

Little Owls Nursery

Century House, Well Lane, Danbury, Essex, CM3 4AB

Inspection date	17/09/2012
Previous inspection date	12/01/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- There is a commitment to improvement and constant reflection. The setting is forward thinking and proactive in bringing about change where this benefits children and are striving for ways to overcome identified weaknesses.
- Partnership working is well established ensuring children who have additional needs are identified and provided with good support to ensure they make progress.
- Transitions are skilfully managed within the nursery and when children move on. At each stage the staff are clear about the children's development levels and children do not move rooms until they are ready to handle the new challenges and demands of that room.
- The spacious premises are used well to allow children free movement within the rooms and free flow access to the outside area.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities for parents to contribute to the next steps in their child's learning are not yet fully developed.
- Children are not fully included in daily routines such as mealtimes, thereby missing out on valuable opportunities for counting, calculation and social skills.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed practice in the three care rooms in current use, the kitchen and the outside area.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and in information contained in surveys and the self-evaluation form.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documents, evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting, the provider's self-evaluation document, parent surveys and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector held meetings with the business manager, the day manager and the staff member who holds Early Years professional Status (EYPS).

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Owls Nursery was registered in 2005. It is privately owned and operates from converted commercial premises located within a small business park in Danbury, Essex. There is an enclosed garden available for outdoor play. Children also use a wooded area

opposite for supervised forest school sessions. Little Owls Nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery is open each weekday, all year round with the exception of one week at Christmas. There are currently 115 children on roll aged from birth to under five years. Opening times are from 7.30am until 6pm. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 29 members of staff, including the managers, of whom 24 have appropriate early years qualifications. Several members of staff are currently training to upgrade their qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- review ways in which staff monitor children's next steps in learning and involve parents in this
- review the organisation to improve children's involvement in routines, such as mealtimes, to maximise counting and their independence and self-esteem.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are engaging with enthusiasm and confidence in this stimulating and caring setting. The staff clearly work well as a team and have embraced recent changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements to provide children with some unique learning opportunities. This helps them make good individual progress. The youngest children have a comfortable, well equipped room and demonstrate their sense of belonging as they select toys to play with. They happily join in with sensory and creative activities, such as printing, with hands and feet as well as sponges. Children regularly explore textures and properties of various materials, such as pasta, custard and even baked beans. The children are happy and settled and have formed strong relationships with the staff, particularly the key persons, who know their individual needs very well.

Toddlers have the benefit of easy access to the outdoor area and good use is made of this feature, allowing free flow play as far as possible. The area has a safety surface to minimise injury from bumps and falls, and is secure and contained, ensuring children are safe at all times. Wheeled toys, such as, scooters and trikes, are popular and children demonstrate their developing skills in manoeuvring their way round the fixed equipment

and other toys in use. The outdoor area also houses the guinea pigs, whose care is shared between all children, giving them a sense of responsibility and an understanding of the need to care for living things.

The pre-school children benefit from a very spacious room, set out in clear areas. These include an attractive and inviting book area with drapes and cushions, an area for writing and mark making and a carpeted area for circle time and story sessions. Additionally, a project room allows for small group work or crafts, such as, cooking and woodwork requiring close supervision. This is well used by staff for the one-to-one time dedicated to enhancing literacy and numeracy skills as children approach formal school age. These sessions produce high quality work, carefully annotated and explained by staff, in books that children take home to share with their families. The recent introduction of Forest School sessions, led by a senior qualified staff member, has brought an added dimension of exciting learning and this has been enthusiastically received by both parents and children alike. The setting is fortunate in having access to a suitable wooded area, where children enjoy supervised sessions of outdoor learning in a natural environment.

All children have the opportunity to enjoy music and movement sessions, and French language classes, provided by outside agencies. Parents may opt for their child to attend these as they take place at set times during the week. Children develop confidence in a wide range of skills by taking part in these activities. Music and singing sessions form part of every child's daily routine and are valuable in developing a sense of rhythm and children have fun whilst strengthening their vocabulary. Often, children choose the songs and join in with the actions.

Systems for planning and delivering a range of activities are based very soundly on children's interests and ideas. Key persons note what they observe children doing and what children tell them, feeding this information onto a planning grid so that the following week's plans include specific activities to reflect and build on these. For example, a child who showed his interest in animals he had seen on a trip to the zoo, was asked if he would like to help clean out and care for the guinea pigs the next week. He was very happy to do this and this extended his understanding and confidence as a result. A parent told her child's key person that her child was fascinated by dinosaurs at home, so activities were planned around the theme of dinosaurs to build on his enthusiasm. Staff report clear and positive benefits to basing the planning on children's interests and helping to create a stimulating and productive environment.

