

Mini Explorers

The Pepperpot, Crabtree Hall Business Centre, Little Holtby, NORTHALLERTON, North Yorkshire, DL7 9LN

Inspection date	29/04/2013
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		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 strong emphasis on providing a child-focused outdoor learning environment which provides interesting and stimulating activities that engage children, build on their interests and develop their learning.
- Key persons take effective action to enhance children's play by introducing activities to incorporate children's interest and favourite toys and characters in order for them to be motivated and fully involved in their play.
- There is a strong commitment to improve the nursery provision through setting ambitious targets, and plans for improvement are well directed in order to strengthen practice in all areas for the benefit of the children.
- Children are well supported in learning new vocabulary and talk confidently with practitioners. Their language and communication skills are promoted and they are learning to express their views and ideas enthusiastically.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Older children are not always sufficiently challenged to discover, describe and compare problems they encounter within adult-led activities, to be able to seek out reasons and think about possible ways forward to discover even more.
- There is scope to strengthen partnership working with other settings that children attend and local schools, in order to share information on children's learning and development and to fully support and complement their transitions.

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 and in the outside environment. She also observed snack time and lunch time.
- The inspector looked at children's learning journeys containing observations and evidence of their learning. She also looked at the planning and overview of children's assessments.
- The inspector looked at a selection of policies and risk assessments, and the suitability of the staff.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager and spoke to key persons.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and director.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents spoken to on the day and through their feedback sheets.

Inspector

Caroline Stott

Full Report

Information about the setting

Mini Explorers registered in 2012 on the Early Years Register and is privately owned. It is located in its own premises on the Crabtree Hall Business Centre site in Northallerton. There are two main nursery rooms which have direct access to the outdoor play areas. The nursery serves the local and wider community and is accessible to all children. There are large fully enclosed areas available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, the manager has a degree and is completing her Early Years Professional Status, the deputy holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 4, three staff hold qualifications at level 3, and two staff are working towards level 2. The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 21 children on roll who are within the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special needs and/or disabilities, and receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance adult-led activities by taking into account the age and stage of the children, enabling older children to seek out reasons and think about possible ways forward in order to discover even more
- strengthen the sharing of information and partnership working with other schools and settings that children attend, in order to fully support and complement children's transitions

Inspection judgements

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

The nursery's practitioners have a good understanding of delivering purposeful, developmentally appropriate and stimulating experiences and activities for children. Children's learning and development are assessed efficiently through observations, linking to photographs and evidence of their work. Detailed learning stories follow children's individual interest and learning pathway, and provide an effective insight into their progress through a range of experiences. Practitioners provide purposeful activities and

experiences built from children's interest to engage them in their chosen play and adult-led play. However, adult-led activities do not fully take into account the age and stage of the children. Consequently, older children are not always sufficiently challenged to discover, describe and compare problems they encounter within adult-led activities. This is in order to be able to seek out reasons and think about possible ways forward to discover more and fully complete the activity.

Key persons have a secure understanding of children's interests and abilities in order to assist their progress across all areas of learning and development. For example, children's interest in specific characters is embraced by creating a book, which children use successfully within their play. The planning takes account of children's interests and their next steps of learning and development. The progress check for children aged two and overview grids monitor children's achievements and abilities well. This establishes a secure awareness of children's strengths and any areas where children's progress is less than expected. Consequently, the nursery generally provides a rich, varied and stimulating educational programme, based on individual children's interests to effectively promote their learning and development.

Children's communication skills, including those who are non-verbal or in need of support to express themselves, are promoted well. For example, sign language is used at snack time by practitioners and children competently. Children enjoy familiar rhymes that embrace well-known actions and sounds, and practitioners skilfully encourage children to join in with repeated refrains and vocalisations, and support them to use Makaton sign language throughout. Children talk confidently and enthusiastically with practitioners, their peers and visitors through their play and during their learning. For example, during constructing a 'castle' outdoors, using crates and wooden blocks, children imaginatively create roles for others, such as a knight, a wicked witch and a princess. They represent their ideas well, establishing where lines of the castle are and that tubes are 'swords'. This demonstrates that children play alongside others well and are engaged in the same storyline. They use their imagination effectively to introduce characters for others and explore concepts and ideas together. In the polytunnel children separate vegetables they are growing and lay these out to measure, using tapes and rulers as guides. This enables children to develop and practise skills shown to them, and use appropriate tools effectively. Children exhibit their awareness of numbers as they recognise them during their investigations of digging and measuring, demonstrating their mathematical knowledge.

Partnerships with parents are effective as the nursery is committed to working together with them to ensure continuity of care and learning is achieved for all children. Children's settling is supported through regular visits and meetings where parents share what they know about their children. Children's starting points are sought and completed by parents prior to their children starting. Parents are encouraged to add to their children's daily diaries and settling-in books. They have access to their children's learning journeys and are encouraged to add their views to these. The nursery holds valued parent meetings to discuss and share their children's individual needs and progress in their development. This also provides the parents with the opportunity to talk about children's interests and achievements, and any concerns they may have. The nursery has implemented the

progress check at age two and uses shared knowledge with the parents to develop next steps for their children's learning and development.

