

The Learning Mill

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



Inspection date	26 October 2018
Previous inspection date	3 November 2015

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

The provision is good

- The newly appointed manager is highly committed to the continued development of the nursery. She involves staff, parents and children in identifying areas for improvement.
- Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities in this caring and nurturing nursery. They are confident and happily play together. Staff teach the children to be kind, share and take turns. Children's behaviour is good.
- Teaching is good. Staff are skilled in guiding children's learning as they play. They have a secure understanding of how children learn and effectively interact with children to extend their learning.
- Staff work well with other professionals to meet the needs of children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Children are provided with additional support by caring and skilled staff. Their individual needs are well met and children thrive.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Staff regularly provide parents with verbal and written information about their children's progress and ways to support children's learning at home. Parents are invited to a wide range of events to meet with staff, such as during a Halloween activity party.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The manager does not make fully effective use of information gathered from tracking children's progress to identify any gaps in children's learning more precisely.
- Staff, on occasions, do not gather information from parents about what their children know and can do when they first start, to support initial assessments.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen the monitoring systems to track children's progress even more precisely, ensure assessments are accurate across the nursery and make comparisons of the progress of different groups of children
- develop systems to ensure information gathered from parents when children first start helps staff to identify children's starting points.

Inspection activities

- The inspector had a tour of the premises.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and assessed the impact this has on children's learning. The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery manager. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Dawn Robinson

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

Safeguarding is effective. Children are kept safe and secure on the premises. Comprehensive risk assessments are used to minimise hazards. Staff understand their responsibility to safeguard children. They know the procedure to follow if they consider a child is at risk of harm. Recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are rigorous to check that staff are suitable to carry out their roles. Staff are well deployed throughout the nursery. The manager regularly holds supervisory meetings with staff to discuss their practice and identify any further training. Parents are highly complimentary about the welcoming staff and comment on the good progress their children make.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff immerse themselves in play with the children. They support babies and toddlers to develop their communication and language skills by introducing new words and narrating what they are doing. For example, staff introduce children to descriptive words as they 'crunch' seeds under their feet. Children are encouraged to feel the 'soft' and 'slimy' pumpkin flesh as they 'scoop' it out. Older children listen carefully to stories. They join in with repetitive phrases and learn about trees and their leaves. Children hunt for different leaves, such as a leaf with a number on it, to support their mathematical development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children are warmly welcomed into the nursery during a settling-in period adapted to meet the individual needs of the child. Staff gather comprehensive information from parents to help support children's routine and care needs. They build good relationships with the children, which helps them feel safe and secure. Staff use praise and encouragement to support children's good behaviour and build children's self-esteem. Children enjoy balanced and nutritious snacks and meals. They learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy through good hygiene routines. There are opportunities indoors and outside to support their physical development. Children enjoy trips into the wider world, such as visits to the wild life park or pantomime. They learn about other cultures and religions through celebratory activities, such as Diwali.

Outcomes for children are good

All children, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make good progress in their learning and development. Pre-school children learn some key skills in readiness for their next stage in learning. For example, they recognise their own name, link sounds to letters, count and begin to identify numerals. Children throughout the nursery demonstrate friendly and cooperative behaviour. Staff support them to listen to and respect each other's opinions. Children are motivated to learn and eager to try new activities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY413620
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10066021
Type of provision	Full day care
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Age range of children	1 - 4
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	73
Name of registered person	The Learning Mill Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP529950
Date of previous inspection	3 November 2015
Telephone number	01538 388228

The Learning Mill registered in 2010. The nursery employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 5 and eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery operates from 7.30am to 6pm from Monday to Friday, all year round. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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