

Little Caterpillars

The Stables, Coppingford Road, Sawtry, HUNTINGDON, Cambridgeshire, PE28 5XT

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

10/06/2013

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

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 enthusiastic and highly motivated manager of the nursery works hard to offer children a dynamic and child-focussed learning environment which stimulates them to learn on many different levels and in many different ways.
- Children are offered a rich early years experience during which they learn through fun-based activities, and practitioners help them feel secure and happy. They introduce a wonderful sense of humour during animated conversations as part of their learning.
- Children develop a love of reading and become adept at using language as practitioners encourage an early appreciation of books and model new words for them in the context of their play and learning.
- Practitioners at the nursery know individual children exceptionally well. Through precise and accurate assessment they offer them challenging, stimulating and varied activities that help them make outstanding progress towards the early learning goals.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive exceptional consideration and their needs are superbly well met, which enables them to make very good progress from their initial starting points.
- The nursery offers exceptionally flexible care and excellent levels of support to parents whose children attend. This enables children to excel through the highly consistent approach taken to their care and learning.

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 the baby room, toddler room, pre-school room and the outdoor area.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager of the provision and spoke to children's key persons as appropriate during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting, the provider's self-evaluation evidence and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of three parents spoken to on the day as well as information included in the nursery's own parent survey.

Inspector

Deborah Hunt

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Caterpillars Day Nursery was registered in 2012 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is operated by a private owner and is situated in a single-storey building on the outskirts of Sawtry, Cambridgeshire. Children attend from the local area and surrounding villages. The nursery is accessible to all children and there are enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery employs six members of childcare staff, of whom two hold appropriate qualifications at level 3 and two hold qualifications at level 2 and are working towards qualifications at level 3. A further two are training for qualifications at level 2.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 6am until 8.30pm, for 51 weeks of the year. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 15 children attending who are in the early years age group. The setting provides funded early education places for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association. They have completed the local authority quality framework.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop relationships with other local early years settings further to support children during transitional phases.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make exceptional progress in their learning and development at this wonderful nursery, taking into account their starting points. Parents and practitioners work closely together as children begin attending. Useful information provided by both effectively supports children's early learning and helps them make excellent progress right from the start. Throughout the nursery, continuous observation and assessment of children during activities informs the next steps in their learning. Key persons use these details to support the planning of individualised activities and help children make impressive progress in line with their specific interests. Practitioners are knowledgeable about the aims and objectives of planned activities and, as a result, children gain confidence and skills that prepare them extremely well for the move to school. Educational programmes offer a balanced range of adult-led and child-initiated activities according to children's age and stage of

development. Practitioners understand the need to concentrate on the prime areas of learning with younger children and the progress check for children at age two is embedded within practice.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive particularly nurturing and supportive care and learning. They make excellent progress from their initial starting points. Practitioners work closely with their parents and other professionals involved ensuring their individual needs are catered for. For example, the nursery uses specialist equipment to stimulate children's interest and purchases soft mats for them to use as they develop their physical skills. The dedicated and very genuine concern for children shown by practitioners is worthy of dissemination. Their positive and professional attitude ensures that children's learning and development is carefully monitored and assessed. In this way, the nursery guarantees that assessments are ready for use by any external agencies and professionals involved. Children therefore receive individualised care and make further progress in their learning and development with timely input and support.

