

Little Owls

Histon Early Years Centre, New School Road, Histon, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB24 9LL

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

08/01/2015

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Staff use their exceptional expertise to create a rich learning environment where all children are motivated and eager to participate. This is ably promoted by the staff's use of the range of inspiring resources available.
- Children's development is continually monitored and staff use targeted next steps and interventions for both individuals and groups of children. This ensures that all children, including those with additional needs, make exceptional progress.
- Skilful teaching highly motivates children to persevere in everyday tasks and build secure relationships with others. This maintains their high level of independence and helps them to acquire the skills needed for school.
- Staff pay meticulous attention to children's care needs and routines, and offer individual support to families. This demonstrates how the well-being of children is of paramount importance.
- Partnerships with parents are extremely well established as staff use a variety of strategies to share information about each child's individual progress and care needs. This promotes a strong continuity between the home and nursery.
- The drive for continuous improvement sets a leadership example to others and ensures that children's safeguarding and welfare needs are rigorously met.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's activities in both rooms, including snack and lunchtime routines. She talked to children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the childcare manager and held discussions with other members of staff.
- The inspector sampled the nursery documentation including policies, learning journals, newsletters and a self-evaluation folder.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through contributions to the floor books and discussions on the day.
- The inspector saw evidence of the suitability and qualifications of all staff members and other documentation in relation to the safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Inspector

Rachel Pepper

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Owls was registered in 2005 and is on the Early Years Register. It operates from purpose-built premises in Histon, Cambridgeshire, and is managed by the board of governors of Histon Early Years Centre. The nursery operates from two rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. This includes a manager with Early Years Professional status and two additional managers with a qualification at level 6. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, 8am until 6pm, for 48 weeks of the year. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 70 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and 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 already excellent focus activities provided by continuing to consider ways to minimise the occasional minor interruptions.

Inspection judgements

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

Highly motivated staff at this nursery have an exceptional understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, children are offered limitless opportunities to learn through well-planned and inspiring play. The teaching is of a consistently high standard and staff have ambitious expectations of all the children that they care for. This means that children are developing at a rapid pace towards the early learning goals and the next stage in their development. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, staff adapt activities to create an inclusive enabling environment where children with limited mobility can manage their own personal needs. Furthermore, children learning to speak English as an additional language carry visual prompts in a cross-body bag. These support them to express their needs and familiarise themselves with the daily routines. Highly skilled staff help to increase children's confidence further as they willingly attempt to also learn new words. They regularly use a software program with the children to translate words in both languages. This supports each child's personal, social and emotional development extremely effectively.

Staff teach children the early stages of literacy and mathematics. They use a specialist program to determine the level of each child's pre-writing skills. This enables them to further support children as they draw and develop their pen control. Furthermore, staff use every opportunity to extend children's play as they introduce numbers for counting

and talk about various shapes and sizes. In addition, staff encourage children to solve problems. For example, children count the settings as they lay the table for lunch. Staff encourage them to count how many knives they have and use simple calculations to work out how many more they will need for all of their friends. As a result, children competently acquire the skills that they need for school. The nursery team take advantage of the on-site school nursery and have developed superb links with the other staff. They work collaboratively to share the progress that children have made. This means that children experience continuity in their learning to ensure that they make the best possible progress.

Staff carry out regular observations of children and complete detailed weekly assessments. In addition, they compile highly comprehensive reports to share at the regular meetings they hold for parents. Staff analyse these reports to assess children's knowledge, skills and abilities extremely accurately. They devise overall plans incorporating each child's next steps for learning to further challenge them. Staff display these on a wall chart for all those working with the children to refer to. This highlights how all activities include the individual learning needs of each child. Children identified as having gaps in their learning or as gifted or talented benefit from a variety of intervention programmes. These include one-to-one support, focus activities or additional areas of learning to complement the current curriculum. Staff devise these activities with the support of other relevant agencies. Partnerships with parents are also excellent as the staff use effective strategies to include them in all areas of children's learning. They make extra time to talk to parents each day and share children's experiences so that they can continue their learning at home. They use elaborate floor books to document the topics that they cover. For example, a recent topic involved children in exploring stories and illustrations. This led to them becoming their own authors and illustrators and displaying their work in the book corner. A current focus is on light and shade. Children explore their own shadows as they use their smaller physical skills to draw using a projected image. They also benefit from an interactive sensory area inspired by a staff member's exploration of alternative curriculums to enhance current practice. Staff maintain a learning journal document for each child. This includes photographs, examples of work and contributions from home. Children access these from the low-level cupboards during sessions and take pride as they share their achievements. Experiences such as these mean that children develop excellent self-esteem as they learn that what they do is recognised and valued.

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

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery and develop secure bonds with many members of staff. They record their attendance by placing their photograph or name on a peg that they choose. Staff vary registration cards as they take in to account the individual capabilities of each child. This demonstrates how unique needs are well met and gives children a sense of belonging in the nursery. The staff use exceptional arrangements for each child as they begin nursery. These include a home visit for each family and a number of settling-in sessions. Staff use this visit to collect detailed information on each child. In addition, they share a welcome pack with parents to cover the procedures and philosophy of the nursery. Staff refer to the information provided, such as sleep and dietary requirements, each day. They meticulously record each child's care plan on a displayed

chart, which includes the daily preferences of each parent. As a result, children receive continuity in the care that they receive. This helps to ensure a smooth move between their home and the nursery, supporting their emotional development.

