

Little Pals Childrens Centre Nursery

Bishops Park College, Jaywick Lane, CLACTON-ON-SEA, Essex, CO16 8BE

Inspection date	10/09/2013
Previous inspection date	28/03/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Children make good use of the well-equipped and exciting outdoor areas. They enjoy moving flexibly between the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Practitioners encourage children to make choices and decisions over their learning. They safely access a wide range of resources from child-height storage and contribute ideas towards the coming week's planning.
- Partnerships with parents and others are strong. Parents are complimentary about the nursery and feel that practitioners support the whole family well.

It is not yet good because

- A recent re-organisation of the nursery rooms has resulted in a safety issue not yet being effectively acted upon, which may have an impact on children. Children in the youngest toddler room can reach and open the door into the main corridor of the nursery.
- Lunchtime arrangements do not provide children with a calm environment in which to enjoy their meal. This does not support their developing independence skills.
- Leaders of the nursery have not yet embedded their use of monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. For example, by using information contained in the children's development records, such as starting points.

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 viewed all areas of the nursery and observed children in each of the base rooms and garden.
- The inspector held discussions with the deputy, practitioners, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, children and parents at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a range of records, including children's details, information about children's learning and development, written policies and written risk assessments. She also viewed planning, accident and medication records, information about complaints, daily attendance registers and a selection of other relevant documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to at the time of the inspection.

Inspector

Lynn Hughes

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Little Pals Children's Centre Nursery was registered in 2009 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in purpose-built premises in the Clacton on Sea area of Essex, and is managed by an incorporated registered charity. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a number of base rooms within the building and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 26 members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2, 3 and 4, including two practitioners with Early Years Professional Status.

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 122 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 a 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 meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure risk assessments effectively identify all safety issues within the nursery. For example, risks to younger children who can reach low-level door handles leaving the base rooms unnoticed

- improve arrangements for monitoring the educational programme to ensure planning and assessment are consistently delivered and recorded across the nursery so children make good progress.

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

- review the lunchtime arrangements, to ensure that children are provided with a calm and safe environment in which to enjoy their meal. Create opportunities for children to move towards independence, for example, by pouring their own drinks.

Inspection judgements

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

Practitioners demonstrate a secure understanding of how children learn. This enables them to provide children with a varied range of experiences, which allows them to explore all seven areas of learning. Practitioners plan individual activities, to challenge children and to extend their thinking. Key persons observe the children in their key groups and record their observations in the children's learning journals. Summative assessments are shared with parents to keep them informed about their children's learning and to involve them in identifying children's next steps in learning. This ensures a shared approach to children's learning, between the nursery and home. Older children are prepared for school readiness through the nursery's general routines. For example, they learn to independently use the toilets and to wash their hands after using them. They learn to dress and undress when they access the dressing-up clothes. Children develop handwriting skills as they learn to make marks with a range of materials from a very young age. Evidence seen through the children's development records, show that children make suitable progress during their nursery life, including those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Babies enjoy floor play with a good selection of age-appropriate resources. They have recently been introduced to more natural materials to enable them to explore all of their senses. For example, a treasure basket full of different sized and shaped plastic lids proves very exciting and captures a group of babies' interests. They play alongside each other, supported by the practitioners, who talk to them about the colours and shapes. Babies are provided with good opportunities to explore books in the comfortable book corner, equipped with cushions and throws. A selection of walker toys and appropriately placed furniture encourages non-mobile babies to begin to stand and to explore their feet.

Children's language and communication is promoted by practitioners speaking to them in a clear manner. Most practitioners demonstrate a good understanding of how to extend children's language through appropriate questions and by encouraging them to think about and consider what they are doing. They use speech and language programme, developed by a national children's charity, to identify and support children's language and communication skills and as a result children communicate effectively, sharing their thoughts and ideas. Many children enjoy learning in an outdoor environment and are provided with very good outdoor learning opportunities. For example, they learn about planting and growing when they help to grow a range of vegetables and fruit. They explore nature by using large magnifying glasses to look at insects and small creatures. The large sand pits and digging areas enable children to dig, build and create structures. The child-height kitchen situated next to the main kitchen provides a good space for children to learn about weighing and measuring, during cooking activities.

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

Children settle well into their nursery life, as practitioners follow the nursery's clear settling-in procedures. A key person works closely with parents to ensure all children's needs are known and met. They encourage parents to visit the nursery a number of times with their children, leaving them for short periods of time to become accustomed to the environment and the adults who will be caring for them. Those children, who find the transition difficult, are well supported by practitioners offering them cuddles. They enable them to use their home comforters, such as dummies, to reassure them and use methods of positive distraction to engage them in play. Children behave well as they develop an understanding about the nursery's rules. Practitioners remind them about using kind hands, when touching their friends and indoor feet, when walking indoors.

The nursery operates from a purpose-built building. The various rooms, toilets and office are connected through a system of corridors. The walls of the corridors are used to provide parents with displays of information, for example, about the Early Years Foundation Stage, parenting advice, nursery policies and information about the practitioners. The children's rooms are made welcoming and interesting as practitioners present colourful posters and examples of the children's creative work around the walls. Almost all of the rooms, with the exception of the baby room, lead directly to the large gardens, enabling children to make good choices about whether they play indoors or outdoors.

