

Little Explorers

Aigburth Opportunities, Future House, 25 Pomona Street, LIVERPOOL, L3 5TL

Inspection date	09/05/2013
Previous inspection date	09/12/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Children gain a good understanding of their world as they visit a range of places in the city and attend special events with the local community.
- Children enjoy the time and space to enjoy energetic play daily. They know the importance of physical exercise in maintaining a healthy life-style.

It is not yet good because

- Some hazards are not identified in the risk assessment and, therefore, represent a safety risk to children.
- Quality is not yet consistent throughout the nursery and, as a result, experiences do not always challenge or engage children as well as they might, and babies do not have support of a settled relationship with an adult in the absence of their key person.
- Staff do not make full use of what children already know and can do at nursery and at home when planning learning opportunities. This results in some children not being effectively challenged.
- The monitoring and reviewing of practice is not strong enough to identify all areas for development, such as the quality of record keeping and shared information, as a result, there are gaps in the records and out-of-date information.
- Children's sense of identity and awareness of similarities and differences is not fully promoted. On a daily basis, some of the diverse range of children attending are not able to see positive images of themselves or words in their home languages.

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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the nursery rooms and in the outdoor area.
The inspector looked at children's records and learning journals, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of staff working in the setting and a range of other records, policies and procedures.
- The inspector spoke with the manager, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Lynne Naylor

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Explorers nursery was registered in 2008. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is managed by Aigburth Training Opportunities, which is a company limited by guarantee with Charitable Status, and operates from their premises in Liverpool city centre. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. Children have use of three rooms on the ground floor and there are two enclosed areas available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and seven at level 3 and above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks a year. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 41 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. Out-of-school care is also provided before and after school and during holidays. During term time, out-of-school care operates from 7.30am to 8.45am and from 3.15pm to 6pm. Staff take children to and collect them from two local primary schools. Currently, there are 31 children attending the out-of-school care. Of these, 15 are in the early years age group.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- assess the risks to children, particularly in relation to doors, and identify how the risk of finger trapping and the risk of unauthorised people entering nursery areas will be removed, minimised or managed
- ensure high quality learning experiences for all children by identifying and addressing the training and development needs of all staff; and ensuring a key person is available for each baby to help them develop a sense of security and well-being.

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

- monitor assessment to ensure it consistently supports individual children's learning and development, and establishes children's starting points with parents on entry to the nursery
- monitor the consistency in which records are completed, in particular, medication records and accident records; and update written information, such as contact numbers in the whistleblowing policy
- support children's sense of identity and promote their awareness of similarities and differences by reflecting positive images of all the children and making available words and stories in their home languages.

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

Children are generally working comfortably within the typical range of development expected for their age. They help themselves to appropriate toys because suitable ranges that cover all the areas of learning are readily accessible. Staff play alongside children and offer sufficient guidance and challenges to help them make sound progress. The new skills children acquire are mainly through these interactions rather than precise teaching. Staff practice is generally sound, although, the level of their understanding of how children learn varies, particularly in the baby room; therefore, the quality of teaching is not consistent. Some children's initial starting points are not identified well enough to enable staff to extend their learning from what they already know and can do. As a result, children are not always sufficiently challenged to help them make the best progress. However, sometimes, staff use accurate findings from their observations to plan some interesting learning experiences. For example, a staff notes a child's interest in joining

together pieces of a construction set; so provides wooden blocks and rice flour and water cement to extend the play. Whereas, another staff sees a toddler tip toys from a basket and replace them in another; so stops the child's exploration by ensuring the return of the toys into the original basket.

