

Rothamsted Little Stars Nursery



Rothamsted Research, West Common, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 2JQ

Inspection date 24 January 2017
Previous inspection date 25 July 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
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

- Effective settling-in procedures support children to feel secure as they begin at the nursery. Children and their family swiftly form warm bonds with their key person. Babies snuggle up to their key person as they become tired and settle peacefully to sleep.
- Partnerships with parents are good. The ongoing sharing of information successfully involves parents in every aspect of their children's care and learning. Staff provide them with a wealth of ideas to support their children's learning at home. For example, they invite them to attend workshops and encourage them to borrow home learning packs.
- Children enjoy a good range of interesting activities that stimulates their curiosity. For example, young children experiment mixing sand and water together. They work out that when they add more sand to the water it becomes thicker and takes longer to slide off their hands.
- The leadership and management of the nursery is strong. The well-qualified manager and dedicated team of staff continuously evaluate and reflect on their practice to develop the nursery further. An active parent partnership group is one way that staff seek the views of parents.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff do not make the best use of older children's interests in child-initiated creative activities to extend their early writing skills.
- On occasions, staff do not give children the best possible support to develop their independence in their self-help skills.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- provide more opportunities for older children to extend their early writing skills
- offer children more opportunities to practise their self-help skills as they gain independence.

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 spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager, regional manager and quality assurance manager. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Lorraine Pike

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of identifying any children who may be at risk of harm. They know the action to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare. Recruitment procedures are robust. Rigorous checks are conducted to ensure that staff are suitable to care for children. The manager regularly monitors staff practice through frequent supervision meetings. Staff are very well supported to attend relevant courses and gain additional knowledge and skills to further promote effective outcomes for children. The manager's attention to monitoring the educational programmes ensures that any gaps in children's learning are quickly addressed. Good links with local schools that children move on to make a strong contribution to meeting children's continuing needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

All children are motivated and inquisitive learners; they engage in challenging activities with enthusiasm in this welcoming and vibrant nursery. For example, young children persevere at completing complex puzzles and sing a song containing letters of the alphabet. They squeal with excitement as they learn the names of parts of their body, such as cheek and ankle. Babies learn how to operate electronic toys. They work out that they need to push different buttons to activate the colourful lights and create sounds. Children positively respond to staff's use of questioning to help challenge their thinking. Staff consistently respond to babies' babbles, helping them to learn the pattern of conversation. They introduce new words to younger children and listen attentively to older children, who use complex sentences. Staff skilfully identify opportunities to extend older children's vivid imaginations. Children thoroughly enjoy pretending to drive a bus as they pick up passengers and take them to their chosen destination.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Staff take the time to get to know children well. Effective arrangements are in place to help children experience a smooth move to the next room and on to school when the time comes. Children behave well. Young children happily share toys and activities together and older children know to line up sensibly before going outdoors. Mealtimes are a social experience for all children. For example, babies sit around the table together and begin to interact with each other. Staff make the most of the extensive outdoor spaces where children enjoy fresh air and develop good physical skills. They enjoy jumping in and out of tyres and building bridges from large planks of wood which they balance along.

Outcomes for children are good

Children are making good progress in relation to their starting points. They demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Older children express a keen interest in books. They make up stories from the pictures on the pages and share these with their friends. Children count the number of fingers on their hands and are beginning to use addition and subtraction to solve mathematical problems. These are just some of the skills that help to prepare children for their future learning at school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	123610
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1048185
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	43
Number of children on roll	54
Name of registered person	Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP901358
Date of previous inspection	25 July 2013
Telephone number	01582 343712

Rothamsted Little Stars Nursery was registered in 2000 and is managed by Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited. It employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including one with early years professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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