The key-person system is fully embedded and staff display a thorough knowledge of the children that they are responsible for. They ensure parents are all aware of who takes the specific care of their child so that they can discuss any concerns that may arise. Parents on the day felt this support and opportunity for daily discussion were invaluable. Several detailed that their children's confidence had increased and that their behaviour at home had improved since they began. Staff at the nursery manage children's behaviour consistently. For example, they provide children with concise explanations and maintain eye contact as they offer gentle reminders of the boundaries. Children are fully aware of the consequences of their actions and how these can affect others. As a result, children behave well and are kind and affectionate to their peers. Staff teach children how to identify risks and keep themselves safe from harm. For example, staff provide visual prompts to help children complete their own risk assessments and remind them to use walking feet indoors. Furthermore, staff use activities to promote protective behaviours, such as helping children to name the different parts of their body during songs and describe what makes them feel safe. Staff talk to children about good hygiene practice and act as excellent role models to aid this understanding.

Mealtimes are social occasions that support children to develop their relationships and make healthy choices. Staff eat with the children and engage them in purposeful dialogue to support their speaking and listening skills. For example, they encourage them to make predictions on what they may have today and discuss terms, such as vegetarian and dairy. As they eat, children cut their vegetables independently and use full size cutlery with support. They pour their own drinks of water as they discuss with their peers how much they enjoy the fish pie, potato and vegetables. Children show they are developing good social skills as they take turns and listen to each other. Staff plan for the children to enjoy regular exercise and fresh air each day. Children match their own shoe size to the stickers on the boots that the nursery provide. This is another indication on the expectation for children to manage their own needs, supporting independence in readiness for school. They use the outdoors in all weathers and practise their larger movements to climb and run or smaller physical skills as they explore sand in the wet or dry mud kitchen. The management team has taken full advantage of the current building works and asked for a viewing section for the children to observe the changes that take place. This ignites their interest in construction. Staff stimulate this further through the selection of materials that they offer. This includes a digging area and demonstrates how events that could hamper children's experiences are used as an innovation for learning.

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

The nursery team meet all of the requirements exceedingly well and safeguarding is central to every aspect of practice. In addition to a secure buzzer entrance system, all visitors are asked to sign in and out each time that they enter or leave the premises. In addition, staff obtain and record their identification. Furthermore, staff record children's

hours of attendance and maintain an accurate head count in each room. This ensures that no person can gain unauthorised access and no child can leave unsupervised. All staff working with the children and those working in other areas of the building receive regular full suitability checks. This helps to safeguard children. Staff complete risk assessments on all areas of the building and the activities that they provide. They demonstrate an excellent understanding as they immediately remove newly identified risks for each activity. The management implements a well-thought-out emergency evacuation procedure, which is regularly practised with the children. This includes times of available access routes and designated areas to congregate. Therefore, all staff and children know what to do in the event of a fire. To support this practice further the centre maintains evacuation bags. These contain emergency provisions and each child's contact details. The majority of staff have received first-aid training. This means that accidents can be managed quickly and effectively. Furthermore, all staff have received safeguarding training as part of their robust induction process. As a result, all staff are aware of their responsibilities in the event of a child protection concern.

The provider follows a rigorous recruitment process. This ensures that each person is suitable and has the dynamic skill set required to maintain the high standard of teaching and care. The childcare manager has an astute and targeted development programme in place for her staff to support continuous improvement. To maintain the high quality of teaching, she uses her wealth of knowledge to encourage all staff to continue their professional development and achieve further relevant qualifications. She uses regular informal and formal supervisions to ensure that her staff are fully supported in their role and places the utmost priority on reflective practice. Staff welcome peer observations and constructive feedback to develop their practice even further. This highlights the supportive team ethos that the nursery has developed. Staff use exemplary systems to monitor the learning and development requirements. In addition to tracking how the different groups of children progress, the management team have collected 24 months of data in order to further analyse the effectiveness of intervention programmes. This ensures that the outcomes for children are continually evaluated and improved upon. The management team use effective self-evaluation to continually focus on all areas of practice. They have successfully addressed the recommendation from the last inspection and now have effective relationships with a very high majority of parents. Through this process the childcare manager has identified that, on occasion, children experience minor interruptions to their focus activities due to the current layout of the building.

Partnership with other providers are inspirational. The management team have arrangements to train providers from other early years settings on how to effectively use floor books. Furthermore, they have welcomed practitioners from Norway to experience time in the nursery through their links with the local college. This demonstrates expert practice which is worthy of dissemination to others. Further highly effective programmes include a focus on environmentally friendly practice and involve the children in regular recycling activities. The nursery received an award for their contribution to the environment and are currently working towards their next level of achievement. Partnerships with parents are also highly effective as the staff value the feedback that they gain and adapt practice to suit their needs. For example, the nursery use different forms of communication, such as newsletters, email and one-to-one meetings, dependent on expressed preferences. The staff also now display a daily white board detailing more

specific activities of the day following recent requests. Furthermore, staff gain the views of children through regular dialogue and add these expressions to their ongoing work. This demonstrates the high value placed on the voice of the child. The location of the nursery and sensitivity of staff actively contribute to the prompt support offered to a variety of families to gain the specialist support that they need.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY312276
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	849007
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	70
Name of provider	Histon Early Years Centre Governing Body
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01223 712075

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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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