' sessions for older children encourages their learning about nature, rural life, fauna and flora. For example, children are able to name different trees. They keep fit as they walk and explore the area of the woods and farm land.

Children feel safe with the staff as they confidently approach them and feel secure in their surroundings. They learn about possible dangers and how to keep themselves safe through rigorous routines and consistent reminders.

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	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	3
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