

# Little Rascals

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY349556

**Inspection date**

25/02/2011

**Inspector**

Hilary Preece

**Setting address**

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**Type of setting**

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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## Description of the setting

Little Rascals is a privately owned day nursery and was registered in 2007. It operates from four rooms within a unit located in the Gadebridge shopping precinct in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. The nursery serves the local area and the building is fully accessible. The nursery does not have an outdoor play area on site but has permission to use the playground and toilets of a nearby school. There are links with Galley Hill Children's Centre and School.

The nursery opens from 7.45am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday all year round only closing on bank holidays and for one week at Christmas. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions or full days. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 35 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 50 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. Currently, two are working towards level 2 and one is working towards level 3. The manager holds Early Years Professional Status. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery promotes most aspects of children's welfare with success, ensuring the children are safe and secure. A well-developed knowledge of each child's needs is used to plan enjoyable and motivating experiences that lead to children making good progress in their learning, given their starting points. Strong partnerships with parents, external agencies and other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage support children's care, learning and development. Rigorous self-evaluation processes ensure priorities for development are identified and acted upon, resulting in a provision that responds to the needs of its users and that has the capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- update the safeguarding children policy in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance, including procedures for obtaining parent signatures on records of pre-existing injuries
- review the complaints procedure to ensure it contains the correct address and telephone number of the regulator (Ofsted) and is easily accessible to

parents.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding children are mostly robust. All staff attend safeguarding training within three months of employment and this is regularly updated. They have a secure knowledge of how to recognise and manage any potential concerns about children's well-being. The procedure is implemented confidently when needed and comprehensive records are maintained. The written policy statement reflects guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. However, some of the wording in the statement is out of date. Most staff members are trained to administer first aid and records of any treatment are shared with parents. Records of injuries that occur whilst children are not in the care of the nursery are kept in order to safeguard children and staff, but these are not authenticated by parents' signatures. Thus not all aspects of safeguarding are as rigorous as they could be. Clear recruitment, vetting and induction procedures ensure that staff are suitable and equipped to work with young children. Closed circuit television cameras are also used as an additional safeguarding measure to ensure children are protected. Children are kept safe and secure because thorough risk assessments are made on all aspects of the environment, activities and outings. The manager monitors the performance of staff closely in order to share good practice with others and identify training needs and areas for development. Training is very much encouraged and there are systems for staff to share what they have learned with others. Staff are well deployed within their rooms to supervise children well and give high levels of attention. Equipment is of good quality and used well to motivate and interest children. Daily use of local community resources provides valuable additional experiences for children.

The nursery strives to build positive relationships with parents and close working partnerships with others. Comprehensive information is shared initially when children start. Parents are given access to the policies, including how to make a complaint should the need arise. However, the contact details for the regulatory body are not up-to-date. Regular communication ensures that children's needs are discussed and individual plans put in place to support their development. Information boards keep parents well informed about the planning and their children's achievements, in addition to the more formal parents' evenings held twice a year. Early support is identified, in conjunction with parents and carers, for children who may have additional needs. This gives all children equal chances of making good progress in their learning and development based on their starting points. There are well-established links with the local children's centre, school and other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage in the area. This enables many children to become familiar with the school that they will attend and also ensures that information is shared where appropriate to provide individual support for children and families.

Self-evaluation is very effective in bringing about improvements. All staff are involved in the process and are encouraged to reflect on their practice within their rooms. This helps them identify new and improved ways of working. Clear action

plans highlighting areas for development are set and reviewed to ensure targets are met. The views of parents are taken seriously and practices developed on the basis of their suggestions. An example includes the provision of menus for parents to have at home so they can plan home meals around what children eat at nursery. Children's views are also considered when planning activities and events. A 'show and tell' session was introduced because it was considered important to a child to have the chance to bring in special toys from home to share with the other children.

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

Children develop highly positive relationships and become emotionally secure because time is made for children to have individual attention from their key person. A buddy system is used when children join the pre-school room so that they are welcomed and supported by another child. This helps them to feel secure and make friends more easily. Children clearly understand expectations for their behaviour because staff act as positive role models and use very effective strategies to help children manage their own behaviour and feelings. Babies are settled and younger children are eager to take part in group activities. Children negotiate and work extremely well together. An example of this is when a group of older children sit together around the computer, knowing that everyone will have a turn because a sand timer is used to give everyone equal time to operate the mouse. Children show they have regard for safe boundaries such as walking and using quiet voices inside and tidying away toys after use. They take responsibility by confidently showing how scissors should be carried in order not to hurt themselves. Children demonstrate awareness of keeping themselves safe when following clearly practised procedures for outings. They wear high visibility waistcoats and know that wrist straps are used to keep them safely together when out. Regular discussions with the road crossing lady and local police community support officers who visit the children at the nursery further develop children's understanding of keeping safe. Children are encouraged to take calculated risks whilst in the presence of staff when exploring the woods so that they are not fearful of challenge. Furthermore, children are encouraged to speak out during activities in the nursery which ultimately equips them with the confidence to say no if they were ever in any threat of danger.

Children learn about good health and hygiene practices through everyday routines. They wash their hands and brush their teeth after meals and understand why these actions are important for their health, and overall they enjoy well-balanced, nutritious meals and snacks. Babies' physical well-being is promoted because their needs for food, rest and play are met. Despite the lack of outdoor play space on site, children have ample opportunities to explore the local environment and be physically active whatever the weather. They use play apparatus in the local school playground to develop movement, coordination and balance, go on nature walks in the woods to experience nature first hand and run about on the playing field. Babies benefit from walks in the fresh air.

Staff know individual children very well and have a secure knowledge of how to support children's learning through play. Observation records are very well maintained and show that all children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning and development. Planning takes account of the needs of all children, regardless of their cultural background or gender, and resources are used to promote an environment that reflects diversity and tackles any discrimination or stereotyping. This is evident when staff plan activities to motivate a large group of boys in one particular room. Types of activities that engage their interests are used to support their learning. Because they really like to use the computer, for example, programmes are used to develop counting, matching and problem solving abilities. Outdoor activities are also planned to extend their thinking and knowledge. They show great excitement about going on a 'shape hunt' on their daily walk. They talk enthusiastically about rectangular bricks, triangular roofs and square windows. As a result, children become active learners and develop a really positive attitude to learning. Even very young children show considerable interest in learning as they take part in letter and phonic activities. They confidently recognise letters and sounds in familiar objects or their names and use some simple gestures and signs to illustrate these. This enables all children to join in and gives confidence to those whose speech is just emerging.

Children express themselves confidently through creative arts, singing, dancing and imaginative role play. They explore the different sounds that musical instruments make and handle them with care. They use their imaginations well when building with construction bricks to create 'spaceships, monsters and flag poles.' Children develop sensory awareness and experiment with a range of materials such as paint, sand and shaving foam. Overall, children successfully acquire the personal qualities and skills they need in order to develop future learning.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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