

Little Scholars

Hugo Drive, Abbey Meads, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN25 4GY

Inspection date	23/06/2014
Previous inspection date	29/06/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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 promote children's personal, social and emotional development very effectively. Children respond very positively to well-established routines and show a strong understanding of behavioural expectations.
- There is a strong focus on following children's interests and using these opportunities well to promote their learning.
- Staff make effective use of whole group activities to promote specific skills in different areas of learning, such as finding out about rhyming words or learning about the concept of floating and sinking.
- There is a good range of learning opportunities across all areas of learning within each session.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always fully challenge children's learning during outdoor play, which means that some children, particularly boisterous boys, do not always fully benefit from these sessions.

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 both indoors and outside.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager of activities in the outdoor area.
- The inspector held meetings with key persons, the lead safeguarding member of staff, the manager and the management team.
- The inspector sampled documentation, including evidence of staff suitability and children's development records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

Inspector
Gillian Little

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Scholars registered in 1998. It is run by a private provider and is one of two settings that work in partnership. It operates from the pre-school room within Abbey Meads Community Primary School in Swindon, Wiltshire. Children have direct access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area, shared with the school's foundation stage unit. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and is caring for 47 children in the early years age range aged from three years. The pre-school cares for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language. It is open on weekdays for 38 weeks each year. Sessions are from 9am until 11.30am and from 12 noon until 2.30pm. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children ages three and four years. It employs five staff, all of whom hold relevant qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance outdoor play by increasing opportunities to challenge children, particularly to engage energetic boys.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress overall in this friendly and welcoming pre-school. There is a busy buzz of chatter as children engage in a wide variety of activities. Staff use ongoing, friendly discussions to promote children's learning effectively. They use explanations, narration, open questions and extension of children's ideas to promote their communication and language development. Staff are well deployed around the premises, focusing effectively on children's interests in the different resources, such as playing games. Children choose a large-scale snakes and ladders game, which staff use successfully to support their understanding of numbers and simple addition. Planned activities promote children's early literacy skills well. Staff encourage children to use different words to describe materials in a tray with different textures. They draw children's attention to relevant printed words and they enthusiastically support an I-spy game to encourage children to think of objects in the room beginning with different letters. Children respond with a keen interest and show a good awareness of initial letter sounds.

The staff team makes effective use of whole group activities to focus on specific skills. Children listen well and respond thoughtfully to a rhyming words activity, which promotes their literacy skills effectively. They show a keen interest in a floating and sinking activity, during which they consider how different objects react when placed in a container of

water. They show a sense of curiosity and are confident to offer their views, such as suggesting placing a car that sinks onto a piece of polystyrene that floats to see what happens.

Outdoors, staff follow children's interests and suggest activities, such as initiating a parachute game with a large group of children. Children thoroughly enjoy this, squealing with delight as they throw beanbags into the air using the parachute. Other children enjoy exploring musical instruments and staff extend this interest by encouraging them to become a musical marching band to a popular tune. At times however, activities outdoors do not always challenge children enough, resulting in some children, particularly boisterous boys, chasing each other without much purpose.

Procedures to track children's progress from their starting points are effective. Key persons know their children very well and talk confidently about their capabilities and levels of development. They identify children's next steps in learning on a termly basis, using this information successfully to plan further activities. Staff provide effective support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Key persons work closely with outside agencies to agree suitable strategies to support children. They are particularly sensitive to integrating children within the main group by responding carefully to their individual needs. As a result of all these strategies, staff are preparing children well for school and the impact of funding for free early education is good.

Parents state that they receive good feedback from staff about their children's progress, through daily discussions and regular reports. They state that staff are supportive in helping them to address any concerns about their children's development and offering suggestions to guide their children's learning at home.

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

Staff are very effective in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development. Children are clearly very familiar with the well-established routines throughout the sessions that help them be cooperative and helpful. Staff carefully explain expectations at tidy up time, reminding children to tidy everything away before the music stops. As a song plays, children busily put away resources and work well in their established teams to clear the room within minutes. To further encourage helpful behaviour, the child helper of the day dresses up as a police officer and wanders around the room with a clipboard making notes to ensure everyone is joining in. Staff routinely reward both teams and individuals for their efforts, providing them with certificates, which promotes children's self-esteem effectively. Staff are sensitive to children's feelings, noticing when children feel sad and helping them to resolve any issues. Key persons develop good relationships with children and their parents, which helps children to feel secure and safe in the pre-school.

Staff arrange for older children to engage in physical education sessions and to have packed lunches in preparation for their move to school. They work closely with reception

teachers in the on-site school to use consistent strategies to promote children's skills in aspects such as sounds and letters. This approach promotes continuity for children as they move between settings. Staff also work in partnership with other schools and are in the process of setting up network meetings to support this area further.

Children have free access to the outdoor area at various times during sessions. Staff encourage children to engage in physical activity routinely, such as joining in with the warming up song at the beginning of the day. They talk to children about the effect of exercise on their bodies, such as a heart beating faster after running around, and they encourage children to have drinks on a hot day. Staff help children to understand why it is important to wash hands before snack time so that children learn about good hygiene practices. Children enjoy healthy snacks, such as vegetable sticks with a drink of milk or water. As a result, children develop a good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles.

Children learn about keeping themselves safe as staff routinely talk to them about potential hazards. They learn to handle scissors carefully and to play thoughtfully on the playground equipment. Visits from the police help children to develop an awareness of stranger danger and crossing roads.

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

The provider demonstrates a clear awareness of her responsibilities to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The premises are safe and secure, and staff supervise children closely. The safeguarding lead for the pre-school has a clear understanding of possible symptoms of children at risk and her responsibility to respond to concerns. She supports the staff team in their understanding by discussing issues during staff meetings. Clear policies are in place for the use of mobile phones and social networking sites so that staff understand how to protect children's safety.

Robust recruitment procedures are in place to assess the suitability of new staff. Induction procedures ensure that new staff become familiar with their roles and responsibilities with support from experienced staff. The provider supports staff to improve their qualifications and to attend relevant training. She visits the pre-school on a daily basis and promotes good working partnerships between the preschool and her other setting to share good practice. Regular staff meetings and appraisals support staff in their ongoing professional development. Ongoing support from the manager is helping staff to improve the presentation of children's development records. The manager carefully monitors planned activities to ensure these cover all areas of learning and to ensure they benefit all children. She gives staff the opportunity to talk about individual children during meetings and during daily discussions so that they can work as a team to meet children's needs. She checks development records every term to ensure that staff are identifying children's next steps in learning accurately and she supports them to make amendments as necessary. These processes ensure that the staff team works effectively with children to promote their learning and development.

The self-evaluation process involves staff, children and parents to identify strengths and areas for further improvement. The manager works in partnership with the local authority to take on board advice to enhance practice in the preschool. Since the last inspection, staff have improved procedures to enhance the quality of planning by developing monitoring records and ensuring that they plan activities to reflect children's individual needs. Parent questionnaires and a comments box provide parents with opportunities to feed their ideas into the self-evaluation process. Plans for further improvement currently include enhancing risk assessments and developing staff appraisals.

Good partnerships are in place with parents who are complimentary about the pre-school. Staff work well with outside agencies, the on-site school, other local schools and early years settings where appropriate. For example, they work closely with the local children's centre to gain advice regarding children's welfare needs.

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	511114
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	842380
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	3 - 5
Total number of places	22
Number of children on roll	47
Name of provider	Pauline Webster
Date of previous inspection	29/06/2010
Telephone number	01793 762037

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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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