

Inspection of Secret Garden Day Nursery

50 Haughton Green, Darlington DL1 2DF

Inspection date:

22 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Staff focus on supporting children and families to feel safe and happy in the nursery. They meet children's care needs effectively and provide a caring, nurturing environment. Babies settle in quickly and older children benefit from calm, quiet areas, which have a positive impact on their behaviour. Although the procedures for dropping-off and collecting children has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, parents are still happy with the levels of communication they have with the staff team. Staff spend time outdoors talking to parents and families, which helps to promote continuity of care and build relationships.

Overall, children are engaged in activities that they enjoy. Staff provide a range of resources that they know children are interested in. This helps them to start to build on their concentration and some children make good progress. For example, older children thoroughly enjoy an activity to raise their awareness of the importance of good oral hygiene. They use good small-physical skills to colour 'plaque' onto teeth and show pride once they have 'brushed' this off. However, staff's teaching does not consistently support and challenge all children, and some have lower expectations, particularly for children's communication and language development.

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

- Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development well. They recognise the impact of the pandemic for some children and work hard to help them settle in and feel safe. Children have good relationships with staff and regularly ask them to join in with play. Staff gather information about children's routines when they start and use this information to meet their individual care needs. This has a positive impact on children's emotional well-being.
- Children are keen to join in with activities and, at times, show good levels of concentration. For example, older children enjoy exploring slime independently in the tuff tray and others play imaginatively with characters in the doll's house. Babies use their hands to make marks in the paint tray and young children develop good physical skills outdoors.
- The curriculum for children's personal, social and emotional development and physical development is good. However, experiences planned for children in other areas of learning are not focused sufficiently on children's developmental needs. Staff do not consistently identify what they want children to learn and do not challenge them well enough to promote their good progress. In particular, there are weaknesses in how children's communication and language skills are promoted throughout the nursery. Some staff have insufficient knowledge of how children acquire language and have low expectations for their learning. Despite staff recognising when some children have a delay in their speech, there

is not enough focus placed on skills, including developing key words. This means that, for some children, gaps are not closing swiftly enough to build firm foundations for the future.

- Staff are good role models for children. They encourage good manners and teach children about making healthy choices. For example, older children learn about the importance of brushing their teeth and living a healthy lifestyle. Children have plenty of opportunities for exercise outdoors in the fresh air and large garden. Staff help them to take an active part in their self-care and build on their independence, such as putting on their coats and hats. Children's behaviour is good. They take turns and show kindness to each other.
- Partnerships with parents and other professionals are positive. Staff work alongside the local authority officers to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, staff work on targeted plans to support children and follow advice from other professionals. Parents leave positive reviews for the staff and are very happy with how confident their children have become, and feel this has helped their transition to school.
- The leadership team has focused on supporting staff, children and families throughout the pandemic. The manager knows each family exceptionally well and offers advice and guidance whenever it is needed. Staff benefit from regular team meetings and one-to-one supervision. However, monitoring of staff practice is not thorough enough to identify and address all weaknesses in teaching. This is affecting the nursery's ability to reach a good standard of quality, overall.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff prioritise children's safety. They are confident to identify, record and report concerns about children's welfare and know what to do if they have concerns about their colleagues. The manager provides staff with a clear policy and procedure to follow. They have access to regular child protection training, which helps them to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, such as the impact of domestic violence and possible signs of exploitation. The provider and manager recruit staff safely and ensure they are suitable to work with children. For example, they complete enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks and validate references for applicants. During the pandemic, the manager completed specific risk assessments, which were shared with staff and parents. This helped to keep them safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
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implement a well-planned and sequenced curriculum, particularly for communication and language, ensuring staff have high expectations and provide challenging experiences that help children to make the best possible progress in their learning.	22/03/2022
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- improve monitoring so that all weaknesses in teaching are swiftly addressed to raise the practice to a higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY552521
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	10143609
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 12
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	71
Name of registered person	Secret Garden (Darlington) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP552520
Telephone number	01325464443
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Secret Garden Day Nursery registered in 2017 and is situated in Haughton Green in Darlington. The nursery employs 14 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds early years professional status and two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 6. The majority of the remaining staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.45am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children and wrap-around care for children who attend local schools.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Michelle Lorains

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- A joint observation was completed by the manager and inspector indoors during a planned activity. The inspector and manager made further observations outdoors and evaluated the impact of this on children's learning.
- The inspector held a discussion with the manager and provider in relation to the leadership and management of the nursery. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of recruitment and staff's qualifications and their suitability to work with children. She discussed children's learning and development with the staff team and nursery manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents, and the manager obtained written feedback for the inspection.

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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Manchester
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