

The Learning Mill

Newspaper House, Joliffe Street, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 5LJ



Inspection date

Previous inspection date

3 November 2015

18 January 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The owner and staff are passionate about developing the service provided and the teaching given to children. Training is seen as essential in developing staff's skills.
- Staff undertake assessments of children's abilities and carefully use them to plan activities that help children make progress in all areas of learning. Staff are particularly skilful at supporting children of all ages to develop their thinking skills and become confident, independent learners. Children are very motivated and curious and make the most of the learning opportunities provided.
- Children's knowledge of the natural world is very strong. All children, including babies, have extensive contact with natural materials and small animals. Parents praise this aspect of the provision, which in many cases played a part in them choosing the nursery.
- Staff's work with disabled children and those with special educational needs is excellent. Children with very complex needs are well supported and staff work intensively with a range of professionals to ensure children's needs are well met.
- The children are well behaved and kind to their friends. Young children show empathy and concern for their friends. Older children understand and reinforce simple rules and codes of behaviour amongst themselves.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff do not provide children with enough opportunities to hear or learn mathematical language.
- On occasions, staff do not support quieter children effectively enough to share their thoughts and ideas and to be fully involved in group discussions.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- provide children with more opportunities to hear and learn mathematical language
- support quieter children more effectively to share their thoughts and ideas and to contribute to group discussions.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the nursery manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery manager/provider and her deputy. She looked at relevant documentation, such as the nursery's self-evaluation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to a small selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Sarah Rhodes

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The staff and management team show a real commitment to providing a high-quality provision. They have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have good levels of training. The management team purchase bespoke training to extend staff's skills. Professional development is targeted at supporting children's learning. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff's suitability is checked when they are recruited and on a continuous basis through regular meetings with the manager. All staff have a good understanding of what would constitute a safeguarding concern. They know what they should do about any concerns they may have. They have regular training and discussions about the subject. Due to the extensive use of natural materials and the presence of animals in all the group rooms, specific risk assessments are in place to ensure staff can manage hazards and keep children safe. Staff keep good records of children's learning and complete detailed summaries of children's progress on a termly basis. The management team undertake regular reviews of staff's work and children's learning records to check that all children are making good progress. Partnerships with parents are good. Staff ensure they are well informed of their child's progress and understand how they can extend children's learning at home.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Teaching is good. Staff know the children well and plan activities that support children's next steps in learning. They gather information from parents about what interests children and what they can do. This information is fed into planning on a daily basis. The staff are well motivated and use a range of teaching methods to enthuse the children. Children's concentration and communication skills are well supported. Staff consider the needs of different groups of children so activities can be tailored to children's abilities. For example, children who will start school soon have targeted work, such as developing their early reading skills and knowledge of phonic sounds. Learning these key skills is part of children's good preparation for school. Children are physically active in the well-planned, small outdoor area. They have many opportunities to explore a range of materials, outside in the mud kitchen and inside through craft and other creative activities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children develop the ability to manage risks from an early age. Staff provide children with a range of natural materials, which they learn to handle with care. Toddlers and pre-school children carefully use the stairs each time they play outside. Children's emotional well-being is well supported. They are very settled and confident and they have warm relationships with their key person. Children enjoy freshly prepared meals and develop an understanding of a healthy diet. Mealtimes are unhurried, social occasions where children also develop their independence and confidently serve themselves.

Outcomes for children are good

Children make good progress from their starting points. Most are working comfortably within the range of development typical for their age. Where necessary, children have appropriate additional support in place in order for them to consistently achieve well.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY413620
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	940105
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	67
Name of provider	The Learning Mill Ltd
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2011
Telephone number	01538 388228

The Learning Mill was registered in 2010. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications; one at level 5, one at level 4, eight at level 3 and one at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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