

Inspection of Little Explorers Hythe

Unit 3, Pennypot Industrial Estate, Hythe CT21 6PE

Inspection date: 4 July 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Leaders and staff are dedicated to supporting families. Staff show genuine affection and care towards the children. A strong key-person system supports children to settle quickly and form secure, trusting relationships. Relationships with babies are sensitive and stimulating. Babies interact with staff, babbling and giggling as staff playfully use animal puppets.

All staff treat children with patience and kindness and teach them about the rules to stay safe. Children mirror these behaviours and often share resources, play together and talk about their best friends. Where children struggle with their emotions, staff are quick to intervene. They calmly give them the time to feel better until they are ready to play again.

The manager implements a curriculum that prepares children to become resilient, inquisitive and compassionate. Staff focus on every child and ensure that they all have appropriate targets. They know children well and provide carefully planned activities that engage and excite the children. Older children thoroughly enjoy making car ramps and investigating which car goes the fastest. Younger children delight in tasting new fruits from 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' story. Children learn from a young age to focus, persevere and take pride in achieving new goals.

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

- Staff have a secure knowledge of how to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They build close and professional relationships with other agencies and parents. Children with SEND show the good progress they make from their starting points. For example, they become able to express their own needs and desires and find ways of regulating their emotions. Funding is used well to support children to meet their individual needs and to close gaps in their learning.
- Children of all ages show they have a love of stories. Staff promote reading by providing cosy book areas, lending story sacks to parents and providing a lending library. Children often ask staff to read with them and exclaim in joy as they use props to engage with the story. Children are often heard telling stories and are confident to finish sentences in familiar books. This supports children well to build an expanding vocabulary.
- For older children, staff are good at using questions and providing ideas to further extend their learning. For example, staff support children to use the internet to help them research aeroplanes when making models. Children enjoy learning and repeating sounds when reading and identifying the initial sounds in different words. However, sometimes, staff are less confident with how to extend younger children's learning in their own chosen play. At times, this does not

provide children with consistent challenges to further their learning and understanding.

- Staff provide a range of activities so there is something every child will enjoy. For example, in the garden, children busy themselves making sandcastles, balancing, climbing, painting with water and drawing. Children show high levels of enjoyment and concentration. Staff are skilled at using interactions to promote children's independent thinking skills and enhance their level of engagement. They often set up investigations for children to solve, such as how to make the sand better for building with.
- Staff provide quiet areas for all children where they can retreat to when they feel overwhelmed. Children with SEND recognise their need to go to these areas to feel better able to cope with the environment. They can access resources such as tents and sensory lights. Children who struggle with expressing themselves can use picture cards to say how they feel and what they need. Staff support all children to have the skills to regulate their own emotions, thoughts and behaviour to enable them to act in a positive way.
- Staff support children well to manage transitions between rooms. They create a daily routine where children spend time close to older children and other staff so they build familiarity. Children generally cope well and settle quickly. However, other transitions such as lunchtime are not so effectively managed. At times, children are left waiting for long periods of time and can become upset.
- Children's understanding of their community and the world around them is widely promoted. They go on listening walks around the local area, visit the beach and a care home, exercise their large muscles in the park and visit the local shops. Building strong links with the community is firmly embedded into the ethos of the nursery.
- The manager is highly supportive of her team. All staff report feeling valued and happy at work. This supports them to be enthusiastic and committed to the children. Parents also comment on the fantastic support and help they receive from the manager and staff. Staff regularly update parents and give them ideas for ways to continue their child's learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to develop a more consistent approach to extending children's learning when joining in with their play

- improve the organisation of transitions and routines, particularly at mealtimes, to prevent children needing to wait too long.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY501250
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10351005
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	65
Number of children on roll	99
Name of registered person	Little Explorers Hythe Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP911016
Telephone number	01303 487877
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Explorers Hythe registered in 2016 and operates in Hythe, Kent. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for most of the year. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs 24 staff, 17 of whom hold a relevant early years qualification at level 3 or above. This includes the two directors who have qualified teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nina Harvey

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum.
- The inspector spoke with staff, interacted with children and viewed appropriate documentation.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- Parents shared their views about the setting with the inspector.

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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