

Little Academy Nursery

Tipton Sports Academy, Wednesbury Oak Road, TIPTON, West Midlands, DY4 0BS

Inspection date	08/07/2013
Previous inspection date	05/11/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Safeguarding procedures are not robust enough to demonstrate that suitable checks have been undertaken for all staff, to ensure they are suitable to be in contact with young children. Staff do not conduct effective risk assessments to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to minimise all potential hazards. Consequently, children's safety and good health are not fully safeguarded.
- Staff do not receive sufficient support, coaching and training to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and ability to effectively support children. As a result, partnerships with other providers, professionals and parents are not always effective and children's learning and development and well-being are not adequately supported.
- Observations and assessments are not always accurate or used effectively, in order to plan suitably challenging activities for children. Every child does not benefit from having the support from a key person. Consequently, children's care and learning is not always tailored to meet their individual needs.

It has the following strengths

- Some staff are suitably skilled and able to effectively engage children in conversation and much focus is given to encouraging children to recognise and name colours, which helps to support children's communication skills.
- At times staff foster positive relationships between children, which helps children to play cooperatively and to consider others.

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 observed activities in two playrooms and in the outdoor learning environment.
- The inspector held discussions with the owner and manager and other staff working in the setting about children's play, learning and care routines.
- The inspector spoke to parents to obtain their views.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including children's assessment records and planning and evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation of a children's activity with the owner and manager.

Inspector

Christine Armstrong

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Little Academy Nursery was registered in 2008 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a self-contained unit in a sports centre in Tipton , and is managed under private ownership. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs five members of childcare staff, which includes the owner. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 16 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure information is available to demonstrate that suitable checks have been undertaken for all staff, to ensure they are suitable to be in contact with young children. This must include the Disclosure and Barring Service reference number, the date a disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it
- ensure all risks to children are identified and minimised, both indoors and outdoors, in order to ensure children's safety and good health is promoted
- put appropriate arrangements in place so that staff receive effective support, coaching and training to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and ability to effectively support children's well-being and learning, and be able to work effectively with other providers, professionals and parents
- ensure each child's key person is effective in providing care and learning that is focused on the prime areas and is tailored to meet the child's individual needs
- ensure accurate observations and assessments are undertaken and used effectively to identify children's next steps and plan suitably challenging activities to support children's progress, particularly during lunchtimes and during adult-led activities
- ensure the named practitioner responsible for behaviour management provides advice to less experienced staff, so that children always receive appropriate support to learn how to manage their own behaviour
- work in partnership with other early years providers that children may attend to enable a regular two-way flow of information to support continuity and cohesion of learning.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are not sufficiently prepared for school and their next steps in learning because observations and assessments are not undertaken frequently enough or used effectively to track children's progress over time, or to identify their next steps in learning. In some instances, staff do not place a strong focus on the prime areas of learning for children under two years, which results in inaccurate assessments and poorly targeted next steps in learning being identified. This hampers staff's ability to identify and support any gaps in

learning, to ensure more targeted support is provided where needed. It also limits their ability to keep parents well informed about their children's progress or to support them to enhance children's home learning environment, which is an important element in supporting children's future success in learning at school. It also limits staff's ability and effectiveness in working with other professionals, particularly in relation to providing accurate information.

The weaknesses in observation the assessments arrangements also significantly hinder staff's ability to provide individual tailored learning for children. Therefore, planned adult-led activities are not always effective in matching experiences to children's abilities. Consequently, children's learning is not always adequately supported or extended. For example, a group of 11 children aged under two to four years all take part in a music and singing session about a teddy bear's picnic. Suitable steps are taken to capture and follow children's interest and to include parents in their children's learning. For example, some children bring their teddies from home and there is a wonderful collection of good quality musical instruments for children to use. As a result, children show interest and enjoyment playing with their teddies and making sounds using musical instruments. Staff sing a new song about a teddy going on a picnic and some children take part in singing some more familiar songs and rhythms. However, this activity is not appropriately matched to support the younger children in the group. For example, the song is unfamiliar, too long and sang too fast to be effective in supporting the communication skills of children who only have emerging vocabulary. These children are not provided with familiar words, phrases or sounds, or given the opportunity to hear these repeated so they can imitate and recognise them. Although there was more than sufficient staff available to support the activity, they do not position themselves so that they can 'tune in' or share in the fun of discovery as children attempt to communicate. Therefore, children's attempts to communicate go mostly unnoticed. Staff do not repeat sounds children make; they do not introduce words in context, such as 'Bang' or 'Up' and 'Down', or take part in playful turn taking in order to support children's communication skills. Consequently, younger children are not adequately engaged in learning.

