

Just Learning Nursery

Notley Green, Great Notley, Braintree, Essex, CM77 7US

Inspection date	22/04/2013
Previous inspection date	24/09/2009

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

- The provision of high quality, interesting resources, well presented in a welcoming environment, ensures that children are stimulated and motivated to engage in their surroundings, learning as they play and helping them reach their full potential.
- Innovative schemes, such as the various developmental movement programmes introduced, are designed to focus on children's physical development and raise awareness among parents and staff alike of the importance of this area of development for children.
- The exceptional partnership working offers many ways to involve and include parents, and the strong key person system enables children to form effective and meaningful attachments and bonds. Support for all children, including those with identified additional needs, is outstanding, so that all children make excellent progress.
- Frequent and in-depth staff supervision and monitoring ensures consistently high levels of practice throughout the nursery. Managers delegate well, enabling and encouraging staff to use their talents and interests well, which all helps to make the nursery vibrant and purposeful.
- The nursery has a very strong identity and the management team have a vision for the future based on realistic, achievable and measurable goals, informed by a variety of sources. The management team is forward-thinking and supports new initiatives and ideas for the benefit of children. Hence the setting has a strong potential to continually develop and improve.

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.

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 held discussions with the manager and senior staff team, and viewed evidence of staff suitability checks.
- The inspector observed and interacted with children in the care rooms and garden areas, at play and during routine care.
- The inspector spoke to parents on the day and took account of their written responses gathered in advance of the inspection.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation, including children's development profiles, daily records, notices and information posted around the nursery.

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full Report

Information about the setting

Just Learning Nursery is situated at Notley Green, Essex and is part of a national chain of nurseries owned by Busy Bees Limited. The nursery opened in 1997 and operates from purpose-built premises. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 187 children on roll, of whom 167 are in the early years age range.

The nursery is open each weekday from 7am to 6.30pm all year round. The nursery offers sessional and full day care as well as before and after school care and holiday care for children up to eight years of age. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Children come from both the local and wider community. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 26 staff, of these, 22 including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting 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:

- continue to develop the outside area to provide an environment rich in visual stimulation so children can make connections and improve their grasp of language, such as by using print and signage to show them the uses of print in various contexts.

Inspection judgements

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

All children thrive, and make consistently excellent progress in their learning and development, because the nursery provides an exceptionally stimulating and well thought out educational programme, with some innovative features. The environment is outstanding in terms of carefully selected furniture and resources, all imaginatively organised to encourage children to access and select items and activities which engage and inspire them. The space is used creatively and to best effect, allowing children free access to the safe indoor and outdoor learning spaces. Within the rooms, areas are designated into specific learning zones, for example, a fully equipped 'builder centre' for the under twos, a dinosaur den for the pre-schoolers, and cosy dens with books and sensory materials for toddlers. Children respond to these areas by becoming engrossed and deeply involved in many creative and imaginative activities. Babies show high

concentration levels as they explore themed treasure baskets with play food, feeding utensils and some baby dolls. Black and white areas provide a vibrant yet calm area to aid sensory development for the very youngest children, who explore and clamber over the cushions and gaze up at the hanging sparkly mobiles. Older children use the role play props and costumes to develop games and play scenarios, trying out characters and extending their vocabulary and language skills as they recount stories they love. A quick check in the mirror helps them get into character and boosts their self-esteem as they smile at themselves in a colourful costume.

Outside, children have the freedom to move about and use equipment, such as wheeled toys, low-level climbing equipment, blackboards and chalk for experimenting with making marks, or using the rocket they made from a large cardboard box. Practitioners demonstrate their excellent understanding of how children learn, and their very individual learning styles and quirks, as they respond to children's interests and develop these into activities to help them make progress. For example, an interest in dinosaurs led to the creation of a dinosaur den and discussion and role play, stories and crafts following the children's enthusiasms. A young child who loves paint and messy play, but does not generally explore out of doors readily, is enticed outside with a 'welly-painting' opportunity, whereby he can stomp paint footprints on a large piece of paper, and indulge his love of paint on his hands.

