

Little Learners

Beeches Close, CHELMSFORD, Essex, CM1 2SB

Inspection date	13/11/2014
Previous inspection date	19/03/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
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's safety and well-being are prioritised, as practitioners and managers demonstrate good knowledge of how to safeguard children.
- The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners understand how children learn and use their knowledge to provide children with a wide range of interesting and challenging experiences, which help them to make secure progress across all seven areas of learning.
- Children are settled, comfortable and relaxed in the nursery environment. They form close relationships with adults caring for them and enjoy their nursery experiences.
- Partnerships with parents and others are strong. Consequently, key persons are able to complement the learning that takes place within the nursery with learning that happens in other areas of children's lives.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities for children to make choices about when to take snack and to develop independence skills during routine activities, such as snack time, are not fully maximised.
- Opportunities for children to make choices about whether they play and learn in an outdoor environment are not provided throughout the nursery session. Therefore, children who do learn more productively outdoors are not provided with the same opportunities as those who learn better indoors.

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 had a tour of the nursery premises.
- The inspector observed play and learning activities and spoke to children and practitioners in the indoor and outdoor environments.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and looked a range of policies, procedures and documentation, including evidence of staff suitability.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection.

Inspector

Lynn Hughes

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Learners was registered in 2004 on the Early Years Register. It is located within the Chelmsford area of Essex. It is managed by Essex County Council, Adult Education Services. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and 4. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 2.30pm Monday to Thursday and from 9am to 1pm on Friday. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 34 children on roll 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 with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend opportunities to enable children to make choices over and to guide their own learning, for example, by choosing when to participate in routine activities, such as snack time, to enable them to remain focussed on activities of their choice
- extend opportunities for children to develop independence skills at snack time, for example, by making their own sandwiches, cutting fruit and setting the tables
- enhance opportunities for children to access the garden throughout the day, to enable those children who learn more effectively outdoors to experience learning across all areas, which meets their individual learning styles.

Inspection judgements

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

Children actively participate in a good range of planned and freely chosen learning opportunities. Practitioners use their knowledge of the seven areas of learning to ensure that planning is effective and covers all areas. Practitioners make frequent observations of the children in their key worker groups. They use their observations to identify children's next steps in learning. Consequently, key persons know the children in their groups well and tailor planning to meet individual children's next steps in learning. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their children's learning by discussing their next steps in learning and viewing their children's development records and progress wheels. The nursery is aware of the requirement to carry out the progress checks for children between

the ages of two and three years and have implemented an effective system to do this. Evidence available shows that children make secure progress across all seven areas of learning, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children enjoy developing mathematical skills through activities, such as cooking. They weigh the dry ingredients and take turns to mix them together. Practitioners support this learning well by talking to children throughout the process about the way in which the ingredients change, what colour they turn and how they smell. Children are enthusiastic and are keen to participate throughout the activity. Children's language skills are effectively promoted by practitioners who speak to children clearly and encourage them to participate in singing sessions. Children's self-confidence is also promoted through their regular song and rhyme sessions as children have opportunities to stand up and perform their favourite songs. They confidently do this and enjoy the applause they receive from the adults and their friends.

The range of freely chosen and planned activities in which the children participate, enables them to develop secure skills for the future. For example, they develop good handwriting skills when they practise writing their name on their work. Children learn how to put their coats and shoes on and off in order to access the garden. Practitioners help to prepare children for their move to school, by developing children's listening and attention skills and by helping them to familiarise themselves with school routines, clothing and language.

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

Children are relaxed, settled and comfortable in the nursery environment. They form good relationships with adults caring for them and approach them confidently to share discussions and the occasional cuddle. Adults respond affectionately to children and demonstrate good knowledge of their individual likes, needs and interests. Children's behaviour is promoted positively by practitioners who regularly remind them how clever they are and praise them for being helpful. Adults act as good role models, encouraging children to be kind and caring towards each other. Practitioners prepare children for changes in their lives and their next stages of learning by working closely with parents to ensure they are knowledgeable about any changes happening outside of the nursery.

