

Little Explorers

Belton Lane School, Green Lane, GRANTHAM, Lincolnshire, NG31 9PP

Inspection date	24/07/2014
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	2 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

- Teaching is good. There is an appropriate balance between adult-led activities and child-initiated play. Consequently, all children make good progress in line with their starting points.
- Children are happy, confident and quickly settle in this caring nursery. Staff build strong partnerships with children and parents. Consequently, children's emotional well-being is supported.
- The staff use the excellent outdoor environment throughout the day to encourage physical play and exercise in the fresh air, supporting children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle.
- Children are kept safe because the nursery staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and understand what to do in the event of a child protection concern.
- The management team has a clear focus and vision for the nursery. As a result, the staff team have the drive to continuously improve and move the nursery forward.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to enhance partnerships with shared carers in order to enrich the quality of shared information, so that children make the best possible progress.

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 in the toddler room of the nursery and outside.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the acting manager.
- The inspector held discussions with the business development manager of the nursery, the acting manager of the nursery, children and the room staff.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of the staff working with the children, the nursery's self-evaluation and development plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through looking at recent questionnaires.

Inspector

Sharon Alleary

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Explorers nursery was registered in 2014 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in purpose-built premises in the Grantham area of Lincolnshire and is managed by a registered charity. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three base rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff; all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm and children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 33 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 further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- strengthen partnership working by ensuring there are robust communication links between all the settings involved in children's care, so that children fully benefit from a shared understanding and common approach to supporting their transition and progress.

Inspection judgements

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

The standard of teaching is good across the nursery. Staff have a secure understanding of how to promote children's learning through their own play. For example, staff consistently play alongside children as they enthusiastically engage in activities of children's own choosing. At the onset of care, parents are asked to complete information regarding their child's developmental levels, which provides staff with information about children's starting points and interests. Staff compile learning journeys of their key children, where observations and next steps in learning are recorded and used effectively in future planning. As a result, children make good progress in their learning and development. Good tracking systems monitor children's progress across the seven areas of learning and identify what they need to learn next. Staff understand the requirement to complete the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. They then continue to summarise children's progress throughout their time at the nursery. This ensures that staff are able to seek specialist support if needed, in order for children to make good progress in their learning and development. Pre-school aged children and toddlers interact harmoniously during the school holidays. As a result, solid friendships and relationships are building and consequently, personal, social and emotional development is encouraged and supported.

Children's language and communication skills are promoted well, including those with English as an additional language. Staff carefully listen to children and get involved in their spontaneous conversations. They introduce them to new words, which extends and builds their vocabulary. They allow children time to think and respond to questions, which motivates children's critical thinking skills. This demonstrates that children are well supported in their language development and are gaining good skills to help with their readiness for school and prepare them for the next stage in their learning. All children have free access to the outside area where they have the opportunity to take part in more physical activity. For example, children develop their building and balancing skills by swinging on tyres and building 'quad bikes' with crates. This encourages children to become confident and independent learners. Staff provide an appropriate balance between playful adult-led activities and children's own purposeful play. For example, when children enthusiastically engage in a group activity, re-enacting a popular story, staff introduce appropriate resources, such as straw, sticks and bricks. Children develop a sense of recall as they anticipate the next part of the story. As a result, their literacy skills are developing well.

Children are offered opportunities to learn about the world in which they live, which fosters their development in understanding the world. Children discover bugs outdoors on the cauliflower leaves they harvest. In addition, they enjoy sensory experiences as they play in the mud kitchen. They build on their interest as they request water and leaves and add these to their concoctions. Good use is made of the allotment area of the garden, for children to grow some of their own fruit and vegetables. This helps them to discover how things grow and change. Children take part in a wide range of creative activities, such as painting and exploring play dough. These activities stimulate children's senses and build on their natural curiosity to explore and investigate things. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities very effectively. Staff work closely with all the external agencies and professionals involved, and this builds a good understanding of children's particular needs and promotes a consistent approach. Children who speak English as an additional language are also well supported, as staff work closely with parents to meet their needs. The nursery shares information regarding children's day with parents via noticeboards situated outside the individual care rooms. This information is informative and practical. Key persons also provide parents with individual and accurate information about children's learning on a quarterly basis, in order to help support children's learning at home. As a result, partnership working is mainly effective in providing continuity of care.

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

Children and their families are warmly welcomed into this friendly nursery. Children are happy and demonstrate that they feel secure in staff's care. Children's emotional development is effectively promoted as they develop secure, trusting relationships with each other and their key person. Consequently, children show they feel special and valued. For example, children who are upset when they arrive at the nursery are gently and patiently coaxed to settle by their key person. As a result, they are soon 'all smiles' and joining in with the play and learning. New children and their parents are invited into

the nursery to visit and spend some time with staff, other children, and to familiarise themselves with the environment. By working closely and flexibly with parents, staff ensure continuous and consistent care for children is achieved, which aids their transitions from home. Information is obtained at the start of the placement about children's daily routines, favourite toys and any known medical and dietary requirements. This promotes continuity in the children's care and supports their continual well-being. Children's achievements from home are treasured and displayed on the 'Sea of Achievement' and 'Wow Washing Line' boards. As a result, children gain a sense of belonging.

