

Inspection of Little Meadows Nursery

29b Harmire Enterprise Park, Barnard Castle DL12 8XT

Inspection date:

30 September 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Leaders and managers have designed a curriculum for children that is balanced and sequenced. They have considered how to broaden children's experiences and help them build secure foundations for future learning. Overall, staff are aware of the skills they need to teach children, but they do not focus their teaching to promote children's individual development consistently. In addition, children make several room changes throughout the day, which has an impact on their learning and their ability to settle in. However, staff promote children's positive behaviour and have high expectations of them. They are kind, caring and responsive toward children and provide parents with information about their child's day. This helps to promote continuity and partnership working.

There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the nursery that have led to breaches of the requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS). For instance, the staff to child ratio requirements are not met in the morning. Despite this, the majority of children are happy on arrival and are keen to come to the nursery. In addition, the procedures for staff to follow when children have individual dietary requirements are unclear in comparison to procedures for children who have allergies or intolerances. Since the pandemic, staff ensure that children regularly visit the local community to become more aware of the world around them. Children take part in local charity events and enjoy trips out of the setting.

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

- Leaders and managers understand the requirements of the EYFS and demonstrates the capacity to make the necessary improvements. Although staff shifts and deployments are organised weekly, this is not effective if children arrive earlier than expected, leaving the nursery under staffed. There are clear action plans in place to drive improvements forward that staff contribute towards, such as developing the outdoor area even further for children who prefer to learn outdoors.
- Children benefit from healthy, freshly cooked meals and snacks throughout the day. They sit together at the table with other children of different age groups and enjoy the social aspect of this. Staff support them to self-serve food and drink and show them how to use cutlery. However, during the inspection, staff were not aware of children's dietary needs and preferences. Staff observing swiftly intervened before any food was consumed.
- Staff know about their key children's interests and stages of development. Overall, they provide activities that children are keen to join in with, such as exploring sensory autumn objects in the tray. Babies and young children develop confidence as they play in the water tray, and staff model tipping and pouring

actions. Toddlers show interest in books and stories. They listen intently and join in with small-group times to help develop their communication and language skills. However, staff's teaching is not focused enough to help all children make good progress in their learning.

- Pre-school children benefit from exciting, challenging experiences that help them to prepare for school. Staff encourage them to use scissors independently and draw shapes for them to cut out. Older children are keen, enthusiastic learners. They show emerging levels of concentration and pride in their own ability as they accurately count the spots on the ladybirds.
- The provision for children with special educational needs is positive. Staff understand the importance of making swift referrals to support children with a potential delay in their learning. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the individual learning plans and support children effectively on a one-to-one basis. This helps to close gaps in children's learning.
- Staff gather information about children before they start. This helps them to meet their care needs and helps them to settle in. Children form positive relationships with staff and are soothed with cuddles and their personal comfort items. However, they move around the rooms in the nursery several times throughout the day, which disrupts their emotional well-being.
- Leaders and managers provide staff with regular supervision meetings and access to professional development opportunities. Staff say they enjoy training and have worked hard to develop their understanding of children's behaviour. This has had a positive impact on how they support children's developing social skills and self-regulation.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- consider the impact on children's emotional well-being when making changes to rooms and the amount of transitions they make each day
- focus staff's teaching throughout the day, so they consistently support children to make good progress

Setting details

Unique reference number	2721980
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10364924
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	50
Name of registered person	Rascals Playtime Childcare Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP909968
Telephone number	01830 200150
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Meadows Nursery registered in 2023 and is situated in Barnard Castle. The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff. The manager holds an early years qualification at level 5, and three members of staff hold an appropriate qualification at level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, other than bank holidays. Sessions are from 7am to 6pm. The nursery offers funded early education places.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Michelle Lorains

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- A joint observation was completed by the manager and inspector, indoors, during planned group time activity.
- The inspector held a discussion with the manager in relation to the leadership and management of the nursery. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of recruitment, staff's qualifications and their suitability to work with children. She discussed children's learning and development with the staff team and nursery manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents and obtained feedback for the inspection.

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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