

Little Stars Nursery

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



Inspection date

11 November 2016

Previous inspection date

1 August 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Inadequate	4
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Inadequate	4
Outcomes for children		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is inadequate

- The provider is unable to ensure that there is always at least one member of staff with a current first-aid qualification on the premises when children are present.
- Children are not assigned a key person to help ensure their care and learning needs are tailored to their individual needs. In addition, this does not support those children who experience difficulty in settling quickly or forming positive relationships with staff.
- The provider does not have effective systems in place to promptly check the suitability of staff working with children.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Not all staff have sufficient knowledge of how to promote children's learning and development. They are not able to effectively help support children to move to the next stage in their development.
- The method used to supervise staff is not effective. It lacks rigour in tackling identified underperformance to improve teaching skills and raise the standard of staff practice.
- The manager and staff do not use the information they gather from their assessments to review the progress made by the different groups of children catered for in the nursery.
- Staff do not gather sufficient specific information from parents about what their children can already do when they begin to attend nursery. This hinders the way in which staff plan for children's initial learning.

It has the following strengths

- Parents receive daily updates from staff about their child's day, such as the activities they have participated in, sleep times and personal care routines.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due Date
■ ensure that at least one member of staff who has a valid paediatric first-aid qualification is always on the premises when children are present	21/12/2016
■ establish a key-person system so that each child has a named member of staff who is responsible for their care and education and that parents know who that key person is	21/12/2016
■ implement effective systems to promptly ensure that all staff who have regular contact with the children are suitable, including obtaining a Disclosure and Barring Service check	21/12/2016
■ ensure staff offer sufficiently challenging activities and that teaching is suitable for each child's age and stage of development	21/12/2016
■ ensure that staff supervision arrangements are effective in offering support, coaching and training and that any underperformance is identified and managed swiftly.	21/12/2016

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

- seek more detailed initial information from parents regarding children's prior learning so that starting points are more swiftly identified right from the start
- use the assessment of children's progress more accurately to monitor the achievements made by specific groups of children and identify where any further support may be required.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed teaching and learning inside and in the nursery garden. She spoke to staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with the owner and manager and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the owner and held a discussion about the teaching and learning with her.
- The inspector held a discussion with the owner about staff recruitment procedures. She checked the evidence of staff working with children and looked at other documentation, such as attendance registers and the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and looked at planning documents.
- The inspector spoke to a small number of parents and took account of their views.

Inspector

Katrina Rodden

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is inadequate

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. When new staff are recruited to work in the nursery, there is often a delay before the provider completes the necessary checks to ensure that they are safe to work with children. While staff are aware that they must not be left unsupervised with children, parents are not assured of the suitability of these staff. The provider, who is also the manager, does not ensure that there is always at least one member of staff who holds a current paediatric first-aid qualification in the nursery at all times. Most staff hold relevant childcare qualifications, including the provider. However, staff supervision arrangements are not robust. The provider fails to identify training needs to help staff build upon their existing knowledge and skills. Staff know what they need to do if they have a concern about children's welfare. They are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and know how to make a referral to the appropriate agencies if required. While self-evaluation is weak, the provider is aware that there has been a decline in the quality of the provision. She has begun to work with her local authority to help in establishing action plans to improve the provision. Staff have built a good relationship with the local school to promote continuity and familiarity for children when they move to full-time school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Some staff do not effectively reflect on the different ways that children learn, to support them in their learning and development. Staff fail to recognise learning opportunities that arise during children's play. For example, staff do not encourage children to build on their mathematical skills during a planned activity. When children first begin to attend nursery, staff do not gather sufficient information about their prior learning to help them quickly identify children's starting points. This information is gathered through observations over a prolonged period of time. As a result, activities do not focus on children's next steps in learning right from the start. Staff observe and make assessments on individual children's play and learning. Parents can look at their child's learning journal at any time. However, the manager does not monitor the progress that different groups of children are making to help her and the staff identify and address gaps in learning and adjust their teaching accordingly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

In recent months, there has been a high turnover of staff. As a result, the key-person system that had been used no longer exists and the manager has not re-established it. There is little continuity of care for children. They do not have a named member of staff to ensure all their individual education and care needs are met. There is a sufficient number of staff looking after children. Staff ensure babies and young children have adequate sleep as and when required and ensure that they are safe at such times by checking every 10 minutes. Children have access to fresh air each day when they play in the garden and enjoy riding on large wheeled toys. Staff keep the nursery clean. Older children help them to tidy toys and equipment away after use.

Outcomes for children are inadequate

Not all children make sufficient progress in their learning and development to help them prepare for their move to school. Staff's practice does not encourage children to become enthusiastic and motivated learners. Children who speak English as an additional language have opportunities to talk together while they play. Staff use basic signs and gestures with the children to help them understand simple instructions or to offer reassurance.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY287543
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	1077398
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	1 - 4
Total number of places	45
Number of children on roll	39
Name of registered person	Susan Jane Harvey
Registered person unique reference number	RP512412
Date of previous inspection	1 August 2013
Telephone number	01525 404046

Little Stars Nursery was registered in 2004 and is managed by a private provider. The nursery employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. Three hold level 4 qualifications, including the provider/manager. The nursery operates Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children and supports children who speak English as an additional language.

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.

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