Children have some opportunities to learn about keeping healthy and safe. They negotiate a range of physical play equipment outdoors, which enables them to consider their own safety. The constant access to the garden, in all types of weather, means that children are provided with good opportunities to experience fresh air and exercise. Children are encouraged to follow a healthy diet and to drink fresh drinking water throughout the day. The nursery uses a dining room at lunchtime for the older children. This arrangement has recently been used to provide a space for younger children to eat their lunchtime meal, outside of their base rooms. Lunchtime is organised over two sittings for the different aged children. The current arrangement is not conducive to meeting children's needs and does not provide a calm and relaxed space for them to enjoy their meal; this is because both sittings are rushed and busy. For example, tables are being sprayed and the floor swept while some children are still eating their meals, in preparation for the next group of children to use the room. Practitioners do sit with the children, however, they need to leave the table a number of times, adding to the hectic atmosphere. There are also limited opportunities for children to use lunchtime as a learning opportunity. They are not consistently encouraged to pour their own drinks, to participate in setting the table or to serve their own meals.

Children are appropriately prepared for their next stages of learning. For example, they are supported by their key person when moving through the nursery rooms, to ensure they feel confident in their new surroundings.

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

This inspection was generated by Ofsted following a complaint and some notifications of incidents. The information investigated through this process, included whether children's medical and dietary requirements are being effectively met, whether parents' wishes are being followed and whether the nursery has effective systems in place for informing Ofsted of incidents which occur in the nursery. The nursery has clear systems for dealing with children's medical and dietary needs and has clear evidence to show how it works in partnership with parents to accommodate all parents' requests for their children. The nursery has effective systems in place for dealing with complaints from parents and keeps a clear record of all concerns. Initially the nursery did not inform Ofsted about a serious accident until the required 14 days had expired. Following a visit from Ofsted to explore why this requirement was not followed, the nursery have tightened their systems. Two further notifications have been made to Ofsted since then, which have been dealt with appropriately and within the required timescale.

The nursery is led and managed by a manager and deputy, who are supported by the children's centre directors. The management team lead a large number of practitioners, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. Practitioners, generally, demonstrate a clear understanding of how children learn, enabling them to deliver the learning and development requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage effectively. The manager and deputy have recently implemented systems to enable them to review and monitor the educational provision in each room. They do this by looking through the planning and discussing the activities with practitioners to evaluate their effectiveness and whether children gained the expected learning outcome from them. A random sample of the children's development records are viewed at a time, to provide the management team with opportunities to strengthen consistency in the recording of children's progress. This system is very much in its infancy and although management have identified weaknesses, they have yet to effectively address these areas in the educational provision. For example, a number of the children's learning journals, used to record and plot their progress, contain missing information and are inconsistently completed. This means that some summative assessments are weak and do not contain all relevant information. There are also gaps in some of the planning for rooms as practitioners do not follow the colour code on the planning sheet to show which activities are tailored to meet individual children's learning needs.

Children are appropriately protected from harm, as practitioners demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities with regards to safeguarding children. The designated person has completed appropriate training. A number of practitioners have either attended face to face safeguarding training or have completed the online course, to update and extend their safeguarding knowledge. All adults working with children hold current suitability clearance and proof of the checks carried out to assess this are available on file. Children, generally, play in a safe environment as practitioners conduct daily safety checks as well as more formal risk assessments. However, a recent re-organisation of rooms has resulted in one safety issue not being identified. Children in the youngest toddler room can reach and open the doors leading to the large corridor and other areas of the nursery. Managers are aware of this, and although there are security devices available, arrangements have yet been put in place to prevent children from leaving this room unnoticed, so their safety may be compromised.

The nursery has some systems in place for ensuring continuous improvement. The manager and deputy have a development plan in place, which they work through, making necessary changes and addressing improvements. Parents are asked to provide feedback on the nursery verbally and through the completion of questionnaires. Information from this exercise is fed into the self-evaluation process. Practitioners meet on a regular basis to discuss staffing issues; this provides a good forum for them to feed their thoughts into the evaluation process. The directors have implemented systems to enable them to supervise each practitioner on a regular basis, as well as through the formal appraisal procedures. The nursery management team encourage practitioners to enhance their professional development through further training, internally and externally.

Partnerships with parents and others are secure. Parents are provided with a good amount of written and verbal information about the nursery. They are kept well informed about their children's day, through daily communication diaries and through verbal feedback. The nursery has good links with other early years settings, which children attend, and works in partnership with them to complement the learning that takes place in both settings. The manager and deputy encourage the local primary schools, which the nursery feeds into, to work with them to aid a smooth transition for children moving from nursery life into big school.

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	EY395827
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	931750
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	75
Number of children on roll	132
Name of provider	Little Pals Childrens Centre Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	28/03/2013
Telephone number	01255 687144

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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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