

Little Raccoons Day Nursery Ltd

105a Sandringham Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire, WD24 7FQ



Inspection date

Previous inspection date

7 April 2015

21 May 2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Requires improvement	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Requires improvement	3
The setting does not meet legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The provider has failed to notify Ofsted of the serious illness of a child while in the nursery's care and the subsequent hospital admittance by the parent.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Staff do not always plan group activities effectively to ensure that the learning experience is purposeful or meets the individual needs of all children.
- The monitoring systems that are in place are not fully effective because the weaknesses in practice have not been identified by the management team.
- On occasions, staff provide older children with answers rather than encouraging them to think for themselves.
- Staff do not always fully promote children's social skills, particularly during mealtimes, when there is a lack of meaningful conversation.

It has the following strengths

- Staff promote children's mathematical knowledge. They use opportunities during play to help children to practise their counting skills and recognise a range of simple shapes.
- Staff knowledge of child protection is secure. They can recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and know who they must report their concerns to. This protects children's safety and welfare.
- Staff work well in partnership with parents, keeping them informed of matters affecting their children's welfare. Staff also regularly discuss with parents how they can work together to support children in learning new skills. This promotes continuity of learning.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that learning experiences are planned to be interesting and challenging, and that staff effectively support children's individual needs, taking account of their varying ages and capabilities at all times.

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

- strengthen the monitoring and evaluation systems that are in place, so that any weaknesses are quickly identified and addressed
- extend children's learning further, particularly those who are more able, by encouraging them to think for themselves and find the answer to their own questions, for example, by asking them probing questions and giving them time to consider their responses
- enhance children's social and conversational skills, particularly during mealtimes, for example, by engaging them in discussions about their day at nursery or what they have done at the weekend with their families.

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about this provider.
- The inspector observed children taking part in a range of activities and spoke with the staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager and held a meeting with her.
- The inspector checked evidence of Disclosure and Barring Service checks and suitability, qualifications and training of staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies, procedures, risk assessments and the nursery's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector spoke to a small sample of parents and has taken account of their views.

Inspector

Katherine Hurst

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This requires improvement

The quality of teaching is variable. Staff plan several circle times throughout the day for all children in the nursery, without taking into account their varying abilities and interests. Taking part in circle time sometimes has a negative impact on children's enjoyment because their own initiated play is interrupted. Therefore, children's progress towards the early learning goals is not as swift as it could be. Nevertheless, during free play, staff respond to children's ideas and curiosities. For example, some children find a spider in the garden and staff provide them with magnifying glasses to search for other mini-beasts. They discuss the characteristics of the bugs, such as the number of legs they have, and encourage children to compare this to themselves and other animals. This helps to develop children's understanding of the world and prepare them for future learning in school. There are times, however, where staff give the more able children the answers to their questions instead of nurturing their thinking skills. For example, while painting, children ask how to make the colour pink and staff are too quick to tell them what to do.

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

Staff are caring and take an interest in what children have to say. They praise children for their successes, which boosts their self-esteem. Children develop close bonds with their key person and this promotes their emotional well-being. Children behave well because staff model the expectations of the setting. Staff remind children to have good manners and engage children in turn-taking games, so that they learn to play cooperatively with others. Children have opportunities to play and exercise outside in the fresh air, and staff provide a range of resources to support them to strengthen their larger muscles. This helps to promote children's good health. Staff sit with children and encourage them to try new foods and have regular drinks. However, staff do not use mealtimes to extend children's social skills further. This is because conversations are mainly based around directing, reminding children to eat nicely and to use their cutlery.

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

The provider failed to inform Ofsted, within the required timescale, that a young child was admitted to hospital after being taken ill in the nursery. However, staff do respond to children's illnesses appropriately and take immediate action to promote their good health. Over half of the staff hold a current first-aid qualification. The manager identifies some aspects of the nursery that can be improved, such as enhancing the resources available for children to play with in the garden. However, arrangements for self-evaluation are not consistently successful because the weaknesses in teaching have not been identified and addressed. The manager holds supervision meetings with the staff and they are able to request training to develop their knowledge further. Recently, some staff have completed training regarding how to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use the knowledge that they have gained to identify children's repeated behaviours and consider how they can promote their learning further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY432662
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1010294
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	23
Number of children on roll	34
Name of provider	Little Raccoons Day Nursery Ltd
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2012
Telephone number	01923 800 711

Little Raccoons Day Nursery Ltd was registered in 2011. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for 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.

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