The nursery environment is clean and brightly decorated, creating a warm and welcoming ambiance throughout. The nursery building consists of two adjoining rooms, one of which provides opportunities for children to participate in messy play and the other provides space for children to extend their play through floor and table top toys. There is a small garden, which practitioners and managers are developing to create a space where children can explore across all seven areas of learning. Access to the garden is generally provided at set times during the morning and afternoon sessions, especially in the winter months. The small areas are mostly grass and can become very muddy and slippery if too wet. Set outdoor times each day provide opportunities for children to experience some fresh air and exercise during their session. However, they do not effectively enable those children who learn better outdoors to make choices over their learning or to fully benefit from

experiences, which enable them to learn through their preferred learning style.

Children's health and well-being is effectively promoted by practitioners who follow the nursery's procedures on health and safety. Children develop knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, for example, they are reminded to use their walking feet, to promote safe walking within the nursery rooms. Children enter into discussions with practitioners about food that is good for them and learn where some foods come from. For example, they grow a range of vegetables in containers in the nursery garden during the summer and use their produce in snack and cooking activities. Children enjoy a mid-session snack during their nursery day, provided by the nursery practitioners. This is generally organised as a large group activity and at a set time during each session. The rigidity of this routine activity means that some children have to leave what they are doing to have their snack, thus breaking their concentration and focus. Once participating in snack, children are provided with few opportunities to develop independence skills, for example, by cutting up fruit and vegetables or by pouring their own drinks.

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

Children are effectively protected from harm, as managers and practitioners are knowledgeable about their responsibilities concerning protecting children. The designated person for safeguarding children has completed appropriate training and cascades her knowledge to the rest of the team. Other practitioners refresh their understanding of how to protect children by completing face-to-face training courses. The manager often uses team meetings to review practitioner's knowledge of safety and safeguarding, for example, by setting a quiz or open discussion around a range of scenarios. All adults working within the nursery are appropriately vetted and proof of the checks used to assess their suitability is available on file. Effective recruitment and induction procedures ensure that all new practitioners are well chosen for their role and they complete a thorough induction programme during their first few months of working at the nursery. The manager oversees the induction programme for all new practitioners and students. Effective use of risk assessments and daily safety checks, ensure that children play and learn in a safe and secure environment.

The nursery is run by the local council as part of their adult learning provision. Some children registered at the nursery are children of learners attending courses within the adult-learning building, situated on the same site as the nursery. The registered providers employ a manager and deputy who are the core practitioners who work each day. In addition, there are four other practitioners who work as and when required, to meet the correct adult-to-child ratios. The manager and deputy supervise the team of practitioners effectively to ensure consistency and an effective delivery of the educational programme. This results in a strong, motivated team, who are keen to pursue their professional development. Managers have implemented effective systems for monitoring and reviewing

the quality of teaching. They regularly observe practitioners and use their observations to form part of their ongoing supervision and feedback. The manager has recently implemented an effective system for monitoring the progress of groups of children, as well as individuals. Managers and practitioners use reflective practice effectively to identify the nursery's strengths and weaknesses. They have improved and developed many aspects of the nursery and continue to review and evaluate its success. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in the nursery's self-evaluation process through regular questionnaires, as well as through verbal feedback shared with the practitioners on a daily basis.

Partnerships with parents and others are strong. Parents are provided with clear information about the nursery and how it operates through written policies and effectively presented wall displays. Practitioners have recently developed the use of a whiteboard for sharing information with parents about the activities that have taken place within the nursery each day. Parents spoken to stated this as a marked improvement and enjoy reading information about what their children do each day. Some parents comment on the friendliness of the practitioners and how this helped their children to settle effectively into nursery life. Some parents chose the nursery because, 'it is quite small and welcoming', and provides a warm and homely environment for their children. Key persons work well with other early years settings, which children attend. This enables them to share information about children's progress and development with key persons from the other provisions. Consequently, children's all round development is enhanced through effective partnership working.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY268807
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	856079
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	14
Number of children on roll	34
Name of provider	Essex County Council
Date of previous inspection	19/03/2009
Telephone number	01245 216959

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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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