Information is exchanged verbally with parents as they drop off and collect their children. In addition, useful information about each area of learning is written on daily sheets and given to parents. Children's learning journals, which contain photographs and assessments of their progress, are also available, although, these inform some parents better than others, as they look at them more often. Overall, parents are fairly well-informed of their child's progress. However, staff are less successful in gaining and using information about children's learning at home. Parents are asked to note their child's abilities in an 'all about me' booklet before they start nursery. This provides some beneficial information about a child's abilities. However, some key staff are not aware of this information. Parents are not fully encouraged to share ongoing information about their child's learning and development at home, in order for staff to use this when planning activities to effectively support children's progress.

Babies have some good sensory opportunities to learn about their world. They explore and investigate natural items, such as shells and pinecones. They also handle everyday objects, for example, they sit and look with interest at reflections in a metal tray and look closely at kitchen items as they pass them from hand to hand. First-hand experiences, such as, local outings, help increase children's understanding of the world. Children link with the community as they watch numerous events, such as, the Queen's visit, the Olympic torch travelling through the city and the Beatles open top bus tour. There are also calendar events when children broaden their cultural awareness by sharing each other's family celebrations. They taste foods, complete craft activities and wear Abayas (dresses) and scarves to have a party at Eid. One parent has started to teach Arabic to children and staff. However, on a daily basis, the culture of those children attending is not sufficiently reflected in toys or images to support children's sense of identity or to promote their awareness of similarities and differences. For example, multi-cultural dolls are not supplied.

Staff suitably prepare children for their move from nursery to school. Children develop sound skills in communication and language and in their physical, personal, social and emotional development. They talk about and listen to stories about attending school. Staff effectively foster children's speaking and listening skills. Baby room staff talk about what is happening, which enables babies to link words with actions. They sing with young babies and encourage them to join in. Babies listen to different instruments, which encourages them to locate and identify sound. Toddlers and pre-school children sing action rhymes and songs that require turn taking. This effectively promotes their social development as well as their language development. They also sing along with recorded songs about number, which expands their mathematical abilities. Children are beginning to develop a good interest and appreciation of books and reading. They listen attentively to stories. Children often practise forming letters using their fingers in wet and dry sand and cooked pasta as well as crayons on paper and chinks on boards. These enjoyable experiences are beginning to promote their early writing skills and their creativity. Toddlers fit shapes into

spaces while completing a range of puzzles. Children also play many games involving number and shape, which helps to improve their mathematical skills.

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

Children have daily opportunities to be physically active. Babies are taken outdoors every day and older children have direct access to the garden so they move freely between indoors and outdoors. Babies and children also take turns to use the nursery's soft play area where they crawl over soft shapes and safely practise climbing skills on the slide. Children develop their finger skills as they frequently use a range of small tools, such as, scissors for craft work and small knives when involved in preparing snacks. Pre-school children develop positive attitudes to exercise as they move their bodies according to instructions on action songs. Outdoors, they negotiate space well as they move around on sit and ride vehicles. They develop good balance as they walk across upturned crates.

Staff are fully aware of each child's health requirements, allergies, special dietary needs and their food preferences. They make light lunches for some children, such as, sandwiches and yoghurt, while some children bring their food from home. Children are beginning to learn about healthy foods as they plant and grow runner beans, potatoes and strawberries in the garden. They are increasingly involved in food preparation. They wear aprons and hats to hygienically make pizzas for tea. Some snacks are linked to cultural events, for example, children make and taste Gulab Jamun (an Indian dessert) at Eid.

Supported by staff, children are becoming competent at managing their personal needs relative to their ages. Each child has a key person, however, when that person is not around, the remaining staff, although they are familiar with the children, know them less well. At times, toddlers are unsettled. They receive plenty of cuddles and good eye contact with staff who are kind and caring. However, not from a consistent staff to help them develop a sense of security and well-being. Staff in the baby room give suitable priority to routine care events, such as, nappy changing to ensure they are regularly and hygienically followed. They encourage young children to tidy up, which keeps the floor free from tripping hazards. However, it does not always support children's emerging skills and knowledge well. Sometimes, the learning is interrupted by having to tidy up.

