

Little Companions

Acorn Hall, Columbia Avenue (off Beech Avenue), RUISLIP, Middlesex, HA4 8UG

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

26/03/2014

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

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

- Staff have high expectations of all children, which in turn encourages children to achieve well
- The language rich environment is used well to help extend children's speaking and listening skills
- Effective partnerships with external agencies and services allows good access to specialised support as needed and assists the staff in consistently reflecting upon practice
- Staff knowledge of individual children's personal, social and emotional needs, in addition to a trusted relationship with parents assists them in moving children on quickly to the next stage in their development.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The safeguarding policy is shared with parents, but staff do not always remind them that mobile phones should not be used.
- Staff do not always actively promote opportunities for children to become more independent by encouraging them to do things for themselves.

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 children's activities inside the main hall and outside.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager and held discussions with members of staff.
- The inspector sampled a selection of documentation, including children's profiles, assessments, planning and the setting's policies.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents on the day.
- The inspector saw evidence of the suitability of staff and other documentation in relation to welfare, health and safety requirements.

Inspector

Rachel Pepper

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Companions opened in 2010 as a mother and toddler group and registered in 2013 as a pre-school. The pre-school is privately run by Little Companions Limited and operates from the Acorn Youth Club in Eastcote in the London Borough of Hillingdon. Children have use of the main hall and an outdoor area. The pre-school provides a service for children from the local and wider community and supports children learning English as an additional language. It is open Monday to Wednesday 9am to 2pm, and 12 midday to 2.30pm on Thursday, term time only. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs eight staff, seven of whom hold relevant Early Years qualifications including one who has Early Years Professional status and an Early Years teacher. There are currently 20 children in the early years age range on roll.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- take further steps to ensure that parents and visitors are all fully aware of and adhere to the setting's prohibition of mobile phone use

- develop practitioners skills to establish a consistent approach in providing opportunities for children to do things for themselves

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching at this pre-school is very good and there is a consistent approach to learning, where all staff have a good understanding of the Statutory framework for the Early Years and high expectations of the children in their care. This means children are making good progress in all areas of their learning and development and are encouraged to achieve well. For example, children count up to 20 with a staff member who then on noticing a child continue carries on and supports them to count to number 47, extending their mathematical development. Each child's starting points are ascertained through the sensitive approach of staff and only determined when they feel the child has settled, highlighting how each child is unique. Individual needs are further met through ongoing observations and assessments to identify children's abilities and interests. Staff use information gathered to identify each child's next steps and to plan for children's future learning, moving them on quickly in their development. Staff continually reflect upon this area and look for ways to improve, currently piloting a new scheme focusing on children's

levels of involvement and wellbeing. It is expected that this will offer a more informative approach and further enable plans to be tailored for each child, supporting their development in all areas. Children learning English as an additional language benefit from the language rich environment and through planned and spontaneous opportunities are encouraged to speak and listen, developing their communication and language skills. For example, during circle time staff say hello in a variety of languages and throughout lunch children are informed of the different words used for a variety of food and encouraged to repeat them. Children are encouraged to take turns by welcoming their friends in each morning to the pre-school through singing a welcome song where each child's name is sung in turn, supporting their social development. As each child is welcomed children jump as high as they can, practising their physical agility. Socially acceptable behaviour is further reinforced during circle time where children are encouraged to sit nicely and place imaginary batteries into their ears so that they can listen to staff and each other. Children are keen to learn; they listen intently as a member of staff explains what an earthquake is, responding to a child's question, showing how they are valued and raising self esteem. Children reluctant to join in are sensitively supported to when they are ready, meeting their emotional needs. At the end of circle time each child chooses an action they would like to use and all available space is used for children to jump and hop as chosen, promoting their developing physical skills.

Within the nursery small group work is carried out for the older children to focus on the more specific areas of learning. For example, this week's topic is mathematics with a particular focus on estimation and measurement, preparing them well for the next stage in their development. School uniforms are accessible within the role play area and homework given upon request from children would like to be like older siblings. The local schools also visit children moving on, highlighting how the pre-school is active in promoting school readiness.

Information on each child's learning is contained within a profile book which parents can access on a regular basis, in addition to detailed plans and topics incorporated within weekly newsletters. This shows how staff are proactive in involving parents in their child's learning and allowing them to extend at home, supporting each child by offering a consistent approach. Information on the Early Years Foundation Stage is given to parents within their welcome packs and regularly through the newsletters. Parents are given a breakdown of the prime and specific areas of learning and advised of where they can access further information. Parents are often invited into the pre-school, such as, for 'mummy's day' where they have the opportunity to play with their children and take part in craft activities together, gaining an insight into the learning that takes place. Children are offered open-ended resources to make mother's day cards including a variety of card, textures, glitter and glue. In addition to circles, triangles and squares children are offered five and six-sided shapes to explore, highlighting again the high expectations staff have of children. Staff talk to the children about why mother's day is special, developing their awareness of cultural traditions. They are then supported to write their own names on the finished products, allowing them to experiment with letter formation and to develop early literacy skills. Strong links with parents also result in well resourced activities where contributions such as pipes and various sized pieces of wood can challenge children's thinking. These also allow children to explore roles of the outside world and use their imagination through creative design. Explanations given by the children of these, using

available floor plans contribute well to their developing vocabulary and communicative skills.

