

# Little Elms Pre-School Limited

Templars Junior School, Cressing Road, WITHAM, Essex, CM8 2NJ

## Inspection date

04/12/2014

Previous inspection date

22/01/2009

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

3

Previous inspection:

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|  |   |
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| How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend | 3 |
| The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children            | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision        | 3 |

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision requires improvement

- Children are appropriately protected from harm as practitioners and managers demonstrate a sound understanding of their responsibilities with regards to safeguarding children.
- Children are settled and comfortable in the pre-school. They form close relationships with practitioners as settling-in procedures are effective.
- Partnerships with parents and others are secure. Effective communication means that parents are always well-informed about their children's learning. Practitioners and managers work well with outside agencies to provide appropriate interventions to support all children in their care and learning needs.

### It is not yet good because

- The manager's monitoring of the deployment of practitioners is weak, which results in practitioners not consistently meeting the emotional and learning needs of all children.
- The quality of teaching is variable with some practitioners not enabling children to guide their own learning or to be creative. Daily routines do not always support opportunities for children to lead their own play.
- The provider does not always ensure that the premises are fit for purpose. For example, in the absence of heating within the main school, appropriate arrangements for providing and maintaining a consistent temperature have not been implemented.

## **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 had a tour of the pre-school.
- 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 deputy.
- The inspector held a meeting with the deputy and looked at a range of policies, procedures and documentation.
- The inspector looked at evidence of the checks used to assess practitioners' suitability and also viewed copies of practitioners' qualifications.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to at the time of the inspection and through written comments in children's learning documents.

## **Inspector**

Lynn Hughes

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Little Elms Pre-school was registered in 2001 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is located within Templars Junior School in the Witham area of Essex. It is managed by a workers' cooperative. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2, 3 and 6, and three are working towards level 3. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 12noon Monday, Thursday and Friday and from 9am until 3.30pm on Tuesday and Wednesday. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 56 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of 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 meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- manage the deployment of practitioners to ensure that all children's emotional needs are consistently met and to provide an environment focused on learning, as well as care
- improve the quality of teaching through effective monitoring and performance management systems to ensure practitioners have a consistent approach to delivering the educational programmes for children
- review daily routines to ensure that children have opportunities to direct their own learning and engage in sustained, uninterrupted play
- ensure that the premises are fit for purpose, for example, by maintaining a constant and appropriate temperature.

### Inspection judgements

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

Children are generally active and busy during their pre-school session. They make choices over their play and learning by accessing resources, which are well labelled and presented on low-level shelving. Practitioners provide children with a range of adult-led and child-initiated play experiences, which help them to make progress across all seven areas of

learning. However, some adult-led activities do not allow children flexibility to be creative and to express themselves. For example, a Christmas decoration activity, which is too adult-led, results in a number of identical paper plates decorated as robins. This happens because practitioners are too focused on the finished product looking exactly like the example they prepared, instead of allowing children to create their own interpretation. Some use of appropriate language to extend children's thinking is used, however, there are missed opportunities to fully maximise children's learning from this activity.

Key persons observe the learning and achievements of children in their key-person groups and record their progress in individual learning journeys. This information is used to identify children's next steps in learning and to track their progression across all seven areas of learning. Managers have recently introduced effective ways of monitoring groups of children, as well as individual children, to enable them to more accurately identify gaps in children's progress. Parents are encouraged to share in their children's development through regular ongoing discussions and through open events, whereby they view their children's learning journeys and discuss their next steps in learning with their child's key person. Key persons complete the progress checks for children between the ages of two and three years and share these with parents. This provides all parties with an early assessment of children's progress and helps to identify if there are any areas for concern with children's development in the three prime areas of learning. Information available shows that children make satisfactory progress across the board in relation to their starting points, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children who speak English as an additional language also make appropriate progress as key persons work well with parents to establish information about relevant words to help children to understand and to use their home language in play.

Children enjoy making models from a range of construction toys and resources. They build towers and houses, and chat confidently to their peers about what they are making. Children enjoy accessing the pre-school garden, which is well equipped and provides exciting learning opportunities across all seven areas of learning. Practitioners support children's understanding of the world through the celebration of festivals and special occasions. This helps them to develop knowledge of other people's cultural and religious differences. Practitioners enable children to learn about planting and growing by providing an area of the garden with raised planting boxes. Children explore nature and wildlife when they use magnifying glasses to find insects and bugs. The range of freely chosen learning experiences provided for children generally enable them to develop skills for the future, which will help to prepare them for their next stage of learning. For example, children develop some listening skills when they sit together for stories. They develop an understanding about keeping the environment safe when they place toys and resources back in their correct boxes at tidy up time. Children also have opportunities to learn to put their own coats and hats on when they use the outdoor area. Children have some opportunities to develop handwriting skills when they freely access resources for drawing and writing, and are encouraged to begin recognising their own name from an early age, when they hang their belongings on their named coat peg.