The nursery's unique approach to engaging with parents successfully promotes the link between the nursery and children's home learning environments. For example, parents are welcome to stay for breakfast and for 'coffee and a chat' to discuss their children's progress and to watch them as they play and learn. Parent consultation events are held twice a year and key persons share children's learning objectives with them. Children's learning journals are always available for parents to see and can be taken home to look through at leisure and bring back the following day. Parents are encouraged to tell the nursery if there is a particular area of learning they want them to concentrate on with their child. This helps ensure communication is a frequent, helpful exchange of information which supports children to make rapid progress in their learning and development. Parents speak very highly of the extent to which the nursery goes to help them support their children's learning and development. They receive regular information about different initiatives the nursery is running and daily feedback about what their children have been doing. In addition, younger children receive a sheet each day which tells their parents about their care routines to ensure they are kept informed about their welfare needs. A huge range of information displayed on the notice board and in the entrance area of the nursery is regularly updated to help keep parents up to date with nursery news. Monthly newsletters attached to invoices inform parents about the wide range of planned themes and activities. E-mail communication also provides another means of conveying nursery news. A website is under construction to allow the nursery to further develop the information they can share in support of extending children's progress.

Children have wonderful fun in this stimulating, superbly resourced learning environment. They take part in activities which encompass all areas of learning and challenge them to think and solve simple problems. For example, they learn about people who help them and engage in role play as they pretend to be doctors and nurses. Their understanding of early mathematics develops as they take temperatures and check for heartbeats. They develop their manual dexterity as they bandage a practitioner who pretends to be their 'patient'. Later, children replay the activity as they try to bandage their dolls. They concentrate hard as they work out which way to fit the bandage around the doll's head. Finally, when they have accomplished the task they smile and take their tiny 'patient' to show a practitioner who praises their efforts. Children's language develops highly

effectively as they hear practitioners read to them and look at books themselves retelling familiar stories they know well. Practitioners sing with children and they love to join in with the familiar refrains and perform the actions to traditional nursery rhymes. They use the interactive screen to demonstrate the dance moves of a current band which they enjoy copying, as they sing along to a favourite song. Children learn about the rhythm of language as they hear poetry and repeat simple rhymes the nursery use. Practitioners exchange conversation with them in playful fun and offer them explanations which help them make sense of their world. Of particular note is the superb engagement there is between a practitioner and children as they join in the familiar routine of remembering rhyming names that the practitioner has devised for each of them. They have excellent fun as they try and guess each other's name and many children display excellent recall skills. Such activities bring the day alive for the children and inject fun into the language they are learning.

Children are offered delightful opportunities in the outdoor area as they use the wedge and mats to create a slope and running platform. They use this in a variety of ways as they slide, slither and run along it. Children become lost in an imaginary world as they create a picnic in a cosy corner of the outdoor area using play dough they have made as their food. A child brings their 'baby' outdoors and announces they are cold. They wrap them in a blanket and cuddle them tightly, feeding them with a bottle of milk and settling them into their baby seat to sleep. Children enjoy using the growing areas to plant seeds. They water and care for them as they watch them grow into plants, such as vegetables, salad crops and herbs. This contributes to their understanding of a healthy diet. They plant flower containers which hang from the fence and tubs which decorate the front of the nursery. Such activities develop their self-esteem and they feel pride in their achievements.

Children benefit from quiet focussed learning during one-to-one activities with a practitioner. A child makes a 'birthday cake' out of wooden shapes and offers a 'slice' to a practitioner. The practitioner extends the activity by asking where the candles are, which the child fetches. They discuss how careful they have to be with matches to help the child learn about safety and engage in role play as they pretend to eat the 'cake'. The newly fitted interactive white board fulfils a number of learning objectives. Children know that they use an egg timer to show when it is their turn. They share use of the interactive pens and learn that they are correctly back in their place when the lights show. Children 'hide' a character on the screen by colouring it in and perform 'dot-to-dots' by using the pens. They develop their knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning as they use different programmes and the practitioner supports them to make progress through timely intervention. Children enjoy looking through their learning journals with a practitioner. They express delight as they recall past activities and express surprise as they notice how much they have changed. One child says 'I didn't recognise that was me. I didn't know I had grown that much!'. The wonderful learning opportunities offered to children throughout the nursery promote their rapid development and help prepare them superbly well for the next steps in their learning.

