

Inspection of Little Owls Nursery Shepherds Lane

Shepherds Lane C C, Shepherds Lane, LEEDS LS8 5AW

Inspection date: 24 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 Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff provide a warm, caring environment for children and their families. They strive to promote inclusion and have a strong ethos around the celebration of difference and diversity. Children attend from a range of different backgrounds and ethnicities. Staff work hard to overcome any language barriers and maintain effective communication with families. This helps to build strong, trusting relationships and promotes continuity of care. Children show they feel safe and demonstrate good levels of self-confidence in the nursery. They benefit from regular praise from staff and develop good social skills.

Children are well prepared for the next stages in their learning. Staff use information gathered from assessments to plan exciting activities and build on children's knowledge. For example, young children thoroughly enjoy story time and begin to develop good listening skills. Staff build on this as children move through the nursery, and they encourage older children to further develop their literacy skills.

Leaders and managers carefully consider how they can use extra funding to support children. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, staff noted that children had less access to outdoor activities and experiences. Staff focus on outdoor learning and provide children with a broad range of experiences, such as hatching chicks from the local farmer, to try and minimise the impact on children. Children thoroughly enjoy using the outdoor environment and have access to the whole curriculum if this is where they prefer to learn.

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

- Leaders and managers provide an ambitious curriculum with clear goals for children to make good progress. Staff have a clear understanding of what they want children to learn before they move on to school. They keep children at the centre of their plans and prepare the environment with exciting activities so they can teach through their play.
- Overall, children benefit from small-group sessions where staff focus on developing their communication and mathematical skills. For instance, children are keen and enthusiastic to talk about the stripes and dots they can see. Staff teach them about different patterns and encourage them to think about where else they might find them. However, some children struggle to focus and join in consistently because of other distractions around them.
- A strength in the nursery is the curriculum for supporting children's personal, social and emotional development. Staff are very good role models and are kind, caring and responsive. They support children with individual behavioural needs and use effective strategies, such as a visual timetable to support them with

routines. Children benefit from the clear and consistent boundaries for behaviour. They show kindness to each other and are consistently encouraged to be well-mannered.

- Staff who work with older children focus on supporting their understanding of the world and their literacy development, as well as preparing them to start school. Children develop good levels of focus and concentration. For example, they show excellent control over their pencils as they colour in with staff for long periods. Local school teachers come into the setting to support children's transitions, and staff share relevant information about children.
- Children thoroughly enjoy being outdoors and develop good physical skills. Young children search for bugs and enjoy the sensory experience as they touch petals and smell the lavender. They learn about how vegetables grow and look at the different plants in the garden. Staff remind them about the vegetables they have previously grown and how they are cooked in the nursery. Children benefit from healthy meals in the nursery, and staff promote good hygiene and self-care.
- Staff have secure relationships with children and know them very well. Children are well cared for and staff are aware of any dietary or medical needs. There are good procedures to help children settle in. For instance, parents say that they felt their settling-in period was individual to their needs and really helped them to feel safe leaving their children. Staff gather a wide range of information about children and their families to help them get to know them before they start.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported in the nursery. The special educational needs coordinator has good partnerships with other professionals who are involved with children. She supports staff to create and work towards individual plans with children. This helps to close potential gaps in their learning.
- Staff have access to a wide range of professional development opportunities, both online and face to face with teachers from the local authority. This helps them to develop their skills to work with children. Although strategies have recently focused on supporting staff to develop children's communication and language skills, these strategies are not fully embedded and, on occasion, staff do not provide children with enough time to think and respond to questions.
- Leaders and managers focus on supporting staff's good health and positive emotional well-being. Staff say they enjoy working in the nursery, and they how pride in their role to support children and families. They are enthusiastic about the organisation and discuss how the team is supportive and friendly. Parents leave positive feedback about the nursery. They say they know their children are well cared for and chose this nursery because of the experienced and friendly staff.

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:

- reflect on the organisation of focused group time to take into account how well children can concentrate and fully participate
- embed strategies to support children's communication and language skills and ensure staff provide children with enough time to respond to questions and share their knowledge.

Setting details

Unique reference number	512563
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10351434
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	49
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	Leeds City Council
Registered person unique reference number	RP900804
Telephone number	0113 2484603
Date of previous inspection	6 September 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Owls Nursery Shepherds Lane registered in 1990. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, the manager holds an appropriate early years qualifications at level 6, 10 staff hold qualifications at level 3 and two staff hold qualifications at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. Children with SEND attend.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Michelle Lorains

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- Two joint observations were completed by the manager and the inspector, with different groups of children during experiences indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector held a discussion with managers in relation to the leadership and management of the nursery. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of recruitment, staff's qualifications and their suitability to work with children. She discussed children's learning and development with the staff team and the nursery manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents over the telephone and obtained 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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