The session is also ineffective in extending older children's learning because it is not targeted at their abilities. For example, children who use talk to explain what is happening and recall and relive past experiences are not challenged to progress in their speaking, listening and attention skills. They are not encouraged or given time to explore and talk about the different sounds of the instruments. They are not encouraged to talk about their own instrument or listen to other children's experiences linked to the topic, such as picnics they may have gone on. They are not encouraged to think about the main events in the song, or to enact the song, as the basis for further imaginative play. Staff do not encourage children to talk about what they might do and learn before the activity and they do not provide children with the opportunity to review what they had learnt, in order to model the 'plan-do-review' process. Therefore, children are not supported to develop their own ideas, have choice and control and time to develop their critical thinking. Consequently, the quality of the learning experience for older children is poor because it does not promote the skills required for effective learning, particularly for children who are about to start reception class. However, when children asked questions about the name of some instruments staff respond by giving them the correct name of the instrument.

Some staff are skilled in effectively engaging children in conversation. For example, they ask children if they liked the activity and extend children's responses by asking why they liked to bang really loud and how this made them feel. However, staff's attention is often fleeting due to the demand of supervising other staff members and other children. Consequently, children's responses are not always fully valued or recognised. This impacts on children's self-esteem and confidence and hinders their motivation, which affects their ability to develop the characteristics of effective learners.

Children's development and learning is also significantly hindered because their movement, access to resources and interaction with staff is restricted for significant periods around dinner time. For example, as some children go to wash their hands all other children are asked to sit on the mat to look at books. During this time only one member of staff sits with the children, which hinders their ability to effectively support or extend children's learning. Children are then required to sit at tables, in high chairs and in low chairs on the floor for an hour while they wait for and eat their dinner and pudding. While children sit waiting for lunch, some staff effectively engage older children in singing activities for a short period of time, although, children's movements are restricted. For example, children are told not to stand up and sit down as they follow the words for the song. At other times some older children sit inactive, some children engage in conversation with each other and some children attempt to gain staff members attention by calling over to them.

This lunch time experience demonstrates how poor everyday activities and routines are in supporting children's learning experiences. For example, staff do not capture the potential opportunities for older children to develop their understanding and interest in numbers, measures and solving simple problems by helping in to collect and set cutlery, plates and cups. Staff pour children's drink without involving children in measuring or comparing how much each cup has. Staff do not support children's literacy skills, for example, by using name or number labels for place mats. However, much focus is given to encouraging children to recognise the colour of all items used and children demonstrate they are very familiar with naming colours correctly.

Although some younger children respond to the songs they hear, they are not sat in positions to be able to see the member of staff singing. Staff who are with younger children do not engage them to sing or position them so that they can see the member of staff singing. Although younger children are given books to look at, staff do not look at the books with them. No resources are provided during this time that move or make a noise when touched to stimulate younger children to reach out with their arms and legs. No objects are placed in reach that can be sucked, pulled, squeezed and held, to encourage the development of fine motor skills. The minimal interaction young children receive during this time limits the development of their communication skills and motivation to learn. Consequently, some younger children become inactive and non-responsive, while other children become frustrated and upset. Consequently, very little learning takes place over a significant period of time, which affects the progress children make in their learning and development.

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

Children's safety and welfare is not fully promoted because sufficient regard is not given to ensuring all safeguarding and welfare requirements are met, particularly in relation to keeping children safe and promoting their good health. For example, the indoor environment is not kept completely free from significant hazards and when outdoors children are sometimes exposed to the hot sun, without areas of shade for them to go to, hats to protect their heads or plenty of opportunities to drink water. This does not ensure children's good health and well-being are promoted and it does not give children positive messages about healthy lifestyles. It also impairs children's motivation and ability to become active and effective learners. For example, children show little enthusiasm or activity as they sit still to allow a member of staff to draw around their hands and feet.

In some instances, the key person system is effective. Some children benefit from the close bonds they develop with their key person who work very effectively in partnership with their parents. For example, parents report how effectively staff help them to support their children's ability to communicate their need for the toilet, which supports children's independence. In other instances, very tailored support is given to support children's emotional well-being, including accompanying them to when they visit other professionals. However, some children and families do not receive this type of focused support as staff members are unsure which children they are key person to. Therefore, in some instances the need to support their independence is not recognised or acted upon swiftly enough. Sometimes, when key persons are not present there is no system in place to ensure other staff know how to support children's individual needs. For example, when a key person is not present until after lunchtime, a specific member of staff is not allocated to her key children to ensure younger children are provided with the targeted support they need. In this instance, children are cared for by three different members of staff who all fail to provide suitable support. This does not ensure children benefit from consistency in their care and it means that when children have identified gaps in their learning and require additional support they do not receive the support they require.