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

Children are secure, settled and exceptionally happy in this vibrant nursery. All children and practitioners know one another well and exchange friendly conversations in this small and homely nursery. Children develop close, affectionate relationships with their key person and approach them for help, support and comfort. This helps develop their confidence to explore the environment and they increase their independence through the skilful interaction they enjoy with motivated, professional practitioners. When children first start at the nursery they are introduced to routines at a pace which suits both them and their family. Introductory visits are managed by the owner of the nursery, during which time they explain the ethos of the nursery to parents. Part of this conversation covers how child focussed the nursery is. For example, a number of parents start work very early. The nursery can pick children up from home to help and drop them off at the end of the day. Additionally, in recognition of the fact that children are often barely awake on arrival, the nursery allows them to come in their pyjamas and dressing gowns. Children then play freely as they would do at home, as other children arrive. At a more usual time, they have breakfast, and then get dressed. This offers children a far more relaxed start to the day and parents very much appreciate the flexibility offered. For very young children their usual home routines are followed as much as possible. Initiatives, such as bringing in a familiar comforter or toy and using blankets from a child's home help children recognise and smell familiar objects and they settle easily. This makes their transition into the nursery easier. On the day of inspection, it is difficult to discern newer children from those who have been attending longer. Practitioners skilfully keep a watchful eye over newer children and offer them comforting hugs, cuddles and reassurance. They explain nursery routines and support them to interact with other children. It is evident that children are confident, self-assured and 'own' the nursery environment. They are active learners who move freely around the space and frequently take their play between the inside areas and outdoors according to their preference. Parents comment very positively that they feel the settling-in process is handled extremely effectively, and that the beneficial role of the key person helps ease the transition for both them and their child.

Children's behaviour is managed superbly and they behave well. Minor upsets are managed with sensitivity and practitioners keep children's self-esteem intact. They offer them firm and gentle guidance to help them learn what is acceptable and what is not. Boys in particular respond to the presence of a positive male role model in one of the practitioners. He 'high fives' them when they change an intended behaviour to one that is acceptable. The accompanying explanation helps the child learn to manage difficult feelings. Children respond positively to the nursery house rules and repeat them as they eat their lunch when it is brought up in conversation saying 'we are kind to our friends' and 'sharing is caring'. Displays outside the base rooms celebrate children's achievements and explain nursery initiatives to parents. For example, a display called 'Around the world in 80 menus' shows different foods that children enjoy and parents are encouraged to add foods children eat at home. The intention is to gather menus, as children come from a number of different backgrounds, and compile a nursery recipe book. The plan is to incorporate each child's favourite foods into the menu offered. This will provide children with opportunities to try new foods and tastes and develop their self-esteem and pride as their traditional foods are respected and eaten.

Children learn about others less fortunate than themselves as they bring in tins of food to fill two trolleys each week. They know these are taken to a food bank to help local families

who are finding life difficult. Children learn to respect one another and the environment through activities that promote their understanding. For example, they help prepare for meal times and serve themselves, enjoy being 'special helpers', learn about recycling and help tidy away each day. Children are solicitous of one another throughout the day as they make space for friends to sit with them at dinner time. A child puts her friend's 'slinky' comforter under her chair to stop it getting food on it and her friend thanks her. Children listen carefully as they discuss feelings at circle time and learn how to comfort others when they are feeling 'sad'. Children are invited to quietly 'pop their head round the baby room door' so that they can check on a sleeping child and say 'hello' to the practitioner sitting with them.

