

Little Explorers

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY313883
Inspection date 27/10/2009
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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

Little Explorers registered in 2005 and operates from a converted house, in Rochester, Kent. Registration is for the Early Years Register. Registration does not include overnight care. The provision is privately owned. A maximum of 41 children in the early years age range may attend the nursery at any one time and of these, nine may be under two years. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 44 children on roll in the early years age range, of whom 12 are under two years of age and 14 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs ten staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. Both the manager and deputy manager hold Early Years Professional Status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Little Explorers is highly effective in its self-evaluation processes, driving continuous and wide-ranging improvements in outcomes for children. The Early Years Foundation Stage principles are at the core of the management structure which results in boys and girls being respected and valued as individuals. Positive, committed relationships develop within an innovative and enabling environment. Comprehensive systems build and track children's progress and these ensure swift progress towards the early learning goals. Consistent, caring routines follow individual needs to ensure the safety and well-being of all.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- provide a variety of mark making resources throughout the nursery, so that very young children can explore daily, independent access to a range of mark making techniques and gain increasing control.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The provision for safeguarding is comprehensive and thorough. Clear and accurate records are maintained, safety policies are highly effective and staff know what to record and who to report to should they have any child protection concerns. The manager has attended the higher level of training reflecting current Local

Safeguarding Children Board procedures and similar training is planned for the deputy manager. An imaginative booklet, displayed at child level, demonstrates visual examples of children of the nursery practising the emergency exit procedures. A record of practise is maintained. Children know to walk to the door quickly and to hold hands in a circle at the waiting area until the fire engine comes. Risk assessments are thorough, dated, identify hazards and indicate actions taken to minimise risk. These include preparation for regular and occasional outings.

Senior managers and members of staff are highly committed in their drive for improvement and have clear priorities and plans for the future. Considerable investment and astute reflective practice means that resources are well organised and children enjoy a stimulating and motivating learning environment. Ongoing training and inspired mentoring fully supports staff in their professional roles, so that children's welfare, learning and development needs are effectively met. A meticulous and wide ranging self-evaluation system is deeply embedded in the ethos and aims of the provision. Staff, parents and children comment on activities and obstacles contributing to best practise and a flourishing climate of self-motivation and mutual commitment. Past recommendations have been critically analysed and met with action at high standard. Priorities for development are identified. Policies and procedure are extensive and efficiently applied by knowledgeable, confident, staff. Reorganisation of the layout of rooms has provided children with a welcoming, sensory-based environment where toys and play materials are superbly arranged, strongly supporting individual enjoyment and achievement throughout the nursery. Equality and diversity are a fundamental bedrock to care and learning. Clear and flexible assessment of individual needs are carried on from starting points that highlight the four principle themes of the EYFS. Linguistic diversity is respected and highly valued by staff, several of whom are bi-lingual. Dual language books are easily accessible and words in a variety of scripts are displayed on objects throughout each room. Children learning English as an additional language are provided with visual aids to support the rapid assimilation of words and phrases and also benefit all who attend. Parents provide fabrics, items from home, the translation of occasional or significant words and their own cultural stories, such as that of Rama and Sita to support and celebrate boys and girls similarities and differences.

The partnership with parents, carers and others is dynamic, extensive and fruitful. Newsletters, notice boards, educative displays and a digital photo frame in the entrance inform parents of their child's daily experience. Daily snapshots and learning records are clearly and simply presented, providing parents with their children's individual achievement and progress. Parents and grandparents attend the nursery to experience learning through play; they contribute willingly to the fabric of the provision as well as demonstrate their own professional and creative skills. There are strong and active links with the community. The nursery has supported a local school which was threatened with closure; the children work with pupils from the adjacent school to test their designs. The nursery is a training resource for schools and a local college; it takes part in Early Years & Childcare Quality projects and provides examples of good practise for academic publication, national magazines and local news media. Theatrical and music groups provide additional events to extend children's learning experiences. Health workers and

specialists such as speech and language professionals share their expertise with staff.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children show they feel safe. They are happy, settled and secure because staff provide close care and are attentive to their needs. They sit with children on the floor, examining board books or during adult led activities, such as matching sounds with instruments. Children are familiar with the routine of the day and those not yet talking can use the pictorial time-line to indicate they know what is coming next. Staff sit with children, providing cuddles and conversation so that children feel confident to practise and acquire new language skills. Children's individual needs and interests are closely followed and information from observation and assessment is used very effectively when planning activities tailored to reflect differentiation. Starting points are clearly recorded and weekly and monthly summaries cover all areas of learning, ensuring there are no gaps in children's development. Imaginative resources such as sensory balls, two-piece puzzles providing examples of symmetry, a listening zone with CD player, headphones and recording equipment are easily accessible from open shelving or storage boxes or baskets. The garden is laid out to delight and entice children to explore the real world and their own capabilities; to experience a range of textures, smells and colours; to stimulate their interest in a healthy lifestyle and the cycles of plant and insect life.

Babies and toddlers enjoy the security of familiar faces and routines. They show they feel safe with known adults nearby. Babies and toddlers animatedly splash the water in the bowl with the sparkling plastic number shapes. Children know it is hard work to make sandcastles with dry sand, they learn to work with others as they fill and empty the containers or sweep up the spilt sand. They use their own cameras to take photos of their friends and objects both inside and outside the pre-school room. They use tools to examine defunct communication equipment to explore the working's inside or cut and hammer pieces of wood at the work bench. They know their work is valued because craft items such as bark rubbings are named and creatively displayed. They choose the shape of the totem sculpted from a dead tree so contributing to the development of the garden. Children's imaginative play is very well supported and reflects a growing understanding of the world about them. The nursing station is set up with dolls for patients, oxygen masks, x-ray photos and barrier gloves. Planned and free-flow outside play encourages a healthy lifestyle so that children can challenge themselves on the trikes, throwing balls into a net or climbing the steps in the play house. A sit-and-ride digger in the garden is used to scoop and transport large pebbles. Hard hats, clip boards and pencils are available close by so that children can draw up their plans. Children gleefully lift construction bricks, laying them in a line before attempting to balance along them. While older children have daily independent access to mark-making resources, these are not available in all areas at all times so younger children cannot explore and develop control when they choose.

Children eagerly programme the Bee-Bot electronic toy to move to their

instructions across the treasure map. They learn to be patient, to focus and to take turns with resources. They learn additional words and language skills as they listen to what others say with support from staff who speak calmly and provide time for each child to express themselves. Children enjoy making a positive contribution to the routine of the day. They tidy away equipment, count the number of chairs, help lay the cloth on the table and recognise their own and others' names from bee-shaped name cards as they prepare for lunch. Children socialise as they enjoy healthy, nutritious meals and are encouraged to eat fresh fruit and vegetables they have grown in the garden beds. They learn to make their own pizzas and fruit kebabs with support from a parent who is a professional chef.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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