In most situations staff respond warmly to children showing care and consideration. For example, staff sit next to children and talk softly to them as they are falling to sleep. They greet children with warm smiles as they wake up and talk to them in soft tones and hugs, which help them to feel safe and secure. Staff foster positive relationships between children. For example, they encourage them to hold hands to walk back indoors and to work together to help to tidy away, which helps children to play cooperatively and to consider others. All children respond well to praise and encouragement from staff and in general behave very well. However, at times staff are unable to respond to all children's approaches for attention, which does not ensure children's confidence and self-esteem are supported adequately. Sometimes, less experienced staff do not receive the supervision, coaching and support they need to manage children's behaviour in a positive way. For example, staff over-direct children, in order to manage their behaviour. This approach does not give children the opportunity to identify and discuss boundaries, in order for them to learn how to manage their own behaviour. For example, children are repeatedly told to put down their cutlery until they follow the command, without any explanation of why.

Some focus has been given to supporting children to manage changes throughout the

day, in order to support them to feel safe and secure. For example, a photographic display has been made showing children taking part in different routines and activities. This is a good way to help children to prepare for the next part of the day. However, the display is high on the wall in a side room, which limits children's access and it is not always used by staff to help children to recognise what is happening next, such as getting ready for dinner. Staff are not proactive in supporting the small number of children who attend more than one setting during the day. For example, they have not established a regular two-way flow of information to support continuity and cohesion of learning.

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

This inspection took place because Ofsted received information that adult to child ratios are not maintained and that there are insufficient staff with the required qualifications. The inspection found that adult to child ratios are met and that there is a sufficient number of qualified staff, in relation to unqualified staff. However, there have been recent and significant staff changes. Very experienced and qualified staff have left and they have been replaced by unqualified and inexperienced staff. Although the owner and manager has put some suitable strategies in place to support staff in their roles, this has not been sufficient or effective enough. Some strategies, such as the reorganisation of the key person system, have been ineffective and resulted in staff not knowing which children they are key person to. This has hindered their ability to provide individual tailored care and learning for children and to work in partnership with parents and other professionals.

There has been some monitoring and coaching by management, in order to ensure staff are able to undertake their roles and duties. However, this has not been sufficient or effective enough. As a result, new staff have not been supported to develop the knowledge and skills they need to undertake their role, which has impaired other staff's ability to be effective in meeting the individual needs of children. This has a direct impact on the quality of care and learning children receive. Consequently, children's learning and welfare is not adequately supported or monitored. Therefore, children do not have the opportunities to make the expected gains in their learning, relative to their age, capabilities and starting points.

Some safeguarding procedures are not robust. Therefore, children's safety is not fully protected. For example, recruitment and vetting requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are not fully met. This is because the owner/manager has not recorded information about the vetting processes that have been completed. In this instance, the reference number and date disclosures were obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service for new staff. However, because records are incomplete it cannot be confirmed that all staff in the setting have undertaken suitable checks to ensure they are suitable to be in contact with young children. Some robust procedures are in place, for example, to ensure swift and appropriate action is taken in the event of inappropriate behaviour being displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children, in order to safeguard children.

Children's safety is compromised because staff do not identify and minimise risks on a

daily basis. For example, staff fail to identify and minimise the risk that trailing wires are in reach of children in both playrooms, which significantly compromises children's safety, and they fail to take suitable action to protect children in hot weather. However, suitable steps are taken to ensure intruders are prevented from entering the premises. This ensures a secure environment.

Overall, self-evaluation is weak and has too little impact. Actions taken to tackle areas of identified weakness highlighted at the last inspection have been generally insufficient or ineffective. For example, one recommendation from the last inspection was to develop further understanding of how to use everyday activities and routines to enrich children's learning experiences. However, children's experiences at lunchtime demonstrate there has been little improvement in this area. A further recommendation was to improve planning to ensure differentiation in activities for the varied abilities of individual children, so that they are sufficiently challenged. However, children's experiences during planned activities demonstrate there has also been little improvement in this area. This lack of focus on monitoring the quality of the provision has resulted in a failure to meet legal requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and both parts of the Childcare Register. However, the recommendation to record children's attendance upon arrival has been fully met.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

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

- put effective systems in place to ensure that any person caring for children is suitable to work with children, which must include obtaining checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that all necessary measures are taken to minimise any identified risks (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- put effective systems in place to ensure that any person caring for children is suitable to work with children, which must include obtaining checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that all necessary measures are taken to minimise any identified risks (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner (voluntary 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	EY366156
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	926001
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	13
Number of children on roll	16
Name of provider	Elaine Willan
Date of previous inspection	05/11/2008
Telephone number	01215673334

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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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