Children learn to manage their personal needs exceptionally well. They enjoy visiting the bathroom area as they like to look at themselves in the mirrored wall behind the wash basins. Two children dress up and admire themselves in their finery as they pose in front of it with their handbags and sparkly jewellery. Signage encourages children to recognise the value of washing their hands well. They independently fetch tissues to wipe their noses and know to put used ones in the bin before washing their hands. High quality practice ensures that children's individual needs are met and germs do not spread. Children's safety is given the utmost priority. Separate horns are in place to denote the need to evacuate the nursery and should anyone get into the securely fenced off pond area. Comprehensive risk assessments have been completed to cover inside and outside areas and outings are separately and individually considered. Fire drills are recorded and the results carefully scrutinised. A recent evaluation has resulted in the purchase of a 'fire truck' to enable the nursery to quickly and comfortably evacuate children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children confirm their understanding of such procedures as they engage in role play as firemen. The nursery supports their understanding with reassurance and careful explanations when fire drills are carried out. Consideration of the external environment is covered through topics, such as 'Our pond'. Within this children discuss how to keep safe around ponds, as well as learning about the creatures and plants they may see there.

The nursery extensively promotes children's understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. The wonderful variety of high quality meals on offer contributes to the marvellous time children have at the nursery. One of the nursery practitioners is a qualified chef and cooks for the children each day. Children are offered two main meal choices as the nursery consider it important that all children can choose and therefore hopefully eat well each day. For example, children have vegetable stroganoff with rice or spaghetti bolognese bake, with creamy custard, fruit and sponge for dessert. They eat varied and nutritious foods throughout the day, from the cereal and fruit they have at breakfast to the wonderful selection of tea time meals they eat. The grand finale on the day of inspection is the 'Ploughman's picnic' children enjoy in the garden at the end of the day. They are delighted to be outside and relish the taste of a number of meats, cheese, salad vegetables and three varieties of bread. In this way, they learn that food can be fun and cookery activities further promote this idea. They relate their understanding of healthy foods to the fruit shop they run in which they 'sell' real fruits. This generates a conversation about the different smells of melon, strawberries and kiwi fruits. The nursery also promotes the 'Eat well, live better' campaign and promotes portion control through displays in the nursery and as children are served meals. Children are active learners both

inside and out. They dance and move their bodies in time to music indoors as they learn that exercise helps them grow up healthy and strong. Outdoors they are encouraged to run freely and explore and during games, children feel their heartbeat and notice how it speeds up. Practitioners explain that moving faster makes their bodies work harder and is good for them. Outings further support children to enjoy being active. Planned trips include visits to Hammerton Zoo Park and Ferry Meadows and trips within the local area are timetabled to help children become familiar with local points of interest.

Through a combination of high quality resources and skilled and dedicated practitioners, children's all-round development is supported to a very high standard. The nursery promotes the 'home from home' environment they offer and this is evident in practice. The dynamic and stimulating environment offers children diverse and interesting opportunities which help develop their independence and support them in becoming capable, confident learners. The many future improvements planned will only serve to offer children an even more superb learning environment in which they are nurtured and encouraged to succeed in all they do.

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

The inspection took place following notification that the nursery's risk assessment and procedure in respect of fire evacuation were not in place for the enclosed outdoor area of the nursery. Ofsted conducted a visit and an action was set asking the nursery to remedy this breach. The nursery's response satisfied Ofsted that they had met the action. The inspection found that the nursery remained compliant and, furthermore, had taken additional stringent steps to ensure children's safety across all aspects of the nursery. For example, separate, comprehensive risk assessments are in place for the nursery inside and out, and the pond area.

The impact of the inspirational and motivated owner manager is evident throughout this outstanding nursery. She is truly passionate about the well-being of the children in her care and strives to offer them a 'memorable and amazing childhood' through experiences they will carry with them throughout their lives. The vision is to offer children an environment where there is 'a big focus on creating a home from home environment where children feel safe, loved and secure'. The nursery take their role exceptionally seriously, but put everything into practice with humour and a sense of fun ingrained. The manager wants to offer children the best experience they can possibly have in their early years and recognises this is their childhood. This ensures that children are offered an exceptional range of activities and a superb learning environment where they have fun and are free to play and learn. The environment allows them to develop a sense of freedom and they can be children, free of many of the trappings which interfere with this in modern life. The manager is dedicated to improving the lives of the children and families who attend and ensuring they achieve the very best in their time at the nursery. Parents speak highly of the support the nursery provides and how accessible the manager is. Practitioners praise their efforts and say they cannot fault the way in which the nursery operates. In turn, practitioners are highly valued. The manager is proactive in ensuring their continual professional development benefits both them as individuals and the nursery

as a whole. The individual skills of practitioners are recognised. The manager knows them well and rewards their dedication and hard work. The manager is an outstanding role model for practitioners, works within the rooms and is a visible presence within the nursery.

