

Little Gems

Winhills Primary Academy, Off Duck Lane, ST. NEOTS, Cambridgeshire, PE19 2DX

Inspection date	18/11/2013
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	2 Not Applicable
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Teaching is good and often strong, enabling children to develop their confidence and make good progress in communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development.
- Strong partnerships with parents contribute well to children's continuity of care and learning.
- Very good arrangements for children's move into school mean they are well-prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Staff provide a broad range of enjoyable activities that encourage children to actively use their senses and develop their physical skills, such as, dough, rice, sand, water and autumn leaves.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always remember to pose open-ended questions and give children time to contribute their thoughts and extend their own thinking.
- Children are not always fully supported to extend their understanding of healthy food and balanced nutrition, for example, through practical involvement in food preparation.

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 toured the parts of the premises used by children.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- A range of documentation was examined, including policies and procedures, recruitment records and children's learning journals.
- The inspector observed children at play indoors and out and spoke with staff during the inspection.

Inspector

Veronica Sharpe

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Gems was registered in 2013 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated at Winhills Primary Academy in St. Neots, Cambridgeshire and is operated by The Diamond Learning Partnership. The setting serves the local area. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play and children have use of the wider school grounds .

The setting employs five members of childcare staff, including the manager. All hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. A senior teacher within the school oversees the setting. The opening times are Monday to Friday all year round. The out of school club sessions are from 7.30am to 8.45am and from 3pm to 6pm during school term times and from 7.30am to 6pm in school holidays. The two-year-old unit operates from 9am to 3pm during school term times only. There are currently 31 children on roll aged between two and three years of age. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend children's further thinking by posing more age-appropriate open-ended questions that encourage them to think creatively about what else is possible

- enhance children's already good understanding of healthy foods by involving them in practical food preparation and valuable discussions about their food choices.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff understand how to promote children's learning and the quality of teaching is good. They use their knowledge to plan and provide a broad range of learning opportunities to help children to make good progress. Daily planning is appropriately focused on the prime areas of learning of communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. Planning is largely informal, with much spontaneity. This enables staff to respond well to children's individual interests and as a result, children are motivated learners. Parents are encouraged to share in their children's learning and tell staff about their children's experiences at home. Staff provide frequent feedback to parents on their children's development to ensure any possible concerns are quickly

identified. A written assessment of children's progress is made before children transfer into the pre-school, which contributes well to the consistency of their care and learning.

Children develop a strong sense of exploration as they experience a broad range of media. Staff provide many different materials, such as, sand, water, dough and rice where the emphasis is clearly on the enjoyment of the activity, rather than any end product. For example, children pour water over flour to see what happens and stir in food colouring. They watch with interest as the textures change and delight in running their fingers through the mixture. Staff sit back to let children explore independently and intervene appropriately when asked. They ask children questions about their activities, such as 'do you think you need more water', but do not always give children time to answer and sometimes pre-empt them. In addition, during other adult-led activities, staff occasionally overlook opportunities to ask open-ended questions that have more than one answer. As a result, children's creative and critical thinking is not supported as effectively as possible.

Staff skilfully support children's communication and language skills, especially during story times. They hold children's attention well with lively reading styles, sometimes whispering words or speaking loudly to encourage attentive listening. Children learn new songs with enthusiasm and join in with their old favourites, such as 'Wind the bobbin up'. Staff use new words to describe activities, such as stretchy and sticky, which teaches children to be expressive with language. Writing materials are plentiful and varied, for example, children use chunky chinks on blackboards and easels, or pencils and post-it notes on the writing table. Children demonstrate well that they understand the value of early writing as they make marks on the post-its and stick them on the wall. Staff are good role models as they use their clip boards to make observations and show children what they have written. Children's small muscle control is supported effectively because staff give them tasks to do that stretch their abilities. For example, children use scissors with adult support to cut up collage materials.

Children who are learning English as an additional language quickly learn the routines of the day through visual images and strong support from their key person. Staff talk to parents about key words and phrases to support children's understanding. They use good eye contact and simple sign language to encourage a consistent understanding. From the outset children learn to be independent and look after themselves and each other. They show a well-developed ability, given their stage of development. For example, they put on their coats for outdoor play, help each other to tidy away and find their own lunchboxes. Consequently, they are ably prepared for the next stage in their learning and eventually, school.

