

Inspection of The Little Shepherds at The Gatehouse

St. Bartholomew's Church Hall, SEVENOAKS, Kent TN14 5PQ

Inspection date: 25 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are greeted warmly when they arrive at the pre-school. Staff use their thorough knowledge of each child to plan an ambitious curriculum of activities that reflects their interests and offers a good level of challenge. All children, including those with special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND), progress well. Staff skilfully build on children's interest in activities to extend their learning. For example, while playing at the sand tray, a child showed a high level of imagination as they spoke about pirates. The staff member used interesting language to extend the child's vocabulary. When the child decided to hide treasure in the sand, the staff member suggested making a treasure map. This led to some wonderful problem solving and early writing. Activities such as cooking support children's mathematical development, as well as providing good opportunities to master new skills and develop their independence. For example, children confidently measured ingredients, cracked eggs and mixed up a batter.

Children are friendly, polite and behave well. They approach activities with confidence, curiosity and enthusiasm, which prepares them well for their future learning. However, there are so many resources and activities on offer that children often explore these alone or with an adult, rather than choosing to play with their peers.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Staff work well as a team, creating a calm, supportive atmosphere. Together, they have successfully improved the quality of the care and education they provide. The manager has effective arrangements to offer ongoing support to staff, including providing training to extend their skills. For example, all staff have attended a course that has helped them to understand how to positively manage children's behaviour. The manager also encourages and supports staff to complete qualifications as part of their professional development.
- All staff know the children well and respect them as individuals. They carefully consider the interests, abilities and learning styles of each child when organising the environment and deciding what activities to offer. For example, there is always an activity, such as sand, available for children who enjoy exploring using their senses. Similarly, a child who loves animals was excited to discover a tent set out with animal figures and a book full of pictures when they arrived.
- The care and education of children with SEND is carefully and successfully coordinated with other relevant professionals. All staff are aware of the learning and developmental goals identified for each child. In addition, they understand the plans in place to support children to achieve these.
- Partnership working with parents is effective. Children benefit from observing the friendly exchanges between their parents and the staff. Parents spoken to

during the inspection were happy with the care their children receive.

- Overall, children display good social skills and play comfortably alongside each other. However, the organisation of activities and the deployment of staff does not actively encourage children to work together and collaborate. This is because there is always an enthusiastic and attentive adult available for them to interact with. While this has the benefit of providing children with a lot of one-to-one teaching, they do not gain as much as possible from group activities. The manager and staff are working to address this issue, but have not successfully identified strategies to use.
- Children benefit from the broad range of experiences they enjoy outside of the nursery setting. Regular outings in the local community, including to the library and woodland areas, help to extend their understanding of the world around them. Keen to build on children's interest, the manager has recently obtained an allotment to enable them to plant and tend fruit and vegetables.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the potential signs and symptoms of abuse and regularly attend training to keep their knowledge up to date. The deputy manager takes the lead role in safeguarding children. She has a good understanding of the procedures to follow should concerns arise about the welfare of any child, or in case of an allegation against a member of staff. The arrangements to assess and manage risks have been strengthened and a range of safety precautions are in place. For example, children wear high-visibility jackets when walking in the community and the doors to the hall are locked throughout each session. In addition, daily safety checks are carried out on the premises.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- consider ways to encourage and support more interaction between children to enrich their learning and enjoyment during group activities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY548197
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10100062
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	7
Name of registered person	Ramage, Laura Jane
Registered person unique reference number	RP516780
Telephone number	07768992193
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2019

Information about this early years setting

The Little Shepherds at The Gatehouse registered in 2017. It is located in Otford, Kent. The pre-school operates during term times and is open from 9am until midday on Monday to Thursday, and from 9am to 3pm on Friday. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are four members of staff, of whom two are qualified at level 3 and two are qualified at level 2.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Liz Caluori

Inspection activities

- The inspector completed a learning walk with the manager to gain an understanding of the curriculum and organisation of the environment.
- The manager and inspector completed a joint observation of an activity and analysed how successful it was.
- The inspector spoke with the staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- A selection of paperwork was scrutinised, including accident records and staff suitability checks.

We carried out this inspection 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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