

Little Dragons Pre-School

Church Meadow Bungalow, Hall Road, Great Bromley, COLCHESTER, CO7 7TR

Inspection date	26/06/2013
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	1 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 are highly skilled in assessing children's progress and planning for their future learning. As a result, children make rapid progress and receive support that is truly tailored to their individual learning and developmental needs.
- The indoor and outside environments are very well planned and resourced. Consequently, children become active learners and delight in investigating their surroundings with great levels of interest and curiosity.
- A very effective key person system helps children to form highly secure emotional attachments. This promotes their well-being very effectively and has an extremely positive impact on their confidence and sense of belonging at the pre-school.
- Children experience excellent continuity in their care, learning and development due to the highly successful partnerships formed between staff, parents, the local school and other early years settings.
- In-depth self-evaluation of the provision, involving staff, parents and children, ensures that actions for improvement are extremely well targeted and always highly ambitious.

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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 playroom and the outdoor learning environment.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection and engaged in discussions with staff and children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of outdoor play with the manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, the provider's self-evaluation form and some written policy documents.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and checked evidence of staff's suitability and qualifications.

Inspector

Sarah Clements

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Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Dragons Pre-School opened in 2010 and registered again in 2012 following a move into new premises. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a converted bungalow in the Great Bromley area of Essex. It is owned and managed by a limited company. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from one playroom and there are three fully enclosed gardens available for outdoor play.

The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above, including the manager, who holds Early Years Professional Status. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9am until 3.30pm. A breakfast club is also offered from 8am to 9am. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 28 children attending, all of whom are in the early years age group. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of 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:

- enrich the already very good provision for children to explore colour, texture and space by implementing the plans for a 'sensory shed' and enhancing the range of interesting materials and resources.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff are highly competent in their understanding of how children learn and develop and work tremendously hard to ensure their arrangements for assessing children's progress are fully embedded. This means that they have a highly secure knowledge of each child's individual learning styles, interests and any gaps in their development. They use this information successfully to plan their interactions with the children and ensure that activities continue to offer plenty of challenge to move children forward in their learning. This approach is particularly effective in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as they receive precisely tailored support from their key person and make exceptional progress given their starting points and capabilities.

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Children demonstrate superb levels of confidence and curiosity as they actively explore the vibrant and exciting environment. They have great scope to steer their own play and learning as they move freely between the indoor and outside spaces. This is because the staff are highly effective in offering easily accessible resources and providing children with plenty of time and space to initiate their own ideas. For example, a group of children relish the opportunity to engage in role play together. They make excellent use of props to inspire their imaginative situations, such as lining up chairs to create a train. Staff observe children sensitively from a distance, stepping in skilfully to ask questions that fully enhance their critical thinking. For example, they challenge children to work together to calculate how many more chairs they need for all of their passengers and inspire their language as they ask them to describe what they can see from the window of the train. While outdoors, children delight in designing and making a tent using an array of interesting materials and tools. Staff intuitively guide children's problem solving skills as they ask carefully-framed questions, such as 'what could we use to fix the tent to the canes?' Children become very intrigued as they actively investigate and test out the different options available, including pegs, pieces of string and stems from a tree. They are extremely proud of their achievements and often invite the staff to take photographs of their activities. Staff make the most of this opportunity to support children in learning to operate the digital camera for themselves, showing them the different buttons and involving them in printing the pictures to add to their assessment records. As a result, children have an excellent understanding of the use of this and other technology.

Children's communication and language skills are promoted exceptionally well. Staff engage them in rich conversations throughout the day, introducing them to new vocabulary and facilitating their discussions with others. For example, older children gather together in the outdoor 'story shed' to share their experience of attending an assembly at the local school. This enables children to prepare extremely well in readiness for starting school because they develop excellent skills in speaking and listening. From a young age, children show a strong interest in numbers and counting. They delight in searching for different numerals, before eagerly taking these to their key person and counting confidently to the corresponding number. Staff are mindful to ensure that the environment is adorned with numbers, symbols and letters to enhance the children's learning even further. Children's enjoyment of physical play is fully fostered by the staff. They have excellent opportunities to refine their physical strength and co-ordination as they stamp their feet in the puddles, crawl through tunnels and balance with care on the low blocks.

Staff place excellent emphasis on working in close partnership with parents, ensuring that they are given every opportunity to get involved in supporting their children's learning. Parents are actively encouraged to share any learning that has happened at home, helping staff to gain an even clearer picture of each child's stage of development. Furthermore, parents are keen to support the pre-school's 'weekly parent activity' initiative, which suggests activities they can lead with their children at home. For example, parents report that their children enjoy 'galloping like horses' and 'scuttling like crabs' as they enhance their physical development at home. There are purposeful opportunities for parents to attend informative workshops, covering topics, such as preparing children for school and exploring the 'learning journey' records. This enables the staff and parents to work

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extremely well together to promote continuity for children in their learning and development.

