

Little Owl Childcare

Highfields Primary School, Elder Lane, BURNTWOOD, Staffordshire, WS7 9BT

Inspection date	22/05/2013
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Practice in this nursery is truly worthy of dissemination to other providers. The quality of leadership is recognised by other professionals and drives the pursuit of excellence in all of the nursery activities. This ensures all children's needs are met exceptionally well.
- Children benefit from rich, varied and imaginative experiences that are delivered by staff who have expert knowledge of how children learn and how they can support this. As a result, children make rapid progress because they are consistently supported to make as much progress as they can, given their starting points and individual abilities.
- Children's transitions from home and to school are extremely well-supported. This significantly contributes to children developing a secure sense of well-being, in order for them to be effective learners.
- All children's needs are quickly identified and exceptionally well-met through highly effective partnerships between the nursery, external agencies and other providers. Partnerships with parents are exceptional and highly effective in supporting children's learning at home and in the nursery.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the nursery room, the outdoor learning environment and lunch time in the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and staff about children's play, learning and care routines.
- The inspector checked evidence of risk assessments and the safe supervision of children, during their active physical play.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation of a children's activity with the manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation; and spoke to adults with designated key person roles and responsibilities.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of the staff, the setting's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection to obtain their views about the nursery.

Inspector

Christine Armstrong

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Owl Childcare was re-opened as a company in 2012. It is registered on the Early Years Register and is situated in Highfields Primary School in Burntwood, Staffordshire. The nursery is privately owned and managed by Little Owl Childcare Limited. It serves the local and surrounding area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a designated classroom and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. One member of staff holds an early years foundation degree. The owner and manager is a qualified teacher and holds Early Years Professional Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 9am until 12 noon. The nursery also offers lunchtime care until 1pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 28 children attending who are within the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to ignite children's interest in listening, understanding and speaking a range of languages by sharing rhymes, books and greetings using languages other than English.

Inspection judgements

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

The first rate practice in this nursery is truly worthy of dissemination to other providers. Children are exceptionally well-prepared for school and their next steps in learning because staff consistently achieve high standards across all aspects of their work. They have expert knowledge and highly developed skills in supporting and extending children's learning. For example, staff place a high value on the critical role parents have to play in their children's learning. They use exceptional strategies to fully involve parents in identifying their child's achievements and next steps in learning from the onset. For example, a home visit programme is offered to parents to give them the opportunity to meet staff and share information about their child in a place where they feel confident and at ease. These visits also provide the opportunity for staff to see children in their own familiar setting. This helps staff to develop a comprehensive understanding of children and

their family and to begin to plan with parents for children's next steps in learning. Parents are also invited to bring their children along to afternoon sessions, run by the nursery on behalf of Children's Centre Services. These sessions provide further opportunities for parents to continue to work with staff in building an accurate picture of their child's achievements and needs before they start the nursery. Parents also receive information and guidance on how to identify any patterns in the way their children are exploring and expressing their ideas through play, which are known as 'schemas'. Guidance is also given on how to support children's schemas within the home.

This excellent focus of fully involving parents in identifying their child's achievements and next steps in learning continues when children attend the nursery. For example, parents post written observations made at home on the 'I can do' garden display. They make daily contributions to communication books, 'Learning Journals' and at parent consultation meetings. As a result, parents are empowered to share all that they know about their children and staff develop a comprehensive knowledge of the child and their family, at a very early stage. This is reflected in written comments made by parents who state they are amazed at how well staff know their children after only five weeks of them attending the nursery.

This exemplary practice ensures early targeted strategies and interventions are put in place to support children's learning, particularly in relation to supporting children's communication skills. This is exceedingly successful in providing optimum levels of support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Highly effective relationships are also forged with all others involved in children's learning ensuring that early interventions are very successful. As a result, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make rapid progress in relation to their starting points.

Staff also provide exceptional opportunities for families to use their knowledge to support and enhance their children's learning in the nursery. For example, grandparents are invited to come into the nursery to plant hanging baskets and flowers with the children. This activity was awarded the best community project for 'Burntwood in Bloom'. Parents also make rich contributions to topics, such as 'Pets'. In this instance, they bring in a wonderful variety of pets from homes that include snakes, rabbits and puppies and talk to the children about the animals and their care. Parents also take part in regular 'family weeks' where they join-in with activities with their children. For example, family members take part in a sponsored physical activity session in the school gym to raise money for an ex pupil of the school, which helps children to consider and support others. These experiences start the very important partnership parents have to play in their children's learning in school.

Sharply tailored individual next steps in children learning are used to inform planning and are shared with parents to support them in guiding their child's development at home. 'Top tips' for supporting children's communication skills at home are also displayed and resources, such as 'home Owl', provide a further link between learning at home and nursery. This exemplary 'knowledge sharing' approach respects, acknowledges and supports parents in enhancing children's home learning environment, which is an important element in supporting children's future success in learning at school.

