

# Inspection of Secret Garden Day Nursery

50 Haughton Green, Darlington DL1 2DF

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Inspection date:

16 November 2022

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## **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 receive a warm welcome from nursery staff. Any children who are unsettled when they arrive are cuddled and reassured. Children show that they feel safe and secure in the care of the nurturing staff team. There is a warm, family feeling in the nursery. Staff know the children well. Photos of children's families are on display to help support children's emotional security. They are also a focus for encouraging children's early speech. Children behave extremely well. Older children are gently reminded to use 'walking feet and listening ears'. They are praised for helping to tidy up and for being kind to their friends.

Children are becoming confident and curious learners. They explore the well-resourced playrooms. These are organised to support even the youngest children to make independent choices about what they want to do. Babies who are interested in vehicles can climb onto a low platform to watch the road outside. Toddlers make their own play dough then develop their small-muscle skills, as they mould it into different shapes. Pre-school children ask to make cakes. They concentrate as they carefully follow instructions.

Children take part in regular outings in the local community. Babies enjoy visiting a pony in a field nearby. Small groups of children are taken to the shop across the road, when they run out of ingredients for baking. They learn about the natural world by building bug hotels and wormeries.

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

- Managers have worked hard since the last inspection to improve the quality of education provided. They have developed an educational programme based on following children's curiosity. Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. As a result, learning is sequenced effectively.
- Detailed knowledge of children's interests and next steps helps their key person to plan appropriate learning opportunities. As a result, children generally make good progress from their starting points. However, in the pre-school room, there are times when some children do not engage in purposeful learning. They wander around and are not always encouraged enough to join an activity.
- Considerable emphasis is placed on helping children to be ready for their next stage of learning. Managers have recently set up a new room to meet the specific needs of two-year-old children. Here, staff focus on supporting children's speech and communication, and their personal development. This helps children to be ready to move on to the bigger pre-school room. Older children are helped to develop the skills they need to be ready to start school.
- Children are supported effectively to practise the skills they need to develop their independence. Babies are encouraged to feed themselves. Toddlers put on

their own coats and keep on trying when fastening their shoes. With a little help, they peel their own fruit. In the pre-school room, children serve their own meals. They know why they need to wash their hands before eating.

- There are many opportunities for children to develop a love of books. Children regularly gather round to listen to stories being read by members of staff. They enjoy the familiarity of stories they know well, often repeating words and phrases. Babies show concentration as they explore books with flaps and different textures. In the toddler room, skilful questioning encourages children to retell stories and predict what might happen next. A lending library enables parents to take books home to share with their children.
- High-quality interactions between staff and children help promote children's speech and communication. Staff talk about what babies are doing. They use strategies they have been introduced to in training to help toddlers who need extra support with their speech.
- Children benefit from access to a large outdoor area. Staff are well deployed to support children's learning effectively when they are outside. For example, they help younger children to walk along wooden beams safely. Children are invited to join staff on a 'bear hunt'. However, the outdoor area does not provide the same level of learning opportunities as the inside space.
- There are effective systems in place to communicate with parents. They welcome the daily updates they receive. Partnership with other professionals is also strong. Managers welcome the advice of specialists to help them develop support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong commitment in the nursery to keeping children safe. Safeguarding training is updated regularly. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of indicators of abuse, including neglect, physical abuse and exposure to extremism. They know how to report any concerns that they may have about children's safety. They also know what to do in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. Managers ensure that appropriate procedures are followed to ensure that newly appointed staff are suitable to work with children.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen teaching further in the pre-school room, so that all children are given opportunities to be actively engaged in purposeful activities throughout the day
- continue to develop the outdoor area, so that it provides a more stimulating learning environment for children who prefer to learn outside.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY552521
<b>Local authority</b>	Darlington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10216972
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	40
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	86
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Secret Garden (Darlington) Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP552520
<b>Telephone number</b>	01325464443
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 November 2021

## 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 qualified teacher status, one holds early years professional status and one has an appropriate early years qualification at level 5. 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 wraparound care for children who attend local schools.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Jan Batchelor

## Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- Children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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