

Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY285918
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Inspector Hazel Meadows

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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.

Description of the setting

Just Learning Nursery opened in 2004 and is part of a national chain of nurseries owned and run by Just Learning Limited. It operates from a purpose-built building, with level access, situated in Rushmere, near Ipswich. The building accommodates six rooms for children up to two years, two rooms for children aged two to three years and two rooms for children aged three to five years. There is a secure outside play area divided into separate areas for the different age groups. The nursery is open each weekday, excluding Bank holidays, Christmas Eve and New Years Eve, from 07.30 to 18.00.

A maximum of 112 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 212 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports several children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a number of children for whom English is an additional language. The nursery is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are 32 members of staff, of whom 27 hold appropriate early years qualification with 21 trained to NVQ Level 3 and six trained to NVQ Level 2. One member of staff is currently working towards Early Years Professional status. The nursery provides funded early years education for three and four-year-olds and receives support from the Early Education Support Team at Suffolk County Council.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. The nursery provides a welcoming, safe and vibrant environment where children thrive as they have fun learning through a broad variety of play experiences. Committed and enthusiastic management leads a competent team of staff, who are caring and attentive to the children and operate a successful key-person system. Trusting partnerships with parents and carers are very effective in ensuring all children are included and their individual needs met. All documentation is stringently maintained to support children's welfare. The setting has effective systems in place to monitor and reflect upon practice, to promote ongoing improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure the balance of adult-led and child-led activities and planned activities provide children with sufficient challenge and new experiences
- increase opportunities for children to write for a purpose in their play and for recognising their name and other familiar words and letters
- implement plans to develop the outdoor area, as extension of the the play and learning environment.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff work as a well-motivated team under the focussed and energetic leadership of a manager committed to providing high quality care and learning for all children at the nursery. Staff's training, and their knowledge of current childcare practice, is kept up-to-date through in-house and external training events. Knowledge and skills gained are applied in practice to benefit and enhance the quality of care and learning for the children. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures are followed by the managers when appointing new staff, although the staff team is predominantly stable with little turnover. Robust procedures are in place to safeguard children and staff are clear of procedures and their responsibilities should they have a child protection concern. The setting effectively monitors and evaluates its provision by ongoing reflection of practice, staff appraisals, regular staff meetings, parent questionnaires and liaison with the local authority support staff. This ensures that strengths, plus areas for improvement, are identified and addressed as required.

Exemplary management of administrative systems ensure that all nursery documentation and procedures are well maintained and easily referenced. Children's records are comprehensive and updated as required. Robust procedures for alerting staff to any allergies or particular health requirements are in place throughout the nursery. Thorough risk assessments are in place to promote children's safety in the nursery and on outings. Inclusive practice is applied to staff, the children and their families. Staff work closely with parents, carers and other professionals to provide individually tailored care for children with particular needs such as disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Children for whom English is an additional language are well supported, with staff using some familiar words and gestures whilst the children gain proficiency with the English language.

Staff work hard to promote open and trusting partnerships with parents. Settling-in sessions are provided to enable the key-person, parents, carers and child the opportunity to meet one another and exchange important information regarding the child's welfare. Parents and carers know their child's key person, who is available on a daily basis to share information with them regarding their child's day. Daily diaries are maintained for children under three, which supplements this contact. The nursery helps keep parents and carers informed about the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and offered a preliminary information evening prior to its implementation. Parent evenings are held twice a year to enable parents and carers to speak to their child's key-person and review the 'Learning Stories', which document their child's progress through the EYFS. Ongoing information is provided via the parent's notice board, individual letters and a quarterly newsletter. The nursery manager has an open door policy to make parents and carers feel welcome and to encourage them to voice any concerns or queries they may have. Many parents express that they feel well-informed and have trusting relationships with the staff and manager.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children attending the nursery make progress across all six areas of learning and development. They move up through the nursery rooms as they approach significant birthdays or are developmentally ready. Staff have a sound knowledge of child development and the EYFS, and provide a stimulating range of activities and experiences throughout the nursery. Planning for each child is based on observations and assessments made by their key-person. There is emphasis on child-led activities and staff endeavour to build upon children's interests and extend their learning by providing extra resources and activities linked to a child-initiated theme. This is mostly effective, although some children are not always provided with sufficiently challenging or new experiences.

Children settle well and become confident with the staff and their peers. They soon learn one another's names and develop a sense of belonging in their particular room group. Children's behaviour is generally very good as they are absorbed in their play and clear of the familiar and secure routines. They are becoming independent, for example, babies have opportunities to feed themselves and older children serve themselves and others at lunch time. They are able to meet their own needs by accessing their drinks and the toilet independently. They learn good hygiene habits through the positive example of and reminders from the staff and older children are proud to wear the same outfits as staff when serving food. Healthy food options are offered, encouraging children to try different foods and textures, with similar alternatives provided for children who cannot have the menu items.

Children play in a vibrant and colourful environment, with many examples of their artwork adorning the walls and hanging as mobiles. Book corners provide quieter areas for children to rest, apart from the busyness of each room. Children benefit from sharing books with staff both in groups and one-to-one. They enthusiastically re-tell stories to one another and delight in using additional props such as velcro-board pictures and puppets. Children have many opportunities for mark-making; drawing in the sand, using paint and crayons or accessing the designated writing areas, however, they rarely write for a purpose in their play and there are some missed opportunities to recognise their names or familiar letters and words.

Children of all ages have excellent opportunities to be creative. They enjoy craft activities, using an extensive range of media, and explore textures such as bark chippings, sand, water, rice and 'gloop'. Alternatives to plastic toys are provided in each room using natural materials and household items. Dressing-up clothes and props encourage and support children's imaginative role-play. Children benefit from free-flow outdoor play into age-divided garden areas where they continue with their role play and develop physical skills and confidence. The garden areas are currently somewhat limited and there are plans to further develop these areas. Children enthusiastically take part in music and movement and mini yoga sessions, and use balls, ride on toys and slides, supported by the encouragement and reassurance of staff. They develop finer manipulative skills whilst doing threading activities, playing with the playdough and exploring action-reward toys.

Children begin to solve problems through playing with action-reward toys and doing puzzles, and some persevere for considerable periods to complete their chosen task. Opportunities for counting and problem solving, which occur during play, are mostly utilised well by staff, for example, working out how many cups will be needed for a group of children and discussing together 'heavy' and 'lighter' items using weighing scales. Children develop an appreciation of the diversity and the wider world around them through many positive images and resources within the nursery, plus visitors from the community and occasional outings to local places of interest.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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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

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