

Little Oaks Childcare

Fulney Hall, Holbeach Road, Spalding, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE12 6ER

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

14/04/2014

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Insightful leadership and high managerial expectations ensure that an inspirational approach is taken to the development and support of practitioners and a robust approach is taken to safeguarding. High quality teaching also ensures children enjoy a memorable early years experience.
- Partnership working is strong with both with parents and other professionals involved in children's care. Mutually beneficial links between the nursery and parents ensure that children's learning at home offers them rewarding consistency in the approach taken.
- Children respond very enthusiastically to practitioners who interact with them in warm, friendly tones, building strong, effective relationships. Children feel secure and their well-being is superbly promoted.
- Joint working between this nursery and the sister setting offers children superb quality teaching. Expertise shared across the nursery ensures all children benefit from enhanced learning opportunities, recognising them as independent learners.
- The exceptional outdoor learning environments offer children many stimulating opportunities, which equip them with skills that will remain with them throughout their lives. They take part in team games, grow vegetables and join in imaginary play to 'search for the crocodile'.
- Children engage deeply in motivating, challenging activities, developing their knowledge and understanding through skilful support and timely interaction from practitioners with a secure understanding of how they learn best.

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 observed activities in each of the rooms in use by children and the outdoor learning environments.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the owner and met with other key practitioners during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Deborah Hunt

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Oaks Childcare was registered in 2013 and is privately owned. It operates from a grade 2 listed, converted manor house in Spalding, Lincolnshire. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It serves the local and surrounding areas and is accessible to all children. Core group rooms are located on both floors. There is an enclosed outdoor play area and access to various parts of the extensive grounds. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 7am to 7pm, all year round, except for two weeks at Christmas. The nursery may also open on a Saturday, mornings only, subject to demand. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 67 children on roll who are in the early years age range. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. They provide care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and bilingual children. There are currently nine practitioners who work directly with the children. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery employs modern apprentices, two of whom are working towards a qualification at level 2. They receive support from the local authority and have completed the local authority quality assurance scheme. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance opportunities for children to experience sensory play further through the use of natural resources in the outdoor learning environment, such as, the creation of a mud kitchen and use of other natural materials to facilitate play opportunities.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals as practitioners in this vibrant nursery are finely attuned to their individual needs and learning styles. Practitioners are extremely knowledgeable and skilfully implement the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage to suit every child's learning style. They plan the educational programmes to ensure children are offered excellent challenge and age-appropriate activities which respond to their individual interests. Children enjoy a rich, extensive range of activities that cover the prime areas of learning in depth for younger children, with the focus on the specific areas gradually increasing as children grow older. Children are free to take their learning outdoors and revel in the wonderful opportunities available to them in the various, stimulating areas. However, there remains scope to expand opportunities even further for children to explore their senses through the use of natural resources.

