

Little Oaks Nursery School - Ashford

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	127517
Inspection date	20/04/2011
Inspector	Jenny Kane
Setting address	William Harvey Hospital, Kennington Road, ASHFORD, Kent, TN24 0LZ
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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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Little Oaks Nursery School opened in 2001. It is one of three nurseries run by Little Oaks Early Years Ltd. It operates from a single-storey building set in the grounds of the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford, Kent. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. It is open Monday to Friday from 7am to 6pm all year round. There is an after school club from 3pm-6pm and a holiday club during the school holidays. The majority of parents work within the health service. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 67 children may attend the setting at any one time. Of these no more than 50 can be in the early years age group and of these, no more than 22 may be under two years. There are currently 51 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. Several school age children up to the age of 11 attend the out of school facility. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who learn English as an additional language. In addition to the two owner/managers, there are 18 members of staff. This includes a cook and a driver. All 16 staff who work directly with the children hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging from level 2 to level 4. They receive support from the local authority's early years' advisory team.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children, including babies, are making good progress in their learning in relation to their capabilities and starting points. Overall, the organisation of space and systems to support children's learning, work well. Staff have established excellent relationships with parents, carers and other practitioners. Children's safety and inclusion are given the highest priority and ensures children are happy, settled, confident and content. The self-evaluation is clear and achievable and staff share the high aims of the senior staff team, demonstrating a good commitment to making and sustaining continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop further the recording of the next steps section of the assessment folders
- consider how to develop opportunities for children's outdoor learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All children benefit from staff's clear knowledge of safeguarding issues. They regularly attend training and implement excellent procedures and have a strong commitment to promoting children's welfare. Staff are well qualified. Recruitment and suitability checks are robust and the owners provide good support and training opportunities for all adults working in the setting. The environment is bright and welcoming, resources are in good supply and staff make the best use of the space despite some limitations to the premises. There is a wealth of books, posters and displays of work at eye level. Resources are labelled with name and pictures to support children's learning. Good ratios and thorough risk assessments ensure high levels of safety. Excellent and consistent input from staff results in children who have high levels of belonging and security.

Staff strive to provide an inclusive service for all families, they use observations and self-evaluation to identify achievement gaps and areas to develop. They know children's backgrounds very well and discuss children's starting points with parents. Where a child is identified as needing extra support, this is quickly obtained due to the close liaison with other professionals. There is a high commitment to working in partnership with others and the outstanding links which have developed with feeder schools helps children's smooth transition. Excellent relationships with parents and carers have a significant impact on the well-being and care of the children. Parents receive excellent verbal feedback about children's progress. Babies and toddlers have contact books which record important information about care routines. They frequently look at and take home their children's learning journals which hold clear observational information, samples of work and many photographs. Management are keen to establish parental views through discussion, questionnaires and open days. Written information, including policies and procedures, are well produced, regularly updated, clear and shared with parents so they are well informed about the service.

Teamwork is good and the deputy ably supports the manager making up an effective senior team. The two owners have high ideals; they have a hands-on approach and work with their staff inspiring enthusiasm for meeting targets for improvement in the long term. The manager takes the lead for the rigorous monitoring of the improvements identified in the self-evaluation document. All previous recommendations have been addressed and improvements to date have had a positive impact on the outcomes for children.

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

Children clearly enjoy their time at the nursery, have good attachments to staff and demonstrate positive attitudes to their play. All children achieve well, make good progress in relation to their starting points and are developing secure skills for the future. Senior staff have a very good knowledge of the learning and

development and welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff's good knowledge of how children learn and develop through play is reflected in the high levels of care and welfare provided to all children, particularly the babies. Staff plan a well-balanced range of challenging activities and learning experiences which are suitable for children's ages, abilities and interests. As a result children are busy and engaged. They are motivated and interested because staff join in and listen to their views and ideas. They share and cooperate very well and have an input into the planning of activities. This has an impact on their behaviour which is exceptionally good.

Excellent communication between parents, carers and the child's key person establish a clear understanding of each child's capabilities, their starting points and individual needs. There are good systems for planning and observations. Staff record observational information in children's individual learning journals and these help to assess progress. Although the assessments show children's next steps in their learning it is not clear how this informs the planning. There is a wealth of information which helps parents to be fully involved in supporting their children's learning and development. These include displays about the Early Years Foundation Stage with photographs showing activities which relate to the areas of learning, regular newsletters, consultations and 'stay and play' sessions.

Children demonstrate good independence, are confident and use their imaginations well. They freely access the play materials, several of which promote diversity and positive images, from the baskets and shelves. During play children use the role play areas, enjoy dressing up and act out scenarios using the good supply of props. Children have access to plenty of creative materials and confidently make their own art. All enjoy playing in the sand and water trays, pouring and measuring, discussing feel and colours, while socialising. There are many opportunities to count and problem solve during the daily routines. For example, at snack children count how many plates they need after counting that there are seventeen children. There are many natural objects in the treasure baskets and shelves. Some children playing with the stones and shells discuss which are smooth, hard and pointed. They remember there is one shell which sounds like the sea when they hold it to their ear.

Children are clear communicators, engage in good conversations with staff and their peers, and babies seek attention when needed coming up for cuddles during play. Other examples of name recognition are the self-registering system whereby when children arrive they find their name card and put it on the 'we are here today' display. During some activities staff use Maketon signing to help communication. Children have access to computers which they use confidently. They learn about the wider world and differences through various discussions, projects and celebrations. Children enjoy rhymes, action songs and using instruments.

Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the need for exercise to keep them healthy. There are good opportunities for physical development indoors, in the garden and on local walks. The baby room has access straight into the garden whilst the pre-school children access it by the side gate. Although the garden is well equipped and children have good amount of space to move about,

there is a lack of free-flow. Also immobile walking babies sit in pushchairs because the soil is rather dusty. Although they receive a good amount of attention and watch older children at play, they are not able to move freely about. In hot weather children understand about why they put on sun block cream, wear sunhats and play in the shade . Pre-school children have a very good understanding about keeping themselves safe and are aware of other children and use equipment safely during play. For example, children care for their peers in the garden. When a toddler falls off a bike, an older child runs over, helps them up and finds their hat.

Children's health is well promoted. They enjoy a hot meal, prepared daily on the premises by the nursery cook, using fresh ingredients. Menus are displayed and staff are aware of children with allergies or special dietary needs. Snacks are healthy and older children choose when to eat snack, helping themselves to fruit and drinks and clearing away when finished. Babies eat as group, using highchairs or low tables and staff sit with them making this a happy and social time. Older children sit in small groups, serve themselves from the dish on the table, use the cutlery well and have good table manners. Children have a good understanding of where food comes from as they grow vegetables, herbs and plants in the garden outside.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met