

Inspection of Little Learners

67 Stockport Road, Denton, Manchester M34 6NB

Inspection date:

23 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

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children are safe and enjoy their time at the nursery. They have trusting relationships with staff, which helps them to feel settled and assured. During the COVID-19 pandemic, toddlers and pre-school children benefited from lots of support to help them to develop their personal and social skills. As a result, they have formed strong friendships with their peers. They play cooperatively and are eager to take part in the activities that staff provide. However, babies have fewer opportunities to develop their social skills, due to minor gaps in the curriculum planning.

Leaders and managers want children to achieve the best they can. However, some children achieve better than others, due to inconsistencies in the quality of education. For example, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, experience a broad curriculum that meets their individual learning needs. Likewise, disadvantaged children get off to a good start and benefit from many opportunities to learn new skills. This helps them to make optimum progress. However, learning opportunities for some children, such as the most able, are not as challenging. This means they are not building up their knowledge and skills as well as they could.

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

- Leaders and managers are aware that some aspects of the nursery need to improve. They have already made changes to enhance children's safety. For example, they have tightened risk assessments and reminded all parents to close the external gates, to prevent children leaving the nursery unaccompanied. Although the nursery has clear policies and procedures, these are not consistently implemented. For example, staff do not ensure that children's medication is stored safely, which poses an element of risk to children's health and well-being.
- The quality of education is variable. The most able children in the pre-school room are not challenged well enough. For example, some activities, such as sticking sequins on pre-drawn pictures, are too easy and offer little challenge. Babies are becoming confident communicators as they babble and vocalise tunefully. However, the organisation of the nursery routines does not help them to develop their social skills. For example, during mealtimes, babies sit at a table facing the wall. This limits their opportunities to interact with others.
- There are elements of strong practice throughout the nursery. Most notably is the curriculum for mathematics. Staff have used knowledge from training to help children grasp early mathematical concepts, such as counting, recognising shapes and comparing sizes. For example, toddlers use language of size as they compare their sandcastles. They also complete wooden puzzles and have great fun singing number songs, such as 'Five Little Ducks'.

- Leaders and managers recognise the benefits of supporting staff in their continuous professional development. They have worked closely with staff caring for the toddlers, including those in receipt of early education funding. As a result, toddlers are benefiting from an ambitious curriculum, which is helping them to thrive. Leaders and managers have also encouraged all staff to complete training to improve their teaching and children's learning. However, some staff have not completed this training. This oversight has not been addressed and has contributed to gaps in the quality of education.
- All children thoroughly enjoy books and story-time sessions. As staff read to them, they model language clearly, which helps children to develop their speaking skills. When children returned to the nursery after government restrictions lifted, staff identified that some children had regressed in their communication and language. As a result, they focused heavily on helping children to catch up, for example by providing narratives as children play. Staff also work in partnership with parents to extend children's learning at home. They have recently introduced home-learning packs. However, it is too early to see the impact of this recent initiative. Nevertheless, parents are hugely complimentary of the care and education their children receive.
- Children are kind and considerate to their friends. They also have opportunities to learn about respect and awareness of others. For example, all children regardless of their gender, enjoy dressing up and playing in the pretend kitchen. They also have access to books that reflect positive images of race, culture and disability. These opportunities help children to feel comfortable with their identity, which helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Checks are completed on all adults who work at the nursery. Staff also receive a thorough induction and child protection training. As a result, they know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child's well-being. Leaders are very knowledgeable about issues within the community and cascade this information to staff. This ensures that all staff are alert to any emerging concerns.

Staff work hard to keep children safe. For example, they supervise children well and keep them in sight and/or hearing at all times. During a recent incident, when a child managed to exit the nursery via an open gate, staff acted swiftly to ensure the child's safety. They also took prompt action to prevent a similar incident occurring in the future.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure the curriculum is well planned and implemented to help build all children's knowledge and skills over time
- support all staff in developing their knowledge of the curriculum and how children learn
- provide support for staff to help them understand and implement the nursery's policies and procedures effectively.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY494687
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10214004
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 11
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	61
Name of registered person	Harding, Rachel Louise
Registered person unique reference number	RP514550
Telephone number	07961461820
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2017

Information about this early years setting

Little Learners re-registered in 2015. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold a childcare qualification at level 6, one holds level 5, four hold level 3 and two hold level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Nursery and holiday club sessions are from 7am until 6.30pm. Out-of-school sessions are from 7.30am until 9am and 3pm until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tricia Graham

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the leaders and managers and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The inspector observed the quality of education and the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Discussions were held with the leadership and management team.
- Consideration was given to parents' views. The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and viewed parents' written testimonials.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation, including 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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