Practitioners competently offer activities which awaken children's curiosity and in-built flexibility enables them to take advantage of spontaneous events or children's changing interests. The quality of teaching is considerable. For example, young children concentrate well as a practitioner teaches them about colour, shape and number during an adult-led activity. They are encouraged to think for themselves, as they recall colour names and persevere to work out which shape fits where on the puzzle. The practitioner's use of open questions, clearly pronounced words and repetition enables children to practice and reinforce their expanding vocabulary. These young children sustain interest for a considerable time, fully immersed in their learning as a result of the practitioner's expert understanding of how they learn best. Children smile proudly as she uses very positive language and facial expressions, as well as offering them a 'high five' to praise them when they succeed. Children throughout the nursery benefit greatly from the positive involvement of practitioners. They know perceptively when to get involved and when to stand back and allow children to explore and develop their own play. Close observation of children means they get to know their individual personalities, schema and learning styles. Children really enjoy taking part in activities with them and show that they are confident to initiate conversations. For example, toddlers, who choose to use the art room, select play dough and paint, enjoying frequent interaction with practitioners who sit with them. Practitioners demonstrate the use of different tools to offer children a visual explanation alongside their verbal comments. Children learn as they copy their actions, create patterns which they discuss and talk about colour, texture and counting. Activities are unhurried, as practitioners allow children to take their learning at their own pace, enabling them to become deeply involved.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive superbly nurturing support. The practitioner with overall responsibility for their welfare and well-being has completed the special educational needs co-ordinator training, as well as further extensive training. She works very closely with children's key carers and parents to ensure that any specific needs are met. Strong links exist with external professionals to ensure that prompt action is taken to arrange additional support and input where necessary. The key carer also works very closely with other professionals who are involved with children to offer them a highly consistent approach. Practitioners encourage all children to be increasingly independent in their play from a young age. Children choose their own activities, moving freely and with confidence, between different resources and rooms. Careful consideration is given to the needs of each age group attending. For example, toddlers have a specific 'small world play' room, set up with a variety of small world ecoscapes, town and country houses and home and dinosaur accessories. It also contains an area set up to reflect the current learning theme. Children all know their key carer and look forward to their 'morning hellos' and 'circle time' where they enjoy lively discussions and sing favourite rhymes and songs. They make rapid progress because practitioners, who show a genuine interest in their uniqueness, find innovative ways to foster their love of learning. Children who are bilingual feel included and valued, because practitioners find out specific information about their home language and culture and reflect this within activities and the environment. This is evident in resourcing, the menus planned, labelling and the many attractive, child-oriented displays throughout the nursery. Children enjoy small group activities in the 'Quiet room' where they use the computer suite and enjoy enchanting storytelling sessions. They learn to use 'quiet voices' as they care for the guinea-pigs and take part in challenging table top and floor based activities. Wall planners in each room

record children's progress and interests and contribute to the assessment and evaluation carried out in their trackers, adventure books and communication diaries. It also allows practitioners to make links between children's next steps and respond quickly to their emerging interests. A 'thinking book' is used to record children's ideas and plans during circle time and has resulted in a 'thinking box' full of related items which can be used to support their play. This approach has led to children being supported and their learning scaffolded where they have challenges or concerns. It has bolstered and consolidated their achievements, meeting their milestones and has enabled practitioners to stretch and inspire those children who are ahead of the national expectations.

Practitioners ensure that children are exceptionally well-prepared in readiness for school. Children develop as autonomous, confident and inquisitive learners, playing freely with self-chosen resources. For example, young children learn to put their hands up as they answer questions and all children are encouraged to develop independence in many ways. Pre-school room practitioners work consistently towards enabling children to develop their own style. In the summer term, before children move up to school, practitioners fine tune the skills children have gained, to ensure they are confident about their forthcoming move. The nursery invites reception teachers from the local schools to visit and takes children on visits to their new schools. Following discussions with each school the nursery shares relevant information about children's current interests and progress. The parents of all children attending the nursery are fully involved in their child's learning. The carefully considered induction procedure ensures key persons gain detailed information from parents about their child's progress and interests at home. This begins the on going dialogue which takes place throughout the child's time in the nursery, ensuring that children take targeted next steps in their learning. Practitioners encourage parents to provide details from home about achievements their children make. They use daily communication diaries and 'Adventure books', which are sent home termly, with stickers for them to record events at home. This provides practitioners with a focus for discussion with children and also informs planning to meet children's emerging interests. They share assessments regularly with parents, including the progress check at age two. The respect and value placed upon developing mutually beneficial relationships with children's parents contributes significantly to children's learning.

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

Children demonstrate a noticeably secure sense of belonging and well-being in this welcoming, enabling nursery. They are happy, settled and display high levels of confidence. For example, a child proudly offers a guided tour of the nursery, skipping and dancing, as they introduce their friends playing in the garden and demonstrating use of the 'trim trail' around the central area. Children are highly respected as unique individuals. They feel valued as their voice is heard and can be seen represented within the many displays throughout the nursery. They are consulted on planning and refer to seed catalogues and outdoor play brochures when helping decide on the layout of the outdoor areas. Resourcing throughout the nursery is of very high quality and meets the needs of children attending superbly. Each room within the nursery is individually themed helping

