

Little Ferns Pre-School

Scout Headquarters R10, 106 West Street, Ewell, EPSOM, Surrey, KT17 1XR

Inspection date	30/09/2013
Previous inspection date	26/01/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	2
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

- Children are not challenged appropriately because staff do not use observations and assessments consistently to identify the next steps in children's learning and development to plan stimulating experiences or to monitor their progress.
- The provider does not ensure that risk assessments and procedures for evacuation of the premises are effective. Staff do not ensure that all hazards are identified and removed or minimised. These weaknesses compromise children's safety.
- The provider does not ensure that safeguarding procedures are known and implemented by staff. Details of some staff's criminal record checks are not recorded. Staff do not have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding procedures. The safeguarding policy could not be made available to the inspector when requested.
- The provider does not ensure that all staff who prepare food and drinks for children have had required training. The kitchen facilities for preparing these are unhygienic.
- Methods for monitoring, reviewing and improving the pre-school's provision, including the education programmes and assessment, and children's progress are ineffective.

It has the following strengths

- Children may play inside or outside throughout the day, enabling them to make their own choices about where they would like to learn.
- Staff are kind towards the children, which helps them settle quickly.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and staff at appropriate times during the inspection, and talked with children.
- The inspector examined a range of relevant documentation, including children's records, staff records and some written policies.
- The inspector spoke to some parents on the day of inspection to gather their views.
- The inspector viewed the kitchen facilities.

Inspector

Daphne Brown

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Ferns Pre-School opened in 1995 and was re-registered under new ownership in September 2010. It operates from a scout hall in Ewell Village, Surrey. There is direct access to a secure outdoor play area. The pre-school operates during term time. Sessions are Monday to Friday from 9am to 12pm, with the additional option for children to attend the lunch club from 12pm to 1pm. Sessions also run from 12.45pm to 2.45pm Monday to Thursday for children aged two years.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 37 children aged from two years to five years on roll. The pre-school currently cares for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. It provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds.

A total of five staff members are employed to work with the children in addition to the provider/manager, who holds a relevant level 3 early years qualification. One staff member is qualified to level 3 and two are qualified to level 2.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take the following enforcement action:

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

- implement effective procedures to demonstrate that staff working with children are suitable to do so, by recording information about Disclosure and Barring Service checks
- ensure risk assessment are robust and that the premises, indoors and outside, are safe for children to use, with particular reference to the low level hanging ropes, hazardous plants and trailer in the outside area.

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

- ensure all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues and that the pre-school has an up dated safeguarding policy and procedures that is available for inspection when required
- ensure all staff who prepare snacks and food for children have training in food hygiene so they are competent to prepare and handle food
- ensure that children's observations are effectively evaluated so that their next steps are clearly identified and staff plan challenging and enjoyable learning opportunities that allow children to be actively involved in their learning and extend them appropriately
- ensure effective hygiene practices are fully implemented, so that the environment is consistently clean, with particular reference to suitable kitchen facilities for the hygienic preparation of food and drinks for children
- must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire and any other emergency and staff are able to locate the whistle for use in emergencies.
- ensure the safety of children by preventing them from being able to gain access to the kitchen and cleaning materials
- ensure effective monitoring systems are in place to continually evaluate and improve the pre-school's provision of the education programmes and children's progress.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a basic understanding of the learning and development requirements. Not all areas of learning are covered with sufficient depth in planning. Staff do not provide adequate challenge when engaging with children. Children's starting points are ascertained prior to starting as staff discuss these with parents. As a result, children settle quickly and enjoy the activities available to them. However, progress is not consistently built on through ongoing assessments of what children can do. Staff observe children as they play and plan activities for children to take part in but do not use the observations effectively in planning. Children's next stages of learning are not clearly identified. This weakness makes it difficult for staff to target individual children's learning effectively or to demonstrate any progress they may have made since they started at nursery.

Staff plan activities for both the indoor and outdoor learning environments, and children freely choose where they would like to play. This encourages their independence and allows them to follow their interests. However, teaching does not always encourage and extend children's learning. Although children have access to both sand and water, staff do not want the children to mix them together, for example. This has a negative effect on their wish to experiment during their play and to find out what happens when mixing natural materials. Children's motivation to investigate and learn is further impeded because some staff complete activities for the children. For example, they mix paint and then paint leaves for the children to print. This does not allow children to experiment for themselves with how to mix the right consistency of the paint, investigate which sides of the leaves make the best prints and to discover for themselves how different colours can be created.