Children behave well in the nursery as they play and learn together, resolving any conflict independently or with the sensitive and caring support of the staff. Staff remind them to share and be kind to each other. Children consistently remember to say 'please' and 'thank you', when speaking to staff and each other. Children are encouraged to complete self-care tasks for themselves and develop their independence appropriately. Staff encourage children to follow appropriate hygiene routines in order to minimise the risk of infection. For example, children wash their hands before food and after using the bathroom. Children's health is supported effectively as they benefit from a healthy and nutritious diet. Children's independence and self-care is supported at snack time. They serve themselves from a range of fruit, and choose between a drink of water or milk. During the school holidays, all children bring a packed lunch to the nursery. The management strive to maintain a healthy eating ethos by offering 'Healthy Eating' displays to parents. Children's lunchboxes are monitored by staff, who gently guide children to make healthy choices initially from the contents, for instance, sandwiches and fruit first. Drinks are available throughout the day; therefore, children drink sufficiently to maintain their good health. During the initial registration, the nursery establishes any dietary requirements children may have, or any health issues which need support. This thorough attention to children's care needs ensures they receive good levels of support.

Staff are deployed effectively in order to supervise the children and ensure their safety. Staff know how to deal with safeguarding issues, and develop children's awareness of safety and how to stay safe. For example, children are encouraged to wear sun cream and sun hats in soaring temperatures. An excellent range of quality resources are accessible for children to choose from in all rooms of the nursery. This develops both their independence and their ability to make choices in their own learning. All children benefit from continual access to the secure outdoor space. This provides an excellent range of opportunities to explore and investigate the world around them. Children experience superb challenge in the shared garden, where they can climb and run freely. As children progress from the toddler room to the pre-school room, the key persons effectively share information with the new key persons. Furthermore, exchange visits are arranged to meet the children in their existing room and children also make visits to their new room. This results in children becoming familiar with their new key person and their new environment. Consequently, they settle quickly in their new group. The move to school is managed through good partnerships with the local schools. Teachers are invited to visit children in the nursery to get to know their individual needs. This supports children to be emotionally ready for school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years

provision

The management team has a secure understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The safeguarding of children's welfare is given a high priority. Staff are fully aware of their role and responsibility to safeguard children. They have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms that would raise concerns, and the procedures they would then follow. The management have a clear knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an allegation against a member of staff. Appropriate action is taken and Ofsted is notified in a timely manner. Staff are appropriately deployed to ensure adult-to-child ratios are maintained and staff ensure children are closely supervised. Risk assessments and daily checks are regularly conducted and reviewed, so appropriate action can be taken to minimise risks to children. Security arrangements are robust. For example, all visitors are asked to sign in and out of the building, and there is a coded key pad entry system into the main hub of the nursery for extra protection. Comprehensive policies and procedures, which promote children's health, safety and welfare, are fully in place and effectively implemented. Information needed to support children's welfare is sought at the time of registration. This includes medical history, allergies and individual health needs. Accurate records are maintained of any accidents or any medicines administered. Robust recruitment and comprehensive induction procedures ensure all staff are suitable for their role. The nursery ensures that all staff have Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Staff comment positively on the impact of the new ownership. As a result, staff morale has increased and the nursery as a whole has a united approach to raise standards. Regular, informal interim reviews and yearly work plans of staff performance are conducted. This supports the continued development of staff through ongoing training.

The nursery has a training matrix that gathers information regarding staff's knowledge and skills and this clearly identifies relevant training needs. Staff are actively encouraged to attend training which has a positive impact on the children. For example, staff return from 'Risk and challenge play' training enthused and full of ideas. As a result, the outdoor space is a haven for children to take challenging risks as part of their development. This demonstrates that training has a positive impact on children's learning. Staff record their observations of children and the manager uses this information to monitor and track the effectiveness of the educational programme. Consequently, any gaps in the nursery curriculum are identified and solution strategies developed. For example, staff are currently introducing more displays of written words in the toddler room, to further develop children's language and communication, in addition to their literacy skills. This ensures that all children's progress is monitored and that appropriate interventions are sought to close gaps. Much time and effort has been put in by the new ownership and management since the last inspection. As a consequence, all the previous actions and recommendations raised have been successfully addressed. The management team and staff demonstrate a good commitment to continuous improvement. For example, the manager updates the nursery's self-evaluation form on a regular basis and demonstrates a willingness to continue to improve practice. The nursery has made extensive changes and progress since being taken over by a new company. Each room has a targeted action plan for improvements which are being systematically addressed.

The self-evaluation process is fully effective in helping to focus on areas for future improvement that will have the most impact on children and their learning. For example, the current actions are centred on embedding the changes brought about by the new ownership. The nursery makes good use of support offered by their local authority, through advice and training. Questionnaires, meetings and discussions ensure all staff, parents and children are actively involved in the nursery's self-evaluation. The nursery has established very good links with external agencies and other professionals. For example, they are working closely with the adjacent children's centre, health visitors, social workers and speech therapists in order to meet the needs of the range of children who attend. Some children attend other settings. However, there is scope to strengthen the building of relationships with all the other settings that children attend, specifically childminders, in order to fully support children's all-round well-being and development. Parents are warmly approached by staff on arrival and at collection times, and a good exchange of information takes place about the children. Other information is provided on a whiteboard and on the foyer noticeboards. Parents see photographs of activities and learning that their children have been involved in daily, on the digital photo frame. The management team has also developed a parent forum to encourage parents to become more involved with nursery life. As a result, parents are well informed, and this strong partnership contributes to the good progress children make.

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	EY474606
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	953471
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	45
Number of children on roll	33
Name of provider	Children's Links
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01507528306

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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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