Children each have a developmental profile, or Learning Journey, which documents their achievements and progress accurately and clearly indicates next steps in learning and ideas for parents to continue learning at home. Responses from parents indicate that they really appreciate these ideas and enjoy working with their children at home to extend and consolidate their child's learning. The photographs and detailed, meaningful observations, give parents a clear idea of what their children have been doing. Children also eagerly share these records, recalling and revisiting events and activities they have taken part in.

A recent focus at the nursery has been the initiatives to raise the profile of physical development in all age groups. Some successful innovations include the 'wake and shake' mini sessions enjoyed by the older children, which is an interactive movement session with music. Children enthusiastically follow staff and stretch and move their bodies in interesting ways. The developmental movement programme, which all age groups engage in, uses specialist equipment, such as stretchy bands, scarves, soft rollers and spinners, and semi-inflated large balls. Children use this equipment freely in small groups, supported by staff who join in and play alongside them, responding with actions but no verbal direction. Excellent supporting displays encourage parents to take an interest and continue with challenging and encouraging their child's physical development at home in fun and stimulating but safe and easily achieved ways. The practitioner who has taken the lead role in this initiative is a drama and movement specialist and enthuses the children, and other staff, with her passion and commitment to the benefits it brings.

One of the main development areas at the nursery is the outside area in general, and how this can be improved. While hard landscaping has created versatile and interesting spaces for children to explore, there is a lack of visual stimulus in the way of signage and text to fully support and enhance their understanding and language development. The room manager and staff in each age group are working on ideas and suggestions for developing

their garden spaces with the age and stage of development of their children in mind.

Transitions at every stage are very well managed and sensitively handled to enable children to move seamlessly onto the next stage. Within the nursery, visits to the next room are gradually increased until a full day is spent with new friends and staff. The layout of the nursery helps this, as all rooms are interconnected and children spend time out of doors where they can see all the age groups, gaining familiarity and an understanding for their next stage. For children approaching school age, a meticulous programme is in place. This consists of information sharing, visits to schools and teachers seeing children in the nursery. Photographs which children can use for discussion and to allay any anxieties or fears all help to prepare them well. Their independence and self-care skills are well developed, as these are included from the earliest days, and children are well-used to making decisions, taking responsibility for tidying up and considering the needs and feelings of others.

Children's progress in all areas of learning is due to the practitioners' dedication and enthusiasm in applying their expert knowledge and understanding of how children learn, and engaging parents at every stage so children are supported and encouraged to achieve highly. High quality labelled displays, including paintings by children and emergent writing and drawings by the children attending the out of school club, show children that their work is valued and allow parents to celebrate these achievements with their children.

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

The understanding that every child is unique and has their own needs, feelings and specific care and learning requirements underpins the nursery's ethos. From the beginning the relationship between the family and the setting is nurtured, so that children can make meaningful attachments and find the confidence to engage in their surroundings happily and well supported. Babies and younger toddlers have a detailed daily diary, to which parents contribute details of what goes on at home, providing a two-way flow of information to ensure continuity of care. As children become more able to express themselves verbally, the daily diary is replaced with a daily sheet, completed by the key persons. These give details of routines followed for each child, so parents know what their child has eaten, how much sleep they have had and their general mood. Each room displays the key persons and which children they are responsible for, so parents can make contact if they wish to discuss any matters concerning their child.

Children demonstrate their affection and feelings of comfort in the presence of their key person and a strength of the nursery is how well the practitioners read and interpret children's non-verbal communications. They respond to children's gestures, facial expressions and emotional displays very skilfully, so children's needs are consistently given the highest priority. This is equally applicable to the older children, who at times may have difficulty expressing their emotions in words. Children's behaviour is exemplary as they have a very good understanding of what is expected of them and are given many opportunities to express their feelings; they know that they are valued and will be listened to. The provision of core activities and the promotion of largely free choice for children means they are most often engaged in activities they are interested in and so show high

levels of concentration and perseverance. One excellent example of how staff understand and are sensitive to children's needs is during the period while they are waiting for their lunch to be delivered. To ensure they do not become fidgety or upset, staff always prepare an interactive activity that children can enjoy for a few minutes; two-year-olds sing some songs and have shakers to keep them focused while they wait a short time for their meal to be delivered, ensuring that behaviour does not deteriorate.