Staff complete the required progress check for children aged between two and three years, discussing this with parents, who receive a written summary. This assessment helps identify children who may require additional support in their learning and development. At present, the manager is working alongside parents and speech and language therapists to provide suitable play plans to support children in their language development.

All children may use a range of materials to develop early writing skills. They enjoy using large paint brushes and water to paint on the fence outside, so developing their hand control. They use their imaginations well and talk confidently about their pictures. Some children drew a treasure map and explained that 'X' is where the 'treasure of chocolate gold coins are' and that the people in their picture are their friends and family.

Opportunities to develop children's early mathematical understanding and independence as learners in readiness for school are missed. Although staff label resources indoors, this good practice is not reflected outside. Staff tell children 'only two can play at the water table' and 'one child on the trampoline' but provide no signs or labels, for example, to help children understand numerals or to regulate their own play. Nevertheless, staff provide children with resources to help them learn about capacity and measure by playing in the water and engage in tipping and filling activities.

All of the children have constant access the outdoor area, where they play on some equipment to support their physical development. A large grassed area gives children opportunities to run around, kick balls and throw foam javelins. However, this area has not been suitably risk assessed for hazards.

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

Overall, the contribution staff make to children's well-being is inadequate. The pre-school shares the facilities with other users. Although staff carry out daily checks on the resources provided, they do not always identify or act upon hazards that pose a significant risk to children's safety. These include low-level hanging ropes, hazardous plants and a trailer belonging to the Scouts, all of which are inappropriate for the children's use, but which are accessible to them when in the outside area. Indoors, a broken safety gate means children can enter the kitchen area, and there are cleaning materials within children's reach in the toilet area. Staff took several minutes to locate the whistle used to raise the alarm for emergency evacuation. All these weaknesses put children's safety at risk.

Hygiene practices are inadequate. The provider does not ensure the premises are fit for use. The kitchen floor is not sufficiently clean; cleaning cloths used to wipe tables are dirty and rubbish bins are unemptied. Not all staff have undertaken required training in food hygiene, in order to have sufficient knowledge on how to handle food for children safely. These weaknesses compromise children's well-being and safety. Nevertheless, staff provide a selection of fruit at snack time, which children can choose when they would like to eat. However, although staff speak to children about having a healthy diet, lunch boxes do not reflect this. As a result, children receive conflicting information about what constitutes a healthy diet. A strength of the pre-school is that children may play and learn outside throughout the session. This option gives children lots of opportunities to exercise, enjoy the fresh air and develop their physical skills.

Children appear happy and content in the pre-school. They interact positively with all staff and play alongside and with the other children. The key-person system helps build children's confidence. Staff liaise with parents prior to children starting to learn about individual care and dietary needs. Children are well behaved because staff implement strategies consistently and give lots of praise. As a result, children learn about good behaviour.

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

The provider does not ensure that the safeguarding and welfare requirements, and the learning and development requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years

Foundation Stage are implemented effectively. The leadership and management of the pre-school are inadequate owing to several breaches of these requirements. The inspection took place following concerns raised to Ofsted about risk assessments, and health and hygiene practices at the pre-school. At this inspection, it was found that risk assessments were weak and failed to identify all potential risks to children's safety. Inadequate health and hygiene practices mean children's snacks and drinks are not prepared in suitable facilities, which are kept clean and well maintained. Not all staff involved with food preparation have received the required training in food hygiene and on how to safely handle food that children eat. These weaknesses put children's good health at risk.

The provider has not ensured that all staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding and child protection issues in order to respond appropriately should they have concerns about a child's welfare. No safeguarding policy was available for inspection. Although there is a suitable procedure in place for the recruitment of new staff, this is not always implemented in practice. Records were not available for some staff to show they have received clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service as being suitable to work with children. Therefore, children's welfare is not adequately safeguarded.

Self-evaluation is weak. It does not identify the many weaknesses in the provision. Actions and a recommendation raised at the last inspection have not been addressed; risk assessments remain inadequate and records of staff's Disclosure and Barring Service checks are not complete. Evaluation does not involve seeking the views of staff, parents and children. As a result, outcomes for children are not improving and the provider does not demonstrate much determination to improve. A lack of effective systems to monitor the education programmes and children's learning and development records means the quality of teaching can be weak and children's progress is hindered.

Parents spoken to on the day of inspection say their children are happy and settled at the pre-school. They are aware who their child's key person is, but have not seen their children's learning and development files; therefore, staff are not helping parents support their children's learning at home. Most information is shared verbally with parents, who state staff are 'friendly and caring'.

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	EY411980
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	928474
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	37
Name of provider	Melanie Jane Merchant
Date of previous inspection	26/01/2011
Telephone number	07881754558

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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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