

# My Little Explorers

2 Standon Main Road, Hursley, Winchester, Hampshire, SO21 2JH

## Inspection date

Previous inspection date

01/04/2014

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

- Children are safe and well cared for in a stimulating natural environment where they learn through play and exploration.
- Enthusiastic staff plan a broad range of activities and experiences, according to children's interests and individual stage of development.
- Staff promote children's language skills and understanding of the natural world extremely well.
- Overall, partnerships with parents and other professionals enable staff to meet children's individual needs well.
- Staff frequently reflect on their practice to identify clear areas for improvement, to continue to develop children's experiences.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Methods for sharing information about developing children's learning at home is not always fully effective for all parents, particularly for those whose children attend more frequently.
- Staff do not always make resources readily available for children to practise writing for a purpose.

## 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 outdoor activities in the woodland area.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children.
- The inspector sampled records and documentation, which included children's progress records.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the registered person.
- The inspector took into account parents' views, obtained in person.

## Inspector

Brenda Flewitt

## Full report

### Information about the setting

My Little Explorers registered in 2013. It is a privately owned setting and operates from a converted mobile cabin, in woodlands near Hursley, Winchester, Hampshire. The setting promotes the Forest School principles towards children's learning. Children use a mobile cabin and wooded areas, which include toilet and hand washing facilities. There is ample parking for parents to drop off and collect their children. The setting is open each weekday during term time. Sessions run from 9am to 3pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, and from 9am to 1pm on Wednesdays and Fridays.

My Little Explorers is registered on the Early Years Register. Children are able to attend from the age of two years and nine months. There are currently 35 children on roll. There are four members of staff. The owner/manager holds a recognised childcare qualification at level 3, and a Forest School Practitioner's Award at level 3. Other staff either hold, or are working towards, recognised childcare qualifications at level 3.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen the methods for sharing information with parents about their children's progress
  
- extend opportunities for children to understand and practise writing for a purpose

### Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy their time at My Little Explorers where they learn through play and exploration in a natural woodland environment. Staff have a good understanding of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements. Overall, they are skilful in promoting all areas of learning while adhering to the Forest School ethos. Staff provide a stimulating learning environment with a good range of mostly natural resources that children use freely to extend their own play and learning. Children are keen to take part and focus well on a good balance of adult-led and self-chosen activities. For example, children enjoy using their searching skills as they hunt for Easter eggs among trees, leaves and natural dens. They take turns to hide the eggs in various places. Staff encourage children to solve mathematical problems as they count how many eggs have been found and work out how many are left. Staff model words such as 'high', 'low' and 'behind' when describing hiding places. This helps children understand positional language.

Staff promote children's language skills extremely well. They talk with them during their activities, naming objects, actions and concepts. For example, staff use words such as 'strike, 'ignite' and 'direction' when teaching children the skills for fire-lighting. Staff use opportunities for extending children's vocabulary and understanding as they read stories in a group. They encourage children to talk about what they know, such as cows providing milk. Staff extend the conversation to include making cheese and how this can help keep our bones strong. A child talks about liking goats' cheese; a staff member uses word such as 'mild' and 'strong' to help them describe the taste. Staff provide many opportunities for children to practise skills for writing. For example, children use charcoal, pencils, and pens for drawing; they mix coloured paints with paintbrushes. However, staff do not always make resources easily accessible to support children to write for a purpose. For example, occasionally writing materials are missing from the role play area or not readily available to enable children to name their work.

Staff enable children to use their imaginations very well as they investigate a wide range of natural materials. Children act out real life situations in the 'mud kitchen', and competently transport materials using a variety of equipment such as cups, pans, wheelbarrows, and baskets. Staff value children's ideas and encourage them to extend their play and learning. For example, a discussion about birds' nests leads to children thinking about scarecrows. They go with a member of staff to the woods to collect sticks and other natural objects to create their own scarecrow model. Children confidently describe what they are doing and add facial features using pens. Staff plan experiences so that children develop an excellent understanding about the natural world. They go on walks to look for badger sets, and watch activities such as tree felling. This enables them to learn about machinery used and what happens to the wood afterwards, for example making paper.

