

Inspection of Little Stars Nursery

The Portacabin at St. Bedes RC Primary School, Front Street, Sacriston, Durham
DH7 6AB

Inspection date: 31 March 2025

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children skip through the door in the morning, eager to play with their friends. They are warmly greeted by the familiar staff, who place a priority on children's confidence and happiness. Staff's warm and caring approach helps children to feel secure and supported to explore and learn. Staff know children well. They recognise how children's prior experiences can have an impact on their learning and development. Staff take full account of individual children's circumstances and preferences when planning activities and experiences, which, overall, helps them to meet their needs well.

The curriculum focuses on plenty of opportunities for children to play independently. Staff skilfully know when to support children and when to allow them to play unhindered. They give children time and space to develop their own ideas. This encourages children's curiosity and imaginative skills. For example, children dig up worms in the garden and create homes for them. Alongside this, staff plan focused activities that are, generally, based around what children need to learn next. This helps to ensure that all children are supported to make the progress that they are capable of. Overall, children develop positive attitudes and are keen to learn.

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

- Staff weave their aims for children's learning into activities. For example, while children play with dough, staff teach them about shapes, sizes and numbers. At snack time, they create further opportunities for children to count and compare. By weaving numbers into a range of activities, staff help children to deepen their mathematical understanding. Children learn to recognise and name numbers and learn about their value. They make good progress and achieve well in this area of learning.
- Group activities, such as song times, are popular with children. Children enjoy using props, such as puppets, that encourage their involvement. However, on occasion, some whole-group activities do not meet the needs of all children involved. Although staff try hard to help all children to join in, some children do not have the prior knowledge and skills necessary to benefit from the activity. They lose interest and do not pay attention.
- Professional development has a positive impact on staff's practice. For example, staff have strengthened their reflections on practice and have identified areas for improvement since undergoing training. Leaders have started to develop the outdoor area. They intend to develop this further to create more learning opportunities and allow children to spend more time outside. Currently, children who are active learners and prefer to be outdoors have fewer opportunities to pursue their interests.

- Partnerships with parents and carers are well established. There is a good two-way flow of information between staff and parents that supports a shared approach to children's learning and development. This helps children to master new skills, such as toilet training, quickly. Parents share their appreciation of staff's 'personal touch' that makes them feel involved and puts their children at ease.
- Overall, children behave well. They follow staff's instructions and enjoy being helpful, for instance, when it is time to tidy the room. However, staff do not consistently help children to understand their expectations when moving between parts of the day. At such times, some children become mildly restless.
- Children benefit from warm relationships with staff. They show trust in them, for example, when they climb up next to them for a hug on the sofa. Staff model kindness and courtesy. Children show consideration for others, for example, when they draw pictures for their friends. Staff plan ways for children to share their feelings. Children know they can go to the quiet area if they are worried or unsettled. Staff are quick to join them and reassure them.
- Staff provide children with plenty of praise and encouragement. This encourages children's self-confidence and they show pride in their abilities. For example, they exclaim, 'Yes!', when they correctly count a set of bricks and celebrate with a 'high five' from staff.

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:

- plan group activities more precisely so that they consistently meet the needs of all children taking part
- develop the outdoor space further to enhance the learning opportunities for children who prefer to learn outdoors
- refine routines to better support children's good behaviour at times of transition.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2712878
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10380391
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	11
Name of registered person	Little Stars Nursery (St Bedes) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2712879
Telephone number	07434704177
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Stars Nursery registered in 2022. It is independently run and is located in the grounds of St Bede's Primary School in Sacriston. The nursery employs three members of childcare staff, who all hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff hold qualifications at level 5 and one holds a qualification at level 3. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 9am until 3pm. The nursery provides government funded childcare.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Clare Wilkins

Inspection activities

- The manager showed the inspector around and explained how the nursery is organised. She talked about the measures in place to ensure that children are safe and well supervised.
- Leaders shared their aims for the early years curriculum and explained how they support children's learning.
- The inspector observed staff's teaching, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning and development.
- The manager and the inspector observed an activity and evaluated it together.
- The inspector spoke to leaders and staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Leaders shared some relevant documents to support discussions around the management of the nursery.
- The inspector interacted with the children at appropriate times during the inspection. She spoke to a number of parents and 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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