

Little Stars Nursery

23 Queens Road, Ampthill, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK45 2TD

Inspection date	01/08/2013
Previous inspection date	09/05/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Teaching is strong because practitioners and senior managers have a thorough knowledge of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They ensure that all children are offered the support required in order to make good progress.
- Assessments of children are frequent and practical, and are used to inform the daily planning. This means that children's interest is captured and they are enthusiastic about their play and learning.
- Practitioners are caring and interact well with the children, sensitively encouraging good communication and social skills. Children respond positively to this and so develop essential skills that support their independent interactions.
- The key person system is used well, supporting practitioners in working with families and getting to know each child. This contributes to children feeling secure and aids them in developing a positive approach to learning.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The outdoor area is not used to the optimum to offer children opportunities to explore natural resources and the natural world, and so fully extend their learning in this area.
- Opportunities for children to experiment by making marks and writing are not always optimised in all areas of play.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main rooms indoors and in the outside area.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and setting owner, and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector talked with children present.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting, the provider's self-evaluation form and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers as given in their written feedback to the setting.

Inspector

Kelly Eyre

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Stars Nursery was registered in 2004 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in converted residential premises in Ampthill, Bedfordshire, and is managed by a private provider. The setting serves the local and neighbouring areas and is accessible to all children. It operates from nine main rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2, and eight hold level 3 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 50 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the use of outdoor areas to offer children further opportunities to investigate natural materials and the natural world

- extend the opportunities and resources for children to write and make marks during role play and other activities.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are secure, happy and make good progress. They are offered consistent and effective support as practitioners take care to get to know each child. Teaching techniques are strong and practitioners have a confident knowledge of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They support children well in developing the skills required in order to learn effectively and to achieve. Their good interaction and confident approach mean that they understand children's play and enable them to take the lead, sensitively encouraging them to think further. For example, children have time to explore wheat in a large tray, pouring it through their fingers and noting that it sounds like rain. A practitioner reminds them of the recent thunderstorms and they talk about these. They then go on to make shapes in the wheat and are encouraged to name these.

Practitioners' good interaction with children supports them in developing their language and communication skills. For example, children engaged in role play pretend they are cooking. A practitioner introduces new vocabulary, such as 'sieve the flour', and then encourages children to describe what sort of cake they are making and how long it will take to cook. Easy access to indoor resources means that children make independent choices and extend their own play. For example, children play happily with a train set, singing and talking to themselves as they play. They then go to a labelled storage unit and choose further resources, adding these to the train set and using them to develop their role play scenario.

Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are offered well-considered support that enables them to make good progress. For example, practitioners undergo additional training where they learn to use appropriate methods to communicate with children. They ensure that these methods are understood by all and are used as part of the daily routine, ensuring that children are always meaningfully included. Children have reasonable opportunities to make marks and develop early writing skills. For example, babies enjoy painting and older children sometimes have writing materials available so that they can make notes as they play. However, writing materials are not consistently accessible in role play areas and alongside other activities. This means that children are not fully encouraged to develop the use of writing for a purpose.

Children's starting points are comprehensively assessed as there are good procedures to support practitioners in gathering a wide range of initial information from parents. They use this information to inform the planning and to monitor children's progress. The setting's good communication with parents means that they have frequent opportunities to share updates about their children. Parents are also supported well in extending their child's learning. For example, the setting's monthly newsletters have information about the current planning and offer practical ideas for associated activities to try at home. Children are offered a creative range of opportunities to gain a meaningful understanding of different ways of life. For example, each child has an 'all about me' box containing photographs and special objects from home. They thoroughly enjoy sharing these with other children, often going on to discuss different family compositions, beliefs and traditions.