Staff use an online system to assess children's stage of development and plan for their progress. They exchange important information with parents before children start at the pre-school to help them plan according to individual needs. Staff observe children's play and interests and record their progress with photographs and observations linked to areas of learning and stages of development. They use this information effectively to identify clear next steps for each child. The system includes a facility for completing two-year-old progress checks. Staff liaise with parents and other professionals to share this information, which all contributes to promoting children's good progress in their overall development.

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

Children are happy, settled and secure. Staff get to know children well as individuals through effective communication with parents and other settings they attend. This contributes to a smooth move between home, My Little Explorers, and other early years provision. Staff provide an environment where children's choices and differences are respected and ideas valued.

Staff provide familiar routines, and clear explanations of what they expect to teach

children to learn about their own safety. For example, children always stop at 'Crocodile Creek' when moving to and from the forest, in order to count the number of children in the group. Staff teach children how to carry sticks safely and to think about their own capabilities when climbing and balancing. Children understand the rules for staying safe with regard to the campfire. They know that they must only go into the 'fire circle' when invited by an adult, and to move around the outside of the seats. Children learn to patiently take turns, for example when practising lighting a fire. Staff acknowledge children's efforts and achievements with targeted praise, so that children know what they have done well. This helps boost their self-esteem and confidence.

Staff promote children's healthy lifestyles very well. They teach children the importance of personal hygiene routines, such as washing hands before handling food. Staff enable children to regularly take part in the preparation of healthy food. For example, they peel and chop vegetables for soup, and enjoy making bread to cook over the fire. Children spend their time in the fresh air, where they benefit from physical exercise, develop confidence, and learn about nature. This all helps them develop useful skills for the future.

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

The enthusiastic staff work well together as a team to ensure that the setting operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis. They have a good understanding of their responsibilities in meeting the welfare, safeguarding and learning and development requirements. Staff implement clear policies and procedures that promote children's welfare and safety. Staff have a good understanding of how to protect children from harm. This includes recognising signs and symptoms that would cause concern, and knowing the procedures to follow. Clear recruitment procedures mean that staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. Staff complete detailed risk assessments and daily checks so that they provide a safe environment for children to explore outdoors. Effective staff deployment means that children are well supervised, in order to keep them safe and support their learning.

Overall, staff promote positive partnerships with parents. They provide useful information about the pre-school by way of written policies, emails, an online recording system, regular newsletters and a website. Key persons make themselves available to exchange information on a daily basis through conversation. This helps staff to meet children's individual needs well. Parents say that their children are very happy in the group and have developed confidence since attending. They like the natural environment where their children learn a range of physical and practical skills. Some parents would like additional opportunities for discussing their child's progress, with ideas for extending learning at home. Staff communicate with other professionals in order to effectively support children in their development. Staff are proactive in making contact with other settings that children attend, in order to share information to enable them to provide consistency in care and learning.

Staff regularly reflect on their practice and provision to identify areas for development.

Children, staff and parents are invited to contribute to the 'Talking, Thinking Floor Book', which includes photographs, drawings and comments about children's activities. There are clear targets and action plans to extend children's experiences. For example, staff plan to provide a vegetable patch to enable children to grow food for their cooking activities. Staff are soon to offer a parent and toddler session. They have identified that this will provide a good introduction for children who will attend My Little Explorers. It will enable them to become confident in the surroundings, and get to know staff before they start. The owner manager is keen to develop the provision and often visits other Forest School settings to share good practice ideas. All this helps to continue to develop the service for children and 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY467166
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	936083
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	12
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	35
<b>Name of provider</b>	Samantha Jane Victoria
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	07766812541

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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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