The superior quality of teaching in the nursery supports, extends and inspires all aspects of children's learning and development. All staff are fully aware of their crucial role in stimulating and supporting children to progress. They use their moment by moment observations about what is igniting children's curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest to shape their interaction with them. They are skilled at inspiring children's learning through active intervention and guidance. They provide the right support at the right time, which is critical to children's learning and leads to children enjoying the thrill of finding out what more they can do. For example, a staff member observes children who show high levels of interest in pushing cars along plastic open pipes. She times her interaction to take place when it becomes clear the children are no longer finding different ways to use the pipes or move the cars. She joins in the play by asking children what they are doing. This helps children to think and express their thoughts and ideas. She initiates a challenge to their learning by using the language of thinking and learning by asking them to 'think together' and 'make plans' about what other resources they could use. In this instance, the children agree to use interlocking square closed pipes and planks of wood.

As the children become excited and all begin to try to use the additional resources the member of staff sets them a further challenge, which is expertly matched to move their learning along. The challenge is to work together and to think together about what they want to achieve and how they could do it. This results in children deciding that they want the cars to go along and down the pipes and caught at the bottom by a container. Children make marks, using the mark making equipment that is readily available in the 'building area' to record that the red car is the fastest. This helps children to begin to plan and make decisions about how to approach and undertake tasks, which supports their critical thinking and school readiness.

During the activity the member of staff supporting the children sharply focuses on how well they are engaging in what they are doing. She captures and uses every opportunity to encourage children to describe any problems they encounter and to encourage them to think and talk about how they might solve the problem for themselves. This approach is embedded into all staff's practice which means children are continually developing and testing the idea of cause and effect and making predictions. As a result, they are highly motivated to become engaged, 'have a go', persist and achieve, which are characteristics of effective learners. The high quality of this type of interaction helps to sustain children's thinking. It helps children to express themselves, to connect ideas, to listen to one another and give meaning to the marks they make, which supports their communications and literacy skills. It supports children to use numbers, describe and compare shapes, measures and distance, to enhance their mathematical skills. The high quality of this interaction gives children the confidence and skills to continually take the next steps in their learning.

At all times, exceptional focus is given to supporting children's communication skills and, as a result, all children make rapid progress, given their starting points and ability. Staff use numerous highly effective strategies to support and extend children's learning. These include using simple sign language, visual timetables, singing, repetition and modelling by adults and more able children. Children also hear a range of languages spoken, for example, staff use familiar words in the home languages of children who attend the nursery. This effective practice fully supports children for whom English is an additional

language, although, there is scope to consider building on this a little further so that all children fully benefit from gaining an interest in the skills needed to listen, understand and speak more than one language.

Opportunities for children to develop literacy skills are exceptionally rich. Children are immersed in an environment where their attention is continually drawn to recognise that signs, symbols and print carry meaning. Children also experience a wealth of opportunities to be creative and make marks for a purpose and to hear and recognise the sound letters make. For example, staff model blending and segmenting words by clapping out of sounds to make familiar words in context, such as children's names. Children show high levels of interest in this area of learning and they are eager to demonstrate they can clap out words too. This significantly supports children's emerging literacy skills.

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

Excellent focus is given to supporting children's well-being. A strong and well-embedded key person system, used alongside an extremely strong partnership with families, ensures all children's experiences are tailored to meet their individual needs. This ensures children develop a secure sense of well-being. For example, children and families receive exceptional support to make smooth transitions when they first start at the nursery. This includes a home visiting programme, which helps children to become confident and familiar with their key person before they attend the nursery. These visits also aid the exchange of information, which promotes continuity and cohesion in children's learning and care. Settling-in sessions are planned and extended, where needed, to ensure children and parents are confident before any separation takes place. This means all children swiftly begin to benefit from the wealth of learning experiences in the nursery.

There is exceptional partnership working with the school. For example, every day children go into the school hall to have their midday meal. This is a particularly effective way to help prepare and familiarise children with the routines they will experience at school. These approaches ensure children are fully supported to embrace new experiences with confidence, become independent and eager and able to learn. They give children a head start in their learning.

Staff have an expert understanding of how to create a highly flexible and stimulating environment. During the day children use both indoor and outdoor areas simultaneously, providing opportunities for them to learn about nature, develop a sense of adventure and ability to work on a larger scale than indoors. A covered sheltered area ensures children can enjoy fresh air and outdoor play during all weather conditions.

Staff fully understand how important it is for children to become active indoors and outdoors and they plan a variety of stimulating and challenging range of activities to support this. For example, staff plan daily focused outdoor and indoor physical activity time, based on children's individual abilities. This ensures children are challenged and supported to make rapid progress in their physical development. As a result, children learn to control their bodies in a number of different ways, in different spaces and on different levels and surfaces. For example, on the mat indoors children move to music following

their own expressions as well as some verbal directions. This activity is also supported by visual directions on the interactive board. This helps children to respond spontaneously to music, move with controlled effort and learn to match their actions to the more restricted space they are in.

