

Early Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Lynne Naylor

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Early Learners was founded in 1994 and registered to a limited company in 2012. It operates from Lancaster Lane County Primary School in Leyland. Children are cared for in a classroom with direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area shared with the school reception class children. Children have use of the school hall, resource area and cooking area.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday from 9am until 3.30pm during term time only. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and there are currently 36 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school manager holds an appropriate degree level qualification. She leads a team of three childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 and one at level 3. Early Learners receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The confident management and staff team deliver a good service and demonstrate a high capacity to sustain improvement. Self-evaluation increasingly involves staff, children and parents and provides a realistic diagnosis of the pre-school's strengths and areas for development. The learning environment, indoors and outdoors, is inclusive, accessible and safe with generally sound use made of resources to promote respect for diversity. All the required documentation is generally well maintained. Each child's unique needs are effectively met and they make strong progress in their learning and development. Their progress is increasingly being supported by positive relationships with parents and developing links with other settings that children attend.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- make greater use of what parents know about their child's learning and development to identify learning opportunities and agree next steps, linking with other providers where appropriate
- make greater use of opportunities in children's free play to help them understand that people have different views, cultures and beliefs, that need to be treated with respect.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They all receive basic training in child protection and are well supported by a designated person with a higher level of training. Robust recruitment and vetting systems determine the suitability of staff to work with children. Most staff hold a valid first aid certificate, which enables them to efficiently safeguard children's health in an emergency. Staff understand and follow effective procedures for identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment. Records that help keep children safe are generally well maintained. Staff follow a checklist to ensure all areas and resources are safe before children use them. Staff protect, support and encourage children to develop safe levels of independence.

Clear appraisal systems provide a regular opportunity to identify the on-going training needs of staff. Some good systems have been put in place by staff, to drive improvement. For instance, children's views and ideas are regularly gathered at class meetings. Also parents are actively consulted and involved in some decision-making at regular committee meetings. This leads to well-targeted plans for future improvement that meet the needs of those who attend.

Children work well independently and as part of a group. This is because staff thoughtfully organise the room into distinct, accessible areas, therefore, children easily help themselves to a wide range of high quality toys and equipment. The outdoor environment also includes opportunities for children to explore all areas of learning. Effective deployment of staff affords children the choice to play indoors or outdoors.

Parents spoken to during the inspection feel well informed about how the pre-school operates and the types of activities provided. They speak with staff daily and also have access to policies and procedures, notice boards, newsletters and a website. Children's starting points are identified from home visits as well as from the information parents provide in the 'all about me' section of the learning journals, which include family characteristics, child development and children's interests. This supports staffs' ability to deliver personalised learning and care. A number of useful systems to encourage parents to exchange further information about their child's learning at home have been implemented and are beginning to positively impact on the outcomes for some children. Records clearly demonstrate that each child's progress towards the early learning goals is good. Parents are increasingly involved in their child's learning. For example, children invite their male family members in to the pre-school for Father's Day and enjoy activities, such as making models from reclaimed materials. They enjoy activities with their female family members on Mother's Day. There are strong links with the host school, which clearly benefit the children and ensures a smooth transition for those who progress to the school. Currently, there are a few children, who also attend other early years provisions. Information is exchanged with these providers to promote children's care but not yet to support their learning and development.

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

Children demonstrate a clear sense of security and belonging. They behave well and confidently talk to each other, staff and visitors. Staff provide children with plenty of opportunities to solve problems, use thinking skills and manage risks during play activities. At snack time, children learn to use tools safely as they cut fruit carefully with a knife. Children learn from interesting visitors, such as police and fire officers, how to keep themselves safe. Children are exceptionally well informed about all aspects of healthy living. They help themselves to a healthy snack, such as cheese, mixed chopped fruit and a carton of milk. Every day, children exercise vigorously in the fresh air as they engage in a wide range of physical activities in a secure outdoor play space. They acquire racquet and ball skills during weekly sessions led by a visiting tennis coach. They improve their balance as they walk across the wobbly bridge and manoeuvre wheeled vehicles along a pathway. Children learn about their body as they name parts on a skeleton. They learn about health issues on a visiting 'life bus' and demonstrate how to brush teeth on a doll when they return.

Staff observe children and identify the next learning steps for their development. They meet weekly to plan activities and experiences to extend children's learning. Clear systems for tracking each child's progress across all six areas of learning are in place. Staff's skilful interactions with children promote positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, children acquire a wide range of social and learning skills that equip them well for the future. Children work well independently and learn successfully through self-chosen play-based activities as well as activities that are led more by staff. For example, they refine their literacy skills as they help themselves to books and readily available pens, pencils, paints and chinks. Children extend their numeracy skills as they count items on cards and find a corresponding numeral on the wall. Children acquire technological skills as they operate computer programs and the interactive whiteboard. Children are creative with paint and modelling sand, use their imaginations in role play situations and enjoy music sessions. Some accessible books, jigsaws and posters help children learn about the wider world, although, these are not readily available in all areas. This limits children's opportunities to recognise difference in others during free play. However, children's awareness of their own culture and those of others is steadily being raised according to calendar events. Children are actively involved in cultural and national events, such as the Queen's Jubilee. Children consider the needs of others as they make and sell cakes to raise money for charitable events. They learn to conserve the Earth's resources as they recycle waste paper.

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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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	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	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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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