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

Children delight in spending time at the pre-school, including the youngest children in the group as they are reassured and settled by the homely and child-friendly environment. Every child's transition from their home into the pre-school is carefully managed through a gradual and flexible process for settling in. Key persons make visits to each child's home before they attend. This means that children can get to know their key person in familiar surroundings and the partnership with parents is fostered at an early stage. Staff gather a wealth of information from parents, using this to plan precise support for the child's first sessions and to ascertain their starting points in learning. Consequently, children settle very quickly and feel extremely confident in seeking support from their key person when required.

Children develop superb levels of independence, as a result of the opportunities they are offered at the pre-school. Staff provide them with photographs of many of the available resources, enabling younger children to point to the photographs and convey their choices more easily. Tasks, such as, watering plants, preparing snack and accessing the toilet are all managed very competently by the children, with little need for support from the staff. Older children also have purposeful opportunities to dress and undress themselves during physical education activities. This supports them exceptionally well as they prepare for similar activities when they move onto school.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. This is because the staff ensure their needs are consistently met and the very few disagreements that arise are managed very calmly. Throughout the pre-school, the staff are highly skilful in using praise and encouragement to reinforce children's positive behaviour. As a result, children learn to take full responsibility for their decisions and actions. Their high levels of self-esteem shine through as they step up to receive a 'star award' for helping to tidy away the resources. Older children relish the opportunity to become a 'big friend' as they offer support to the younger children in the group and take on additional responsibilities. This means that children develop highly positive attitudes that prepare them well for their transition into school. Staff enhance this further by initiating regular opportunities for children to explore the local school environment and to get to know their future teacher.

Children show an excellent awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They have rich opportunities to experience new foods, including the healthy spinach and runner beans they grow from seed at the pre-school. The meticulous planning of snack menus ensures that the dietary needs of all children are always consistently met. Children spend most of their time in the outdoor environments, ensuring they benefit from plenty of exercise and fresh air while playing. They can often be heard talking about changes in their breathing and temperature when they have been running around. This shows that they are developing an excellent awareness of the effects of exercise on their bodies. Staff are particularly skilled in creating rich practical activities for children to learn about safe risk-taking. Children eagerly take on the role of 'safety officer', as they take a clipboard

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and pen outside to check for hazards and complete the daily safety checklist. Well-supervised activities, such as, using scissors to cut grass, chopping apples with a knife and using woodwork tools, go further to enhance children's excellent awareness of how to manage risks and keep themselves safe.

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

The dedication and effectiveness of the management and staff is exceptionally strong. They work very cohesively together and demonstrate an unquestionable commitment to their role and responsibilities in promoting children's welfare. Robust procedures are implemented whenever new staff or students are recruited, including rigorous checks to confirm their suitability to be in contact with children. The ongoing performance of staff is carefully monitored through highly effective supervision, appraisals and supportive observations carried out by the manager. This ensures that any weaknesses can be identified and addressed in a timely manner, while also inspiring staff to enhance their practice with the children even further. There is a very strong emphasis on safeguarding children with comprehensive policies and procedures vigilantly implemented by the staff. In addition, all staff are expected to complete a relevant safeguarding children training course and the manager issues them with regular safeguarding quizzes to ensure their knowledge continues to be secure. As a result of this, all staff are extremely well resourced with the knowledge they need to follow up any concerns about a child's welfare.

The management has high aspirations for continuous improvement and this underpins all aspects of the children's care and education. Their exceptional commitment to providing the best outcomes for children is demonstrated in their drive to make the very best use of the new pre-school premises. The move has lifted the spirits of staff, parents and children alike and continues to inspire new and innovative practice. For example, the recent introduction of activity bags in the outdoor areas has a significant impact on opportunities for children to practise making marks and to develop their early writing skills. Self-evaluation is robust and well documented, providing a detailed review of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. All staff, parents, children and the management are actively encouraged to contribute to the self-evaluation, in order to gain a wide range of opinions and suggestions for further development. For example, there are ambitious and exciting plans to enhance the range of exploratory experiences for children through the development of a new 'sensory shed'.

Management and staff are extremely clear about their responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child's 'learning journey' record is beautifully presented and celebrates the extensive assessments of learning carried out by their key person. Management diligently carry out regular scrutiny of these records. This ensures that the assessments remain highly accurate and continue to be used to inform the planning of exciting and challenging educational experiences for children.

Staff work exceptionally well in partnership with a very wide range of external agencies and professionals to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or

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disabilities. Children make excellent progress, relative to their starting points and capabilities, because of the well-targeted extra support and interventions they receive. Particularly purposeful partnerships are fostered with parents and the other early years settings attended by the children. This ensures that children benefit from excellent continuity in their care, learning and development. Parents indicate that they are extremely happy with the quality of the provision and are very impressed by the progress their children make, as a result of attending the pre-school.

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**