

Little Oaks Pre-School

Adeyfield Community Centre, Queens Square, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 4EW



Inspection date

Previous inspection date

10 October 2016

17 July 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement	3
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Inadequate	4
Outcomes for children		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is inadequate

- Children's health and safety are compromised as a result of staff's poor supervision. Staff do not supervise children closely enough when outside and little attention is given to ensuring that they cannot access hazardous items, such as staff's handbags and electrical equipment in the office.
- The provider does not ensure that all members of the management team have sufficient skills and are capable to lead and manage the staff to a good level in her absence.
- Staff are not aware of the basic needs or abilities of children when they first start. Children's starting points are not assessed, in order to plan effectively for their early learning and development. Key persons for babies do not discuss children's home routines with parents, in order to meet their needs and comfort babies appropriately.
- Staff are not alert to some of the signs that may give cause for concern regarding child protection. They do not act on children's comments or actions during their play and occasionally are dismissive of children's expressions of sadness.
- The statutory progress check for every child aged between two and three years is not completed or shared with parents.

It has the following strengths

- Children enjoy physical games that promote their learning in the outside area. For example, they use numbers and counting as they play hide and seek with staff members and other children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due Date
■ ensure that staff are deployed effectively, in order to supervise children and to promote their safety, health and well-being	31/10/2016
■ take reasonable steps to identify, remove and minimise hazards to children	31/10/2016
■ ensure that managers have the capability, skills and knowledge to lead and manage the staff, in order to improve practice	31/10/2016
■ make sure the basic needs of babies are adequately met and their key persons know how to effectively comfort and support them	31/10/2016
■ ensure that all staff have sufficient knowledge of how to identify any potential child protection concerns and have the skills to respond to children in an appropriate way	31/10/2016
■ ensure that the statutory progress check is carried out for every child aged between two and three years and it is shared with parents	31/10/2016
■ obtain detailed information from parents about children's skills on entry to ensure the prompt identification of children's starting points in learning, in order to secure the accuracy of initial planning for activities.	31/10/2016

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

- introduce more effective ways to gather information from parents on what children already know and can do when they start at the pre-school.

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about this provider.
- The inspector observed activities and spoke to the staff and children at appropriate times.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documents and a range of other documents, including the safeguarding policy and procedure.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of the staff working with children.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and of the pre-school's action plans.

Inspector

Jill Hardaker

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is inadequate

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The provider is failing to ensure that children are adequately supervised or kept safe. The key-person system is not rigorous enough to ensure that children's basic needs are known and met by staff. The provider states she is stepping back from managing the pre-school. However, she has not ensured that the deputy manager has the necessary skills and capability to manage the pre-school in her absence. Not all staff are confident in recognising potential child protection concerns. They fail to respond when children comment on feeling sad at home. Staff do not consider the need to monitor such comments. They do not give appropriate reassurance to children to support them in expressing their feelings further. Suitable recruitment and induction procedures are in place for new members of staff, students and volunteers. Supervision and appraisals of staff's practice are regularly carried out. These are used to help identify training opportunities for staff. The manager and staff use self-evaluation to monitor the provision. However, this is not rigorous in identifying weakness and prioritising areas for improvement. The provider understands her responsibilities to inform Ofsted and other relevant agencies of significant incidents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

Staff do not complete the required progress check for all children aged between two and three years. Parents are not given a short written summary of their child's development. Staff are not aware of children's starting points in learning and, consequently, planning is not based on what children know and can do. Younger children's personal, social and emotional development are not promoted effectively. Nevertheless, the activities that children engage in offer them some opportunities to play alongside others and participate in physical activity. Staff read stories to children and encourage them to retell the story to each other. Children engage in role play in the garden. They collect soil in pots and use this to make pretend cakes. Staff show them how to shake the soil through a sieve and talk about how this breaks up the lumps. Where outside professionals are involved in individual children's lives, staff work with them to support children's specific learning plans.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

Staff's supervision of the children is poor. On occasions, during the inspection, staff were observed standing with their backs to the children, particularly when playing outside. Risk assessments are not effective in identifying and addressing hazards. Children are able to access areas where there are risks to their health, safety and well-being. Staff are unaware of children taking random lunchboxes from the storage trolley and beginning to eat food which may not be suitable for them. Staff do not notice when children go behind screens and have access to staff's bags and electrical equipment in the office. The key-person system does not ensure the youngest children are supported in the best possible way. Staff are unable to comfort babies who are new to the pre-school when they become extremely upset and distressed. Staff have not gathered sufficient information from parents about the methods used at home to soothe, comfort and care for their babies. Children who have recently moved into the pre-school section settle well. Some children

rely on their comforters when they first arrive. Staff support them in gradually dispensing with these, working with parents on this issue. The environment is clean and staff and children regularly wash their hands at appropriate times. Staff encourage children to be independent; they have opportunities to pour drinks and cut up fruit for snacks. Staff support children who speak English as an additional language to make progress. They learn key words in the home languages spoken by children. They also use visual prompts, such as picture cards, to help children understand the activities available to them.

Outcomes for children require improvement

Some children are working comfortably within the range typical for their age. However, the inconsistent support for some of the youngest children means that they are not always engaged in learning. Older children are developing skills in using tools for writing as they use chalks outdoors. They use mathematical language and count how many slices they have as they chop up pretend food. Children are developing the basic skills they need for future learning at school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY392996
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1074773
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	41
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Tracy Ann Hart
Registered person unique reference number	RP909768
Date of previous inspection	17 July 2013
Telephone number	01442 252 030

Little Oaks Pre-School was registered in 2009. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm for 46 weeks of the year. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school supports children who have special educational needs or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

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.

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