

Little Rays Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Mary van de Peer

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Little Rays Day Nursery registered in 2011 and is located on the same site as a children's centre in Ashford, Kent. It is one of over 50 settings owned by 4Children Limited. There are four main play areas and an office, nappy changing space, staff room and interview room. The nursery is on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 50 children in the early years age group may attend at any one time. There are currently 50 children in the early years group on roll. The nursery receives funding for two, three and four-year-olds. It opens each weekday all year round from 8am to 6pm. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs eight staff, including the manager; of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging from Level 3 to some Degrees in Childcare Studies.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The outcomes for children are consistently good and exemplary in many areas. An area of outstanding practice is the expert attention given to training staff in the safeguarding and protection of children. Partnerships between the provider, parents and other professional agencies are very successful. These ensure that individual children's needs are exceptionally well met, overall, and their safety and protection is assured. There is an inclusive, self-evaluation process that underpins the high quality service, as the nursery has excellent capacity for maintaining continuous improvement. Comprehensive monitoring systems are used to build and track children's development, ensuring swift progress towards the early learning goals.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- maximising opportunities for children to move freely between indoor and outdoors, while maintaining the comfortable temperature in the indoor environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The provision for safeguarding children is comprehensive and thorough. The up-to-date policies and procedures highly promote their welfare and well-being. Highly effective, consistent procedures are applied, meeting Local Safeguarding Children Board requirements. The manager is totally committed to ensuring every member of staff is confident and knowledgeable about safeguarding children from harm. As a result of robust recruitment and staff monitoring processes, dedicated and professional adults care for children. A highly organised risk assessment system is used to identify hazards and detailed actions taken to minimise dangers at the nursery and on outings. Children prepare extremely well for an emergency evacuation as drills take place at least monthly.

Staff are all highly motivated in their drive for improvement. Their strengths and priority areas for personal development are identified at appraisal and management fully supports individuals in their professional roles. Their knowledge and confidence ensures that children's welfare and learning needs are very effectively met. An inclusive self-evaluation system is in place. Staff, parents and children contribute to a wide ownership of best practice and a flourishing, mutual commitment. Policies and procedure are extensive and applied by knowledgeable, caring staff.

The learning environment is easily accessible and very inviting to children, including imaginative resources organised into accessible, attractive areas. This strongly supports individual enjoyment and achievement. There are good opportunities for children to play outside. However, there are fewer opportunities for them to go out in colder conditions, because of maintaining a comfortable temperature indoors. The promotion of equality and diversity is fundamental throughout the nursery, and is clearly recognised as essential to care and learning. Well informed assessments of children's individual achievements are carried forward from details given by parents. Skilled key persons identify and assess starting points to plan next steps in learning. Diversity is respected and highly valued by staff who provide all children with examples of variety in methods of communication. Visual guidance is displayed to promote an understanding of self-care.

Partnerships with parents and others are highly valued and very successful. Children's daily experiences are shared through newsletters, notice boards, delightful photographs and creative displays of work. Many parents write their comments, following on from the key persons' entries in the nursery-to-home record books. Highly detailed daily records of food intake, sleep times and general well-being reassure parents of babies and toddlers routines whilst at nursery. The nursery supports parents and creates continuity for children by providing all their drinks, snacks and meals. Routine observations are used to build clear learning records of all children's individual achievement and progress. Next steps are very clearly identified and used to inform planning. Parents are invited to attend the nursery to experience their children's learning through play. They contribute

continuously to the success of the nursery. Staff are aware of children who attend other settings, helping to add to and extend children's learning. The nursery works extremely closely and productively with the adjacent children's centre. Health workers and specialists, such as speech and language professionals, visit the nursery to share their expertise with staff and children.

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

Staff provide close care by being attentive and responding quickly to children's needs. Children clearly show they feel safe. Babies and toddlers enjoy the security of familiar faces and routines. Children feel comfortable talking to their buddy, key persons and enthusiastically adopt familiar daily routines. Experienced staff interact continuously as toddlers and babies explore age-appropriate toys and resources around them. They cuddle the youngest babies and toddlers while attentively listening to their responses to conversation.

Children gain excellent skills for the future. Adult-led activities, including action rhymes, encourage even young babies to mimic and repeat movements and sounds. Children rapidly gain confidence to acquire language skills. Storage labels encourage them to 'read' what is inside and books are very well used. Children clearly enjoy listening to stories and they watch animated readers in amazement. Supervised, crayoning activities enable the youngest children to explore and develop finger and hand control, while older children show determined concentration when cutting out shapes. Many mark making resources encourage children to create pictures and make lists and older ones attempt to write their names. Cameras, computers and CD players are highly effective in introducing children to technology to further support their learning.

Children's capabilities, needs and interests are identified early and closely followed through extended resources and activities that focus and reinforce learning. For example, pre-school children concentrate very well, watching how water flows through funnels and sieves. Information from assessment is used very effectively when planning activities designed to meet all children's individual learning needs. Starting points are very well recorded and monitored covering all areas of learning and ensuring there are no gaps in children's development. Young children are absorbed in using their senses to explore stimulating treasure baskets, while reflective, colourful mobiles hold babies' attention. Children benefit immensely from the calm, stimulating environment of the nearby sensory room. Their imaginative play is very well supported and reflects growing understanding of the wider world, including enthusiastic role play in the 'kitchen'.

Children gain an excellent understanding about healthy lifestyles. Daily, outside play in inviting areas encourage them to explore the natural world and experience a range of textures, smells and colours. Children challenge themselves on the climbing frames and develop coordination using pedal bikes and push buggies. Children enjoy contributing to daily routines. They tidy equipment and recognise

their own and others' named place mats when self-registering for snack. They confidently choose from healthy options of food and drink. Children demonstrate excellent behaviour, listening to what others say. Staff are excellent role models, speaking calmly and providing time for each child to express themselves. Children learn new skills, such as patience and managing themselves, taking turns using sand timers at popular activities, including the laptop. Children learn expected behaviour boundaries and respond well to praise and encouragement. Their work is valued as staff display this creatively. They benefit from such incentives to do well and so develop excellent levels of confidence and self-esteem.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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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