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

The key person system is successfully in place and key persons ensure that children form good emotional attachments, through regular visits to the nursery and providing a relevant settling-in period. The use of the settling-in book provides important information for meeting established children's routines and care needs, and link home to the nursery. 'My family' and photograph books provide a link to home for the children, where family members and pets and even favourite toys can be discussed. Care plans are completed for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to maintain their well-being and ensure their individual needs are fully met. Children develop good confidence and independence, and are eager to explore the well-organised rooms and the outdoor areas. They gain an understanding of managing their own safety and the safety of others, such as holding hands to walk to the paddock and engaging in road safety awareness. This is as a result of practitioners encouraging children to look where they are going and motivating them to think about if any cars are moving nearby. Children behave well and play cooperatively, and their behaviour is well managed by the practitioners. Children are reminded to share, and turn taking is actively encouraged. Consequently, children are happy and well cared for; they explore their surroundings freely because they are supported by practitioners through talk and play.

The vast outdoor space provides various areas for children to explore freely, such as a large sand and digging area, and tyres to sit and stand in or on. This enables children to gain an understanding of the importance of outdoor play and physical exercise. The polytunnel enables children to grow their own vegetables and gain an understanding of growth and healthy eating. Children investigate and are curious, and show good control and coordination as they move around the polytunnel. They use tools and handle equipment effectively, within the polytunnel and outdoor areas. The paddock provides a superb opportunity for children to run around freely and negotiate space, as they climb and run around tree stumps. This means children are supported well to practise movements and motivated to actively engage in outdoor play and learning.

Parents are offered visits to the nursery to help children settle and complete the settling-in book with the aid of the key persons. This provides information on children's interest and achievements, likes and dislikes. The nursery is establishing links with the local school. For example, the school invited the nursery in to see their Christmas production. The nursery gains information on children's learning and development from other settings to aid children's transitional period. The nursery is aware of the need to establish and strengthen partnership working with other settings that children attend and also to establish links with other local schools, in order to share information on children's learning and development and to fully support and complement their transitions.

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

The nursery practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of the seven areas of learning and that children learn through play from their interests. Children's learning and development are assessed efficiently through observations and detailed learning stories. Practitioners assess children's capability through the areas of learning and monitor their progress using thorough overview grids. The educational programmes are monitored efficiently by the manager, to ensure the nursery and the vast outdoor environment provide a broad range of learning experiences across the seven areas of learning. The manager monitors the planning and assessment within the nursery through overview grids. This clarifies that children's progress and abilities are accurately understood by their key persons and children's learning needs are provided for through child-initiated and adult-led activities. Consequently, children's progress is tracked to ensure they are working within their expected developmental levels, and those who are not gain the appropriate support they need quickly.

The nursery creates a safe and stimulating environment and practitioners are fully aware of safeguarding policies. They all complete safeguarding training and are aware of local safeguarding procedures. Practitioners complete daily checks, and risk assessments are completed for all aspects of the environment in order to ensure children's safety. The main door is secure and parents and visitors are unable to gain entry without authorisation. Safety gates to all areas outside maintain children's safety. The nursery has completed a self-evaluation that identifies strengths and weaknesses, and uses this to set targets and action plans for improvement. For example, they aim to complete the level three of the benchmarking scheme, 'gardening for schools project'. Parents and staff complete feedback sheets to establish their views and wishes, and children design their ideas through creative activities, exhibiting their opinions and thoughts. For example, they paint purple carrots to grow in the polytunnel.

Recruitment procedures are robust, which ensures that staff working with children are suitable to do so. The manager completes monthly supervision meetings to establish and maintain the high quality of care and learning for children she envisages. Practitioners are encouraged to continue their professional development. For example, all practitioners have completed in-house Makaton sign language and working with parents training. The manager is fully aware and identifies in the self-evaluation that the performance management and monitoring systems need to be carefully monitored. This is to ensure the new observation and assessment information is used effectively, to fully shape the quality of teaching and shape practitioners' professional development and provide quality learning experiences for children in order to progress them on even further.

The nursery has established good partnerships with parents, who speak and write highly of the care and support given by the practitioners through feedback and comment sheets. Transition forms are ready to be completed for schools and other settings as required. The nursery receives information on children's learning and development from their previous settings and uses this information, alongside settling-in books, to ascertain a child's starting points and interests. The nursery work with parents and relevant professionals to gain appropriate support for children and parents as needed. For example, speech therapist and external agency visits are encouraged and individual learning plans are used to assist individual children as required to support their needs and development. This means children's diverse care needs, and their learning and development, are shared in

order for all those involved with them to be relevantly consulted. The partnerships with other professionals are appropriate in order to provide continuity for children in their care and aid transitions into the nursery.

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	EY451048
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	892430
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	21
Name of provider	Mini Explorers Nursery Ltd
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	07980 306501

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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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