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

Children enter the setting with enthusiasm due to warm and secure attachments to staff. They happily part from their parents and eagerly start to explore the well-thought-out activities. Staff work closely with parents when their children first start, so they have a good understanding of children's initial needs and interests. Parents indicate they are pleased with the settling-in procedures. They say their key person invites them for visits, so they can complete the 'all about me' forms together and discuss in detail their

children's individual needs. This gives them confidence and encourages children to make a smooth transition from home into the setting.

Staff support children to learn appropriate behaviour by being good role models. They praise children for kindness and involve them in small group activities, such as making play dough, so they learn to play alongside each other. Children quickly learn to take responsibility for small tasks, such as scraping their plates at lunchtime. This helps them to develop a sense of pride in their achievements. Staff teach children independence skills as appropriate for their age, for example, they encourage them to help themselves to toys and resources. As a result, they are well-prepared for their future learning.

Children benefit from continuous access to the outdoor area and spend a good deal of time there in self-initiated play. Staff encourage children to be physically active by providing resources, such as wheeled toys. Children visit the school hall for active games and enjoy fresh air and exercise on regular walks around the school grounds. They develop their large muscle control on the challenging 'trim trail' and learn to take acceptable risks on large play equipment. All of this supports their physical development well. They learn to keep themselves safe as they regularly take part in the emergency evacuation procedure. Staff encourage children to think about their own safety by teaching them clear rules, such as not running indoors as they might trip.

Children's snacks are suitably healthy, comprising mainly fresh fruits. Most parents choose to bring a packed lunch, while other children benefit from the hot school lunches. At snack times and lunch children sit together in small groups, supported by a member of staff, who engages them in social conversation. However, adults prepare the snacks away from children, which means they are unable to play an active part in food preparation. This reduces children's opportunities to develop practical skills, learn about healthy food choices and benefit from other valuable conversations. For example, enhance their understanding of the world by exploring what foods look like and where they come from. Children have some activities to support their understanding of healthy foods, for example, they have made fruit smoothies. Additionally, the school has a kitchen garden, which enables children to learn how foods grow and develop.

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

Staff have all attended safeguarding training and are clear about the reporting procedures if there are child protection concerns. Most have had previous experience supporting vulnerable families, which gives them a secure ability to keep all children safe from harm. The provider has a robust recruitment process and staff undergo thorough vetting procedures and induction. This helps to ensure any adults working with children are safe and suitable to do so. Staff make daily checks of the premises and have thorough risk assessments that take into account all aspects of the provision. As a result, hazards to children are effectively minimised.

Parents are enthusiastic about the setting and say staff are particularly friendly and welcoming. They agree their children enjoy their time in the setting and are safe and well

cared for. Staff are on hand at the end of every session to talk to parents about their children's experiences, which means they are well-informed. Parents have use of an informative website and a private social networking page, so they know about news and events. Partnerships with other agencies are well-established. There are good links with the local children's centre, where the centre workers help with home visits when children first start. This supports their transition from home into the setting well. The school is very supportive of the setting and there are excellent systems to enable children to make a confident transition into the pre-school and nursery classes. Some staff work in the school, which further enhances children's continuity of care and learning. Staff undertake specialist training to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and support parents to gain access to additional support as appropriate. For example, some know sign language and some have training to support additional medical needs. As a result, children effectively have their individual needs met.

Staff are supported well by the new manager and the senior management team of the school. Each staff member is enabled to use their individual skills and personalities and clearly feel they are valued team members. As a result, morale is high and staff work with enthusiasm; leading to good quality provision for all children. All staff have attended a range of training on supporting two-years-olds and are extending their skills into more specialist aspects of children's play, such as schemas. This enhances their ability to meet the needs of the very young children on roll. Staff hold regular meetings, so they can assess and plan effectively for children's learning. They make regular assessments to ensure all children continue to make good progress, given their starting points. The manager and the responsible senior teacher from the school are a constant presence in the setting and help to ensure monitoring of the provision and children's development is secure.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY462283
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	919894
Type of provision	Out of school provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	31
Name of provider	The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01480 211626

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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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