Staff use special dolls to help older children discuss emotions and how they feel. This is beginning to help children manage their feelings and behaviour. A 'behaviour tree' has recently been introduced as a way of recognising and sharing children's achievements and positive behaviour. Children's names are written on a leaf and added to the tree. This is beginning to effectively promote their self-esteem and confidence. Children are reasonably well-prepared for their move up to the next room. Positive relationships with the local schools to which most children later attend, eases their transition from nursery to school.

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

The providers and manager understand their responsibility to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager recognises some

of the nursery's strengths and weaknesses. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been partly addressed. For example, a recommendation to value children's home languages continues following this inspection. Staff take keywords from parents in the home languages of children to help them settle in. However, children have less opportunity to use their home language in their play and learning. Also, in an effort to improve self-evaluation, the views of children and parents are included in any plans for development. However, there is a lack of secure monitoring and analysis of practice and no method for ensuring that any identified areas for change are successfully implemented. As a result, self-evaluation is not yet fully effective in ensuring that all specific legal requirements are fully met, or in driving forward improvements that will raise the overall quality of the setting.

The inspection took place following concerns raised. Although, there is currently no adverse impact on the children's safety and welfare, some of the required records are not easily accessible or consistently maintained. Weaknesses in the organisation of records means, although staff have been suitably vetted, the manager cannot easily demonstrate this. Records of the information used to check that apprentices are suitable to work with children are kept by the main company office and staff records are kept in the nursery office. All staff and apprentices receive induction training and a checklist monitors they have been informed of all the relevant policies and practices. However, when staff change roles from apprentice to permanent staff it is not clear how they are briefed on their new role. The company are not effectively monitoring the completion of record keeping; as a result there are gaps in information. The nursery's own stated procedure for parents to sign accident records to indicate they have been informed is not always followed. Similarly, it is not clear in the medicine administration records whether the time stated is the actual administration time or the time requested by parents.

In practice, staff monitor children so they are not able to leave the premises unsupervised. The premises and outside area are covered by closed circuit television, which provides some added security. The use of mobile phones and cameras is carefully restricted to protect children. Staff follow a simple checklist to help visually check the nursery is suitable and safe for children. A risk assessment is reviewed annually and records of evacuation practices are maintained. However, sometimes hazards are not successfully identified and minimised. For instance, at the inspection, pre-school children queue at the bathroom doorway for their turn. However, there is no protection against fingers being trapped on the handle side of door or the hinge cavity side; this represents a risk of injury to children's fingers. Staff have a good awareness of child protection as they regularly attend safeguarding training. They demonstrate a clear knowledge of the indicators of abuse and how to work with other agencies. This is because a list is kept, which easily identifies when this type of training should be renewed.

Appropriate arrangements have recently been put in place for the supervision of staff. However, there has not been sufficient time for these to effectively monitor staffs' performance and the effectiveness of teaching. Staff have good access to professional development but it is not sufficiently targeted to focus on weaker areas of their practice. Therefore, training is not yet sufficiently tailored to the needs of the staff team. As a result, some of the inconsistencies in the nursery with regard to effective teaching are not being addressed in order to raise children's levels of achievement.

Staff generally work well with parents and external agencies to meet the diverse needs of the children, so that most of them who need it, receive appropriate interventions and support. Relationships with parents are sociable. Parents are warmly welcomed and those spoken to at the inspection speak positively about the nursery. They are informed about the nursery through displayed notices and newsletters. Although, some activities and experiences lack challenge, children enjoy some opportunities that help them steadily progress towards the early learning goals. Staff work generally well with parents, other professionals and other settings to meet children's needs.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- ensure all necessary measures are taken to minimise any identified risks, particularly in relation to doors and the risk of unauthorised people entering the nursery (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).

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	EY375074
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	917974
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	52
Number of children on roll	72
Name of provider	Aigburth Opportunities
Date of previous inspection	09/12/2008
Telephone number	0151 708 7868

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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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