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

Children are settled and comfortable within the pre-school. Effective settling-in procedures, ensure that parents, children and practitioners spend valuable time getting to know each other before children begin attending the pre-school. Children form close relationships with their key person and other adults working within the setting. Practitioners act as good role models, promoting positive ways of speaking to each other and encouraging children to be kind and caring towards each other. However, the lack of effective deployment of practitioners, sometimes results in children not being well supervised or supported in their play and learning. Consequently, they become restless and find minor conflicts difficult to resolve, often resulting in pushing each other or toys being taken off one another.

The pre-school environment is welcoming and vibrant with lots of examples of children's creative work displayed on the walls and hanging from the ceiling. Children move confidently around the pre-school room, accessing a wide range of resources and equipment. Practitioners follow a rigid routine each session, which children are very familiar with. For example, mid-session, children know that they have to tidy all of the toys and play equipment away for snack. While they readily do this, the rigidity of this routine means there is a short period where children and practitioners are moving around, creating a very busy, loud and congested environment. It also means that children who are engrossed in a chosen activity of their choice or creating a model from a construction toy have their focus and attention halted.

Children's health and well-being are promoted by practitioners following the pre-school's policies and procedures. For example, all children go to the bathrooms before snack time to wash their hands. Practitioners remind them of the importance of hand washing to remove germs. Children enjoy regular fresh air and exercise when they access the pre-school garden or go for walks in the extended school grounds or local community. Children enjoy a healthy mid-session snack, which usually comprises of a range of fresh fruit and cut vegetables. Children have some opportunities during snack time to develop independence skills such as pouring their own drinks. Practitioners work closely with parents to establish good ongoing methods of communication. This enables parents to share relevant information with their child's key person about any changes occurring in children's home lives. Key persons then consider ways in which they can support children and families through these changes.

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

Children are appropriately protected from harm as practitioners demonstrate a secure knowledge of their responsibilities concerning safeguarding children. The pre-school providers ensure that the written safeguarding policy is regularly updated and that practitioners are knowledgeable about the content of the policy. All practitioners working with children are appropriately vetted and proof of the checks used to assess their

suitability is available on file. The pre-school managers ensure that new practitioners awaiting confirmation of their suitability are supervised and not left alone with children. Practitioners generally provide children with a safe environment in which to play and learn through effective risk assessments. However, a recent breakdown in the heating within the main school has resulted in issues with the providers being able to maintain an appropriate temperature within the setting. Some arrangements have been put in place to heat the room for the first part of the session. However, these arrangements do not maintain a consistent temperature for the duration of the day, especially when the setting operates their afternoon sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday. Practitioners ensure children's safety generally by conducting daily safety checks and regular risk assessments.

The pre-school is managed by a manager and deputy, both of whom hold Early Years Professional Status. The team of practitioners are appropriately supported through the pre-school's systems for performance management, to review their personal and training needs. However, these systems are not robust enough to sufficiently focus attention on the quality of teaching or the effective deployment of practitioners. Consequently, the quality of teaching is inconsistent with some practitioners not demonstrating accurate knowledge of how children learn. Self-evaluation is used to identify the pre-school's strengths and weaknesses, and appropriate action plans are put in place to address any areas for improvement. Parents are actively encouraged to feed into the pre-school's self-evaluation by completing regular questionnaires. Managers use the feedback obtained through this process to inform changes and improvements.

Partnerships with parents and others are secure. Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection shared their satisfaction on the way in which the pre-school cares for their children. They stated that they feel well informed about their children's learning and development, and have confidence in the team of practitioners. Some parents of children who require additional support are complimentary of the way in which the pre-school has identified their children's needs and supported them by seeking appropriate interventions. Links with local schools and other early years settings, which children attend are strong, enabling practitioners to complement the learning that takes place across other areas of children's lives.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met  
(with  
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met  
(with  
actions)**

**To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:**

- take all necessary measures to minimise any risks to the health or safety of the children and practitioners (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- take all necessary measures to minimise any risks to the health or safety of the children and practitioners (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

## 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

|                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>     | EY378804                   |
| <b>Local authority</b>             | Essex                      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>           | 858501                     |
| <b>Type of provision</b>           |                            |
| <b>Registration category</b>       | Childcare - Non-Domestic   |
| <b>Age range of children</b>       | 0 - 17                     |
| <b>Total number of places</b>      | 26                         |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>  | 56                         |
| <b>Name of provider</b>            | Little Elms Pre School Ltd |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 22/01/2009                 |
| <b>Telephone number</b>            | 07809 254881               |

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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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