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

Children have a real sense of belonging to this setting, gained through having individual pictured coat pegs and name cards in English and their home language if relevant. They come in happily and are familiar with the routine of the setting, also made clear through a visual guide, supporting their emotional needs. An 'all about me' sheet completed before children start ensures staff are made aware of each child's likes, dislikes and requirements, enabling them to tailor activities and experiences to suit each child. A home book also created contains people that are important to the child. This is easily accessible, supporting children's emotional needs as and when they need reassurance. An open door policy allows parents to come into the pre-school to help children settle. Staff are sensitive to the needs of all children and they work well in partnership with parents to support children's development, highlighting where children may not be progressing as well as expected and working together to close the gaps in children's learning.

An effective key person system is in place supporting children in making secure attachments with staff, promoting their well-being and independence. Children appear to have secured bonds with many of the staff and some refer to them as aunty, a cultural tradition for when they feel close to another person. All staff know the children well and regularly collect observations that they have made. These are then placed in a slot file system to ensure as much information is gathered as possible about children's care and development. Staff effectively support children to reach their full potential. Parents are aware of their child's key person and are able to talk to them on a daily basis, offering further consistency for each child.

Behaviour is managed well and children are regularly reminded of the expectations of the pre-school such as being told to stop running as they may fall and be kind to each other by sharing resources, meaning that they play well together. Good behaviour is rewarded through the use of a golden box and a shining stars board in the entrance, highlighting children who have had golden behaviour or achieved a specific goal. This gives children something to aim for and ensures that rules and boundaries are made clear. Children are involved daily with risk assessments carried out on the outdoor area due to its rugged nature and are therefore beginning to gain an awareness of risk, by knowing what things they need to inform staff about. Children are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles through regular outdoor activities such as themed walks, trips on the train seen from the outdoor area and the freedom to move between indoor and outdoor areas, encouraging fresh air and exercise. Children are encouraged to collect and put on their own coats and are asked if they will feel warm enough, promoting independence and allowing them to assess their own personal needs. Healthy snacks and drinking water or milk are also provided regularly to the children, although at times these are poured for them, meaning opportunities for children to do things for themselves are sometimes missed. This is again the case at lunch time when staff hand out children's lunch boxes, limiting their opportunities to gain independence skills. Good hygiene routines are implemented. Children know when to

wash their hands to minimise the risk of cross-infection and they wipe their noses and discard tissues using readily available resources.

The high quality, age appropriate equipment and resources offer children stimulating and interesting play opportunities, with a good balance of both child-initiated and adult-led activities. The staff create an environment which does not resemble a fold away pre-school and is full of natural resources and life-like products, supporting children's learning and development in all seven areas. For example, there is a garden centre where children can see daffodils and dig in the mud using a variety of tools, promoting physical development and a dressing table with real tubes and sprays encouraging role play. A mood area also allows children to decide how they are feeling today, further supporting their emotional needs. Vibrant posters and displays with colours, numbers and recent activities throughout the pre-school ensure children are constantly able to reassess their learning.

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

The enthusiastic manager and her team of highly qualified staff are dedicated to providing a high standard of childcare provision. A secure bell entry system and password requirement if a child is to be collected by someone not on the authorised list, ensures that all children are kept safe. Outside gates are secured and children are supervised at all times during outdoor play, ensuring that they cannot leave unsupervised. All staff have completed safeguarding and first aid training, highlighting further how the welfare of children is of paramount importance. Safe recruitment procedures, full disclosure and barring clearances and strict ratios adhered to at all times ensure staff are suitable and that children are kept safe from harm. Daily risk assessments of all areas of the pre-school are also carried out. A thorough induction process for all new staff ensures that they are aware of child protection procedures and the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff know what to do if they have concerns for a child or if an allegation is made against another staff member. The policies and procedures of the pre-school meet all the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation stage. Parents are informed about the setting's safeguarding policy, which includes the prohibited use of mobile phones in the setting. Newsletters and posters remind parents and visitors of this policy. However during the inspection parents are witnessed using mobile phones during story time and this goes unnoticed by staff. The manager accepts that they need to do more to ensure this policy is adhered to at all times.

Training needs of the staff are highlighted through twice yearly appraisals and peer observations carried out on each other. Evaluations are also carried out weekly on activities and experiences that have been offered to the children enabling them to be adapted accordingly for improvement. Staff are deployed well and roles and responsibilities given in line with the wealth of knowledge they can apply, enhancing the learning that takes place. To ensure the pre-school maintain a reflective practice, outside agencies are invited in and any suggestions they make are incorporated in order to enhance the environment offered. The views of parents are also gained through

suggestions boxes and email correspondence. Parents detail how they are also able to speak to staff on a daily basis if they have any concerns or issues to raise, highlighting that staff are approachable at all times. Activity books and displays of photographs around the setting offer parents a good insight into their child's time at pre-school. Children's views are also a high priority within the setting and in addition to talking to the children, a reflections board is on display where likes and dislikes can be identified by placing a picture against current activities.

Well developed partnerships have been established with Hillingdon authority, meaning the pre-school have been approved to offer funding to children aged two, three and four years and training can be sourced as identified through evaluations. In addition to schools and children's centres visiting, the pre-school have offered placements to students of a local school who have expressed an interest in childcare. These links support the pre-school in accessing specialised support as needed, meeting children's individual requirements and offer workshops that may be of benefit or interest to parents.

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 | EY462146 |
| Local authority | Hillingdon |
| Inspection number | 916552 |
| Type of provision | Full-time provision |
| Registration category | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Age range of children | 0 - 5 |
| Total number of places | 20 |
| Number of children on roll | 20 |
| Name of provider | Little Companions Limited |
| Date of previous inspection | not applicable |
| Telephone number | 07957398476 |

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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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