Throughout the day staff capture opportunities to encourage children to take part in short bursts of activity. For example, as children get ready to go indoors to prepare for lunch they take part in a playful and fun activity that requires them to listen and follow directions to touch their head and shoulders and knees. Children are provided with extra challenges the more competent they become. For example, children are challenged to follow a verbal direction to touch their knees whilst seeing the visual stimuli of the adult touching her head. Children are also challenged to cross their arms and touch their elbows, which add to the fun and playfulness to the activity. This type of activity is particularly successful in helping children to calm down after boisterous activity. It helps children to focus, listen, concentrate and coordinate their actions. It also provides children with a physical release after they have spent time concentrating. This supports children's ability to become engaged in active learning.

Staff plan activities outdoors to teach children to learn how to use a variety of resources. This includes learning to ride a wide selection of wheeled toys that require children to learn how to pedal, as well as propelling themselves along using their feet. Children travel along the road layout in the outdoor area, which also has a steady incline to provide extra challenge. Staff are on hand to provide any assistance that is required and they stimulate role play opportunities, such as, acting as stopping places for children to buy ice creams and fill up with petrol. At all times children receive exceptional support to manage their feelings and behaviour. As a result, they show high levels of self-control and cooperation. For example, children start and stop in controlled ways and wait patiently in queues as other children are served at the stopping stations. Staff work in partnership with parents to support this activity with walks around local roads that offer children the opportunity to gain real life experiences of learning about road safety. Children demonstrate how these experiences support an excellent understanding of how to manage risks and challenges relative to their age. For example, children stand and wait at the crossing on the road layout until children riding around the road stop for them to cross.

Staff are alert to and respond to all the opportunities that arise to teach children skills of how to use tools and materials effectively and safely, giving them opportunities to practise them. For example, at snack time children practise how to use knives safely to put spread on their bread, which supports their self-care skills. Staff also capture these opportunities and work effectively with parents to support and fully extend children's understanding of the need to eat healthily through healthy eating themes and growing activities. This wonderful range of activities inspire children to become extremely positive about being active and healthy and to promote self-challenge for them to gain as much control over their bodies as they can.

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

This very high quality established nursery is used by the local early years department to disseminate exemplary practice. For example, the owner and manager has been selected to undertake training to disseminate a programme for engaging parents to other local nurseries. Taking part in this project also further enhances the already exceptional work the nursery undertakes with parents. The high quality of the nursery is also recognised through the commissioning of children's services by the local authority, such as afternoon parent sessions for younger children. This provision also enhances the high quality support children and parents receive in the nursery.

This recognition by other professionals reflects how extremely effective the manager and all staff have been in driving and maintaining the highest standards of care and learning in the nursery. This team effort is based on an expert knowledge and understanding of the areas of learning and how children learn. It has been supported by an ongoing professional training programme, which has included the manager, who is a qualified teacher, achieving Early Years Professional Status. This level of expert knowledge has led to an extremely sharp focus on monitoring and continually enhancing the quality of educational programmes. High emphasis has also been given to monitoring the progress of individual and groups of children. This ensures all children receive the support they need to make as much progress as they can in their learning and development, taking into account their starting points.

The training programme has also included all staff taking part in a national project aimed at developing the language and communication skills of children. This training has been extremely effective in developing all staff's knowledge, skills and confidence in supporting the language and communication skills of children and involving parents in this process. The success of this training is reflected in staff's practice and the exceptional support children receive to extend their learning in this area. Staff have also attended training in relation to the importance of recognising and following children's interest and this can also be seen to be fully embedded in their practice.

Safeguarding procedures are exceptionally robust, ensuring that children are kept safe and protected from harm and neglect. For example, recruitment and vetting procedures are rigorously implemented, ensuring that all adults working in the setting are closely monitored and assessed for suitability. This includes all staff signing daily declarations that they are 'fit' to undertake their work with children. All staff receive ongoing training and have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. The setting also works as part of a multi-agency team, working together with parents and other professional agencies. This ensures families receive early intervention and support if needed. Children are further safeguarded through high levels of supervision and a culture of assessing and minimising risks during all activities. This ensures children enjoy a safe and secure environment.

Partnerships with parents are exceptional and make rich contributions to children's learning and care. For example, fathers support the nursery in the refurbishment of the outdoor area by using their skills to act as advisors in designing the area and in the management of the work. This has resulted in a truly wonderful and imaginative outdoor area that makes the best possible use of the space available. Parents have also made individual contributions, such as providing an outdoor canvas cover, to provide further

protection against inclement weather. This means the very best use can be made of the outdoor area to support children's learning and enjoyment. Discussions with parents and grandparents demonstrate how welcome, involved and supported they feel. They say they are amazed at how much progress their children make by attending the nursery.

Self-evaluation is robust and includes the views of all of the staff, parents and children. This results in well-targeted action plans that support children's achievements over time. For example, action plans have focused on reviewing staff roles and responsibilities, in order to sustain the pace and quality of continual improvements within the nursery. This has resulted in staff receiving coaching and mentoring within the nursery to enhance their skills and knowledge in targeted areas. As a result, staff are very well-prepared to undertake individual responsibilities within the nursery, which helps to continually expand and improve services for children and their families.

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 action. 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	EY457077
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	895016
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	21
Number of children on roll	28
Name of provider	Little Owl Childcare Limited
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01543 510445

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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