Children's nutritional needs are met by the provision of hearty, home-cooked food using fresh ingredients, all prepared according to children's specific needs and taking account of their allergies and sensitivities. Babies' food is pureed or blended according to their stage of development and adjusted as they progress towards a more grown up diet. Meal times are very calm and social; the children are given time to eat and supported by staff sitting with them and encouraging their social skills and table behaviour.

All areas of the nursery are safe and child-friendly. Security is strong and all visitors are screened before admittance. No child can leave the setting unseen. All outings undertaken, whether to local shops or further afield, are risk assessed to ensure safety and suitability. Any maintenance matters within the setting are swiftly dealt with so children are never exposed to hazardous equipment or dangers. Fire alarms are tested weekly and drills are carried out very frequently so children know what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation. Staff clear all floor areas daily, so that thorough cleaning takes place and the nursery rooms are fresh and bright every day. Posters and visual reminders help children understand how and why they need to wash their hands at appropriate times and wash basins, soap and hand drying are organised to facilitate this and allow children to gain independence.

Resources and play materials are all of high quality and chosen to stimulate and inspire children. A variety of sensory experiences for the younger children include textures, such as hay, wooden objects, baskets and shiny mirror mobiles, to ensure that the environment holds their attention. Toddlers enjoy setting out and naming sea shells, pine cones, twigs and pebbles, handling them and comparing them. Older children boldly set off on a journey into space in their home-made rocket, while others watch enchanted to see how tiny tissue butterflies flutter away in the breeze.

Moving between rooms is managed sensitively and children are prepared with gradually lengthening visits. The handover to the next key person includes a full discussion and analysis of the child's progress to date and any individual plans they have in place. Outside organisations, such as the local children's centre, have been welcomed in and make use of a vacant room to hold classes and sessions for parents in diverse fields, such as breastfeeding promotion, music and movement sessions and storytelling. Parents of nursery children are able to benefit from these sessions and classes and the nursery has achieved a high profile in the local community as it is welcoming and open to local people. Occasional visitors include the police and other people who help us, giving children a close up and first-hand experience as they try on uniforms and talk to adults about what they do. Another example of activity that promotes children's understanding of the world around them and their place in it is the simple recycling schemes within the rooms, whereby paper waste is separated, and found materials are used for modelling.

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

The nursery is managed by a highly committed and enthusiastic team who motivate all practitioners to strive for the highest possible standards at all times. Recent changes of ownership and management have been carried out with minimal disruption and all staff feel the changes have been overwhelmingly beneficial. This is due in no small part to the sensitive and forward looking management team. The drive to improve is evident in the displays detailing current goals and incentives for staff performance that goes above and beyond their duties. Practitioners are valued for their individual talents and skills, such as the drama specialist, and room managers who have vision for the development in their key areas. All staff have their professional development needs attended to on an ongoing basis and attend in-house and external training as frequently as possible. Supervision and monitoring is key to the continuing growth and success of the nursery and is carried out systematically by the manager and deputy manager. The manager also collates and analyses the progress of every child within the setting, to ensure that every child has an equal chance to flourish and benefit. Any discrepancies or underachievement is carefully looked at and action is taken to rectify this.

Safeguarding of children is always paramount and the designated person with overall responsibility has attended the relevant training and demonstrates a clear understanding of how to ensure all children are safe and free from harm or neglect. The nursery policy clearly states procedures to be followed in the event of a concern, and parents spoken to are also clear on what will happen, so are reassured that their children are kept safe and well protected.

Evaluation and reflection of day-to-day practice is well established and forms the basis of the evidence folders and forward plans for the nursery. Plans for the future are made explicit so that everyone can participate in helping the nursery grow and develop in a positive way. Additionally, an overall evaluation is undertaken to highlight all areas of strength and those which would benefit from further development. This is informed by children's and parents' views, local authority and in-house advisers from the parent company. The self-evaluation is an honest and realistic document which charts progress and the effects of changes as they are introduced. For example, the introduction of new 'wow' boards in the rooms has been successful in allowing parents to contribute bite-sized examples of things they are proud of in their children. These are then celebrated in the nursery, helping strengthen the links between home and nursery. At the end of each session the children take their 'wow' moments home to share with their families.

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 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	203710
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	908170
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	100
Number of children on roll	187
Name of provider	Just Learning Ltd
Date of previous inspection	24/09/2009
Telephone number	01376 552700

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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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