

Inspection of Little Owls

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

Inspection date: 8 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children simply adore spending time at the nursery. They have exceptionally strong bonds with staff and are confident in their well-organised and stimulating surroundings. Children like nothing better than being outside where they can run freely and spend time exploring. They take great delight in finding fallen apples and collecting as many as they can in their bags. Staff encourage children to observe the flowers and look for spiders or ladybirds in the grass. They share children's excitement as an aircraft passes overhead and talk about what they have seen. Children are totally enthralled by these experiences and even at the youngest age are showing curiosity and enthusiasm for everything they do and see.

Children demonstrate excellent physical skills as they run around outside or learn to climb small equipment inside. Those just learning to walk, hold tightly onto staff hands and beam with delight as they try to toddle as fast as they can to keep up with their friends. Children's fascinations and interests are quickly recognised and enhanced by staff, who know the children very well. For example, staff spend time playing with children, who enjoy listening to the variety of sounds made by tapping and scraping different things on the metal gate.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Little Owls is an integral part of the Histon Early Years Centre, which is a maintained provision and subject to a separate inspection. This inspection was carried out under the early years register and reflects the care, learning and well-being of children who are between one and two years of age.
- Staff have a deep understanding of how to plan an ambitious curriculum and demonstrate an exceptional knowledge of how young children learn. The standard of teaching is excellent and consistent across the staff team. Staff are quick to reflect and evaluate what they have seen when playing with children. They use their insightful observations to ensure children can repeat recently acquired skills, become secure in their knowledge or move on to learn something new.
- Leaders and managers have an energy, enthusiasm and drive for excellence that is second to none. Their determination to provide the very best for children is shared by all staff, who admit that they simply love their jobs. Staff feel well supported in their roles and benefit from the approach taken by leaders and managers to nurture and develop staff's skills to the highest level.
- Staff encourage children's independence and give them the time they need to practise new skills, such as handwashing or removing shoes. Staff show genuine warmth to children and ensure that care routines, such as nappy changing, are carried out in an unhurried manner. Staff are quick to respond to children's changing moods, especially after a busy morning outside. They know that a

cuddle is sometimes all that is needed to soothe those children feeling tired and fractious.

- Staff place a high priority on children's developing communication skills. They promote and repeat new words during delightful interactions and give children the time they need to join in. Staff sing songs and use routine activities, such as rhyme sacks, to further children's abilities. They frequently share books with children, who thoroughly enjoy looking at, and talking about, the pictures.
- Staff have an outstanding awareness of what children need to know and how this knowledge is further developed and enhanced as they move further through to the nursery school. Transitions are handled sensitively, and staff take steps to ensure children feel secure as they move to unfamiliar surroundings. For example, staff place familiar resources, such as favourite books for the children to find in their new rooms.
- Parents offer the highest of praise for staff and say they are 'friendly, caring, professional, reliable and communication is great.' Parents acknowledge that their children thoroughly enjoy attending. Staff value the strong partnerships between the two and even during the COVID-19 pandemic, have ensured that parents remain well informed about children's daily activities and care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have an excellent knowledge of safeguarding and are well trained to recognise and report their concerns to the appropriate authorities. They are vigilant as children play outside and have clear procedures in place should they need to return children inside to keep them safe. Staff know about wider safeguarding issues, such as children being exposed to radical or extremist ideas. Recruitment procedures are robust as are the ongoing checks to help confirm staff's suitability to work with children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2530904
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10208457
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 2
Total number of places	9
Number of children on roll	17
Name of registered person	Histon Early Years Centre Governing Body
Registered person unique reference number	2530903
Telephone number	01223 712 075
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Owls registered in 2019 and is located in Histon, Cambridgeshire. It is run by the Histon Early Years Centre governing body and integral to the maintained nursery school. Little Owls opens from Monday to Friday all year round, apart from two weeks in August, one week at Christmas and one week at Easter when they are closed. Sessions run from 8am until 6pm. Little Owls employs seven members of childcare staff to work with the youngest children. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jacqueline Baker

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The two senior centre educators and inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed how the curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with a senior centre educator.
- The inspector held meetings with the head teacher, the deputy head teacher and the two senior centre educators. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- A number of parents sent emails for the inspector to read. The inspector took account of their views.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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