Monitoring and evaluation of the educational programmes is rigorous. This ensures children make the best progress possible and their individual needs are met. Whole staff meetings take place and are a social and professional development event. Regular supervision meetings and annual appraisals are in place and underperformance is challenged and dealt with through a comprehensive procedure. Documentation is thorough and practitioners are supported in their practice through a staff manual and frequent verbal feedback. This engenders a positive atmosphere within the nursery where all practitioners feel valued, supported and appreciated. This in turn, helps create the warm and welcoming atmosphere that pervades the whole nursery.

The owner manager's vision for the future of the nursery is amazing and she strives for excellence in all the nursery does. The action plan clearly demonstrates the ongoing plans for the nursery. Achievable goals and measureable timescales are set through rigorous, effective self-evaluation and reflective practice. Of particular note is the nursery's proactive stance towards building links within, and giving back to, the local community. Their vision in this respect is 'to give a neighbour a helping hand'. Children are encouraged to join in a number of charitable events and become aware of their ability to help make a difference. For example, they collect tins of non-perishable foods to fill two trolleys each week. Whatever children and their families donate, the nursery tops up two-fold. This is then taken to a charity which provides food bags for those unable to feed their families during the current difficult economic situation.

The nursery works closely with other professionals and parents to ensure that children's individual needs are highly effectively met through timely and well-targeted support. For example, close working relationships have been built with speech and language therapists and hospital specialists and close attention is paid to implementing the advice they offer. The nursery is experienced in supporting children as they move up to school and has plans to continue to extend partnership working with other early years settings to support children through transitional stages. Children attend from a wide geographical location and move onto a large number of different schools. The nursery sends out a letter to parents of children going to school and when they know which schools are involved, they contact them. Teachers are invited to come in to meet children and to speak with their key person. This helps smooth the transition for children as they leave the nursery to begin their formal education.

A unique feature of this nursery is the management committee that the owner has formed. They consider it to be of benefit to them and the success of the nursery to receive challenge from those who have an external perspective to offer. This committee provides a rich source of ideas for improvements to practice. Parents spoken to are exceptionally positive in praise of the nursery and staff team. All are exceptionally happy about the nursery experience their children receive. They particularly comment on the friendliness of practitioners and the accessibility of the owner manager. All state that they love the 'home from home' nature of the nursery and how happy their children are. One parent states

they are so confident of the care and education their child receives that they moved here with them before even seeing the new setting. Another says that they trust that the nursery care for their child as well as, maybe even better, than they do themselves at home. All parents said that they would recommend the nursery to others. One parent states that it is simply 'fantastic'.

All aspects of the setting are superbly organised which reflects the management and organisational style. The documentation which supports the running of the nursery exceeds requirements with much careful thought given to initiatives and ensures children's safety. For example, visitors to the nursery complete a comprehensive declaration and wear visitors' badges which remind them of the need to switch off mobiles and keep medication away from the children. Practitioners wear badges which identify them and the role they hold. On the reverse, safeguarding information and contact details are shown so that practitioners have them to hand should they be needed. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures further safeguard children, such as ensuring mobile and electronic devices are not used within the nursery. The security of the building both inside and out ensures children play and learn in a safe and secure environment which superbly promotes their care and learning.

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	EY458991
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	919288
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	27
Name of provider	Gail Connolly
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	07753 749000

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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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