Practitioners diligently observe children and also note their current interests. They assess this information, developing the next steps for each child and using these to inform the daily planning. This means that children are offered play opportunities that capture their interest and promote their development. Specific activities, the use of resources and the daily planning are thoroughly evaluated. Practitioners check that children are offered balanced opportunities to explore independently and to participate in adult-led activities. Therefore, children play an active part in their learning and are well prepared for school. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities that promote their physical development. For example, older children develop skills in balance and coordination as they use large play equipment. Practitioners pay attention to ensuring that younger children are consistently offered a broad range of resources and equipment that promote their physical development. For example, young children use baby walkers, pull themselves up on the soft furnishings and low storage units, and enjoy standing at a low table to explore shape sorters and craft resources.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The well-implemented key person system supports good partnerships with parents. It aids practitioners in developing a thorough understanding of each child and therefore enables them to offer children consistent support. As a result, children are secure and develop good relationships with practitioners. They are actively encouraged to make independent choices and to express their needs and ideas. This supports them in developing a positive approach to learning and they are well prepared for the transition to school. This is further supported as the setting works closely with local schools. For example, they invite children's prospective teachers to the setting, enabling them to get to know children and their needs before they start school. Consideration has been given to ensuring that the setting's indoor areas are well resourced and stimulating. Therefore, children have opportunities to choose their resources and explore further. However, the outdoor area is not used to the maximum to make full use of opportunities for children to explore natural resources and the natural world, and so extend their knowledge of these areas.

New children quickly settle because key persons work closely with parents to find out about children's interests and normal daily routines. They put together a care plan for each child to ensure that their needs are consistently met and are reflected within the planning. Children's transitions within the setting are supported well. Parents are consulted about the most appropriate time to move their child to the next room. Children have several visits to their new room before actually moving. They also have opportunities throughout the day to visit each other in different rooms. For example, younger children often visit the older children's room to eat breakfast or participate in an activity. This means that children learn from each other and also gain valuable social skills to support their interactions.

Practitioners are aware of the importance of creating a positive environment. They praise children for their efforts and achievements and also act as good role models, showing a genuine care and concern for all. Therefore, children are supported in developing a good understanding of the needs and feelings of others. Their understanding of appropriate behaviour is promoted as practitioners offer them clear explanations, encouraging them to appreciate how their actions affect other people. Children are supported well in developing their self-care skills. For example, they help tidy up between activities and help themselves to drinks during the day. Children are offered good opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles. For example, they talk about sun safety and the need to protect themselves with sun cream and hats. Their understanding of the importance of exercise is promoted as they participate in physical activities and note their raised temperatures and increased heart rates. Ongoing explanations and good daily practice support children in gaining a thorough understanding of safety. For example, they learn to use tools and implements, such as scissors and cutlery, safely and effectively.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The owner and managers set high standards for the childcare they provide. They recognise the importance of the role that practitioners play and ensure that they are supported in all areas of their work. For example, they have frequent supervision sessions and are supported in developing their professional practice. All practitioners work well together to ensure that they are meeting the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff deployment is well planned and is under review throughout the day. This means that practitioners are now consistently available to support children and meet their needs, whether this is indoors or in the outdoor play area. This extends to the procedure for snack time, meaning that this is consistently well organised and children enjoy this part of the day.

The owner and managers monitor the planning and check each child's records to ensure that they are making good progress towards the early learning goals. There are clear procedures for sharing information with others caring for the children. For example, practitioners exchange assessment information with local pre-schools, enabling them to work together to promote children's development. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and activities. For example, they receive monthly newsletters and meet regularly with their child's key person. Children's health and independence are promoted as there are good procedures for toilet training, including the hygienic use of potties. This area is further supported as practitioners are given clear guidance that covers all hygiene issues and enables them to prevent the spread of infection. For example, used tissues are disposed of immediately and practitioners are vigilant and check that young children use their own beakers when accessing their drinks. Children's health is further promoted as the setting has thorough procedures for the safe administration of medication. These include obtaining all relevant information, ensuring that there is written parental permission, keeping a clear record of medication administered and sharing this with the child's parent.

The setting's self-evaluation is thorough and honest. Feedback is sought from parents and children, and means that the setting has a representative overview of its strengths and weaknesses. This information is used to develop practical action plans that lead to improvements in the provision for children. For example, recent changes include the reorganisation of the main playrooms. This means that the space is used more flexibly and children have easier access to resources. Children's welfare is consistently promoted because all safeguarding arrangements are thorough. Good procedures for induction, training and supervision ensure that all practitioners are fully aware of their responsibilities. They demonstrate a good understanding of the process to follow should they have any concerns about a child's welfare. There are robust measures in place to ensure that all practitioners are suitable to work with children. Thorough risk assessments are regularly reviewed and mean that hazards are minimised or removed. Therefore, children play safely, enjoy their time at the setting and have a positive childcare experience that forms a sound platform for their future learning.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY287543
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	925775
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	45
Number of children on roll	52
Name of provider	Susan Jane Harvey
Date of previous inspection	09/05/2013
Telephone number	01525 404046

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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