Staff have been recording children's progress and noting the next steps in their individual 'Learning Journeys', although, systems to review and involve parents in this are not yet fully developed.

The provision for children with identified additional needs is very good. The setting has strong links with a range of outside professionals who work closely with the setting to put into place plans for children needing help with language or behavioural matters. These plans are thorough and detailed and shared with parents so that everyone can work towards ensuring the child's best interests are served. The setting is sensitive to individual children's needs and, for example, do not move children on to the next room until they are ready both physically and emotionally. This ensures that they are cared for according to

their unique needs and underpins the setting's ethos that every child receives a happy and enjoyable learning experience in their early years.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The organisation of the setting ensures children can form secure emotional bonds and attachments. The settling-in process is flexible and sensitive to children's needs and past experiences. Parents can be reassured that their children will be given sufficient time and attention to find their way about and take part in the fun and worthwhile activities provided. At certain times the children join rooms so siblings can spend time together and children can enjoy the company of younger or older children. This develops their social skills and confidence in interacting with others and helps when it becomes time to move on to the next room.

Key persons discuss children's care and welfare requirements to ensure they can tailor the day around what the children need. For example, dietary and medical needs are clearly known to the chef and kitchen staff so children only receive suitable food and drink. Care routines, such as, potty training and use of comforters and dummies, are discussed and strategies agreed with parents to help children become more independent as time goes on.

Older children are independent in terms of using the bathrooms and washing their hands before meals. They choose where to sit at lunchtime and snack time so usually sit with friends. Meals are prepared in-house from high quality fresh produce and children's ideas and preferences are taken account of, for example they requested bagels, which are now on the teatime menu. Children are not routinely directly involved in some aspects of mealtime routines, for example, laying the table with cutlery and placemats and some of the clearing away. Therefore, they miss out on valuable opportunities for counting and calculating, as well as social skills.

Security has a high priority at the setting and a fingerprint entry system ensures that no unknown person enters the setting unseen. Arrangements for collecting children include using photographs to identify named, alternative adults who may collect children, together with a password. The health and safety officer at the setting carries out daily risk assessments and checks the environment for hazards, any that are identified are swiftly dealt with, keeping children safe.

Children understand the need to move around safely and know that they must ask to use the large fixed equipment in the garden, which requires supervision. They understand that they need to wear suitable protective clothing when taking part in the Forest School activities and remind staff to wear their 'wellies' and not flip flops.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership of the setting clearly shows their commitment to high quality care and education in a well thought out environment. They constantly seek the views of children and parents to make improvements to the setting. For example, children chose which characters they would like included on the murals in the large corridor. These were painted by a professional artist and add vibrancy and colour, as well as interest, and provide a talking point as parents deliver and collect children.

The recruitment and appraisal systems address staff training and professional development needs on an ongoing basis. Students and apprentices are fully integrated and have a dedicated induction programme so that they know what their duties and responsibilities are in terms of the staff team. Incentives are provided to reward staff's performance and their welfare and well-being are of the utmost importance to the management team, who value and wish to retain their dedicated staff.

Senior staff have a role in observing and monitoring teaching and care throughout the setting. The manager spends time in each room and is available for any staff member to discuss any issues or concerns. All staff have been given one-to-one training in regard to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) changes, to ensure they are confident in delivering the new requirements. Imaginative use of role play and cascading of information, means that several different approaches are used so training remains interesting and informative for everyone.

Partnership working extends beyond providing additional support for children with identified needs, to ensuring that all children are well prepared for their transition to school. This is achieved by forging strong links with several local schools so children either have pre-visits or are visited by their forthcoming reception teacher several times to become familiar with what to expect when they move on. With the success of these arrangements in mind, the setting is preparing a set of transition books, one for each room in the nursery, with photographs and text to let children see and talk about what they can expect at each stage, and involve parents in what can otherwise be a tricky time for some children.

Safeguarding children is given extremely high priority and the policy and information folder is exemplary in that it contains a vast amount of pertinent information, training scenarios, and detailed procedures so that every staff member feels empowered and can protect children's best interests. Parents can access these and all the setting's policies as there is a meeting room with sofas and facilities for them to peruse all the documentation or have a quiet, confidential talk with a manager or key person if they so wish. Parents say they value the approachability of staff and the fact that staff take the trouble to learn as much as they can about their key children in order to offer the best standard of care and education and ensure children are happy.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY297422
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	883639
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	93
Number of children on roll	115
Name of provider	Little Owls Nursery Ltd
Date of previous inspection	12/01/2011
Telephone number	01245 221333

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their

Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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