children understand their use and they develop a strong identify with the setting. Children have free flow access to the majority of rooms and are offered a balanced range of adult-led and child-initiated play daily. The space within the nursery is used flexibly, to enable practitioners to respond to the specific needs of each cohort of children and in recognition of the fact that needs change. The atmosphere throughout the nursery is relaxed, positive and practitioners work cohesively as a team. They are proactive in their approach ensuring activities are prepared in readiness for children and respond well to their specific needs. For example, babies are offered dedicated 'tummy time' sessions in recognition of the value to their development. Children listen effectively to practitioners who offer them clear explanations. They behave exceptionally well as practitioners skilfully make them aware of the nursery's expectations for behaviour. For example, children learn to use good manners. Even very young children learn to cover their mouths with their hands when they cough, as practitioners urge them to 'catch that cough!' They are taught valuable lessons for life as they learn that 'hands are not for hitting' and 'words are not for hurting'. Practitioners understand that although the same expectations are applied for all children, the approach and methodology to achieve behavioural goals must be attuned to individual personalities in order to achieve the most effective change. Children learn about risk and what may happen if they are not careful or do not think about other people around them. For example, practitioners teach babies to climb and descend the stairs safely and offer simple explanations to promote their understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Practitioners demonstrate a keen awareness of the importance of transitions in children's lives. At such times, they offer children sensitive, warm, affectionate care, allowing children time to come to terms with new situations. For example, a child settling into nursery as a new starter is offered lots of cuddles and their key carer stays close by, offering reassurance. The gradual approach taken to children's learning is set only by the pace of the child themselves. This ensures that children flourish, secure in the knowledge that their emotional well-being is promoted and protected. As children begin attending, the nursery wait for parents to tell them when they feel their child is ready to be left. This exceptionally flexible approach takes account of the individual needs of the child and their parents. At this time, parents make children's key carers aware of any specific dietary or medical needs. The nursery pays careful attention to such details, working alongside parents to ensure children's needs are superbly met. The close family atmosphere across the nursery supports children's emotional well-being superbly. The nursery owner and manager see children and their parents as an integral part of the nursery family. They comment that 'each child is seen as another thread that becomes interwoven into the nursery' during their time there, adding to the rich fabric of the nursery life. Children and practitioners all know each other very well and children are respected and valued as individuals. They enjoy visiting other base rooms to visit siblings or to see what is happening upstairs. This is all part of the enabling approach taken to their learning. Children are very well prepared when they are moving on to the next room. They go for many visits with their key carer who introduces them gradually to their new replacement. Meetings are held with their parents, who are fully involved throughout, for reassurance and information sharing. Children's ability to develop as unique, independent beings is superbly fostered and promoted. For example, older babies are encouraged to begin trying to take off and put on their own shoes, with support. Toddlers are supported to serve themselves and eat with cutlery at meal times. Pre-school children self-register on arrival each day and become increasingly independent as they hang up their coats on named

pegs and store outdoor shoes in their individual shoe boxes. Children relish the daily opportunities they have to use the delightful, high quality, extensive range of resources and activities. These accurately reflect their interests and offer levels of challenge which stretch their growing curiosity and inquisitiveness. Practitioners are very attentive to children and show a natural affinity with them in their play.

Children take part in a superb range of activities both inside and outside to promote their good health. The food offered is planned each week and is not on a repetitive cycle. Inspirational meals and snacks encompass menus from around the world, encouraging children to explore food and try new tastes. For example, the very well-qualified chef offers children Chinese 'moon cakes', traditional roast dinners and 'space food'. She also offers advice and support to parents of children with allergies and supports them to encourage fussy eaters at home. Recently, she has compiled a list of her recipes including hidden green vegetables for parents to try at home. A 'Jack and the beanstalk' themed reward chart encourages children to try new foods, eat well and use good table manners. They use the wonderful garden areas daily. These have a range of equipment to promote their balancing, climbing and role play explorations. They learn about gardening as they plant and grow different root vegetables and salad crops and watch rabbits, squirrels, owls and even a falcon on occasion. The exceptional thought put into the creation of the outdoor areas offer many opportunities for children to experience awe and wonder during their play and opens their eyes to nature. Practitioners work at children's level, joining them in their play and extending their learning and confidence through discussion. For example, babies play with construction bricks and a practitioner follows their interest to make a flying craft out of one of their creations for a favourite toy to ride on. The nursery embraces every opportunity to improve children's physical well-being and to reflect the needs of children attending. They have created a 'Busy room' set up to promote their physical development and both fine and gross motor skills. This ensures children can be physically active even when the weather is bad and children can also use this room spontaneously. Children are encouraged to consider the effects of exercise on their bodies, in line with the nursery theme of 'Happy, healthy me'. This demonstrates how effectively the nursery works to develop a very positive attitude in children with regard to their health and awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle.

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

Safeguarding at this inspiring nursery is given the utmost priority. Practitioners maintain close supervision of children at all times and have all completed core training, which includes first aid and safeguarding. The manager and owner have completed 'Designated persons' training and 'Enhanced safeguarding' training. Practitioners are fully conversant with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures for the reporting and recording of any concerns, including allegations against staff. Rigour is applied in the recruitment of new practitioners and safer recruitment training has been undertaken. The owner and manager genuinely value all practitioners and provide them with training to gain professional qualifications and to increase their knowledge in specific areas. Additionally, all practitioners have completed child protection, paediatric first aid training, food hygiene and fire safety training. The care and concern management also show in the wider sense

ensures all practitioners feel valued and supported. The nursery manager and owner are fully aware of the importance of informing Ofsted of any significant events and complying with external governing legislation. A comprehensive set of policies supports practice and all required documentation and procedures are in place. The exceptional work that has been carried out since registration and continuing development of the nursery, demonstrates the dedication and high level of commitment of the entire nursery team. They have learned from the outstanding practice at their sister setting and have used this, alongside their own thoughts and ideas, to create a unique and inspirational nursery. Much work has gone into considering how to meet the needs of children and their families, this is bearing fruit, as trust and appreciation is shown by parents. The commitment of all practitioners to children's care and learning significantly contributes to their feelings of well-being and belonging in the nursery.

The dedication of both the owner and manager is evident in the high quality provision offered and results in an outstanding nursery experience for children in their care. The professional, equally dedicated staff team work very effectively together to ensure that each child enjoys a unique and positive experience. There is a collective determination to provide outstanding care and learning for children and this is visible throughout the nursery. The management team continually evaluate the provision and strive for high quality improvement. The manager works through action plans to identify very well-targeted priorities for future development of the nursery. She co-ordinates the implementation of the learning and development requirements for every child and rigorously monitors planning and assessment. She also works closely with the key carers and conducts regular room inspections. All practitioners receive regular supervisions, bi-annual appraisals and attend the regular team meetings. Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda for each of these meetings. This, together with a proactive stance towards continuing professional development, has significantly contributed to the successful monitoring of the quality of teaching within the nursery. The nursery welcomes support from the local authority and from other agencies who are involved with the children. Continuous improvement has been made since registration to ensure children receive a highly individual and collective beneficial experience. In recognition of the changing landscape, with regard to the availability of training, the nursery has recently opened their own training academy.

The manager demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of her responsibilities to meet the learning and development and safeguarding and welfare requirements. She is highly effective in continually monitoring the quality of the experiences offered to children. Practitioners are actively supported in their planning, observation and assessment of the children in their care. There is excellent partnership working both with parents, whose contribution is highly valued, and other agencies and local schools to support children's transitions. The nursery works very closely with other local early years settings to offer extensive support and guidance. They also liaise effectively with the local children's centre that is interested in working with them to provide counselling space, parenting classes and creche facilities. Parental views are sought and taken account of in many ways, for example, they were consulted on staff uniforms and the music played within the nursery. Parents spoken to comment that their children have made 'fantastic progress since starting' and say that practitioners and the location are 'brilliant'. They also value the

'close bonds' children develop with their key carers and how happy their children are here.

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	EY470960
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	940217
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	75
Number of children on roll	67
Name of provider	Kathryn Holmes
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01775 762084

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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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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