



Little Fishes Pre-School (Brackley)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219979
Inspection date	24 January 2007
Inspector	Rachael Mankiewicz
Setting Address	Brackley Baptist Church, Waynflete Close, Brackley, Northamptonshire, NN13 6AE
Telephone number	0794 4188108
E-mail	
Registered person	Little Fishes Pre-School (Brackley)
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Fishes Pre-School opened in 1994. It operates from rooms within Brackley Baptist Church close to the centre of Brackley town. A maximum of 22 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens each weekday during school term time with the exception of Tuesdays. Sessions are from 09:15 to 12:00. Afternoon sessions take place on Monday and Wednesday from 12:30- 15:00.

There are currently 27 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from Brackley and surrounding villages. The pre-school is able to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six staff and all hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three members of staff are currently working towards a higher level of qualification. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from a clean, warm, comfortable and generally child-friendly environment in a shared building. They are protected from infection through the effective hygiene routines carried out by the staff, which the children try to imitate. Older children have a secure awareness of how and why they need to wash their hands as they talk about the germs that they might have on their hands from playing in the snow. They learn the importance of good hygiene practices in promoting their health as they become increasingly independent in their personal care. For example, children readily wash their hands after using the toilet, before snack and after messy play. Many children access the tissue boxes as they need to and appropriately dispose of the used tissues. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have up-to-date first aid knowledge in the event of any accidents and appropriate procedures are in place if children are unwell.

Children have an excellent understanding of the benefits of a healthy diet in promoting their growth and development as they eat snacks during the on-going snack time. They independently access the good choice of fruit, vegetables and snacks after looking at the instructions which tell them how many pieces of fruit they may have. They choose and pour their own drinks and clear the tables when they have finished. Children readily help themselves to water at other times which ensures that they remain well hydrated and comfortable. Special dietary requirements are complied with in partnership with the parents. Children are encouraged to try new foods, and are helped to begin to understand why some foods are healthy and others are not. They show preferences and talk about flavours and textures, and this is extended as they cook, try different foods at taste testings and when celebrating different festivals.

Children enjoy very good opportunities to develop their physical skills which contribute to their good health. They have daily opportunities to get fresh air to promote their development by using the setting's outdoor area for active play and other more sedentary activities when the weather allows. Quieter activities take place spontaneously outside as children look for mini-beasts and listening to the sounds around them. Children learn about being appropriately dressed for the weather through discussion with staff as they get ready to play outside. They excitedly explore the ice and snow as they make footprints and throw snowballs. Children move spontaneously around the room and hall as they develop a good awareness of the space around them and the close proximity of others. Large and small equipment including climbing frames, balance beams and items to throw and catch are used well to allow children to develop good control over their bodies. They confidently manoeuvre wheeled toys, play parachute games and take part in movement sessions, action rhymes and dances. They run, jump, climb and move with confidence as they participate in obstacle courses. Children handle tools, small machines,

construction resources and malleable materials, safely and with increasing control. This develops children's hand to eye coordination and strengthens small muscles effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a secure environment where risk of accidental injury is minimised by the staff's vigilance and their good practice based on required documentation. Risk assessments ensure that any hazards are identified and that appropriate safety equipment is used. The premises and outside area are secure and children are unable to leave them unsupervised. When other users come into the premises they make themselves known to the pre-school staff. The good deployment of staff and high levels of safety and security enable children to move freely and to develop their play and ideas in a safe environment. This includes opportunities which offer challenge within safe limits such as playing in the snow. Children safely and deftly manipulate tools and implements as they cook and garden and they develop good hand to eye coordination as they use craft tools and carry scissors across the room.

Children learn about safety and use high quality equipment appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they begin to take personal responsibility for their safety. For example, they enthusiastically scale large play equipment and sensitively negotiate space around the room. They learn about road safety as an activity in the pre-school and transfer their knowledge as they walk around the local environment.

Children's well-being is safeguarded and promoted because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection policies and procedures. Their safety and welfare is further enhanced by staff carefully monitoring access to the premises and complying with fire requirements such as completing regular fire safety evacuations. Staff check the resources and equipment to ensure that they are safe and suitable for the children's individual needs.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy playing, learning and having fun with their friends and with adults in the pre-school. Their natural curiosity and development is promoted by knowledgeable and experienced staff who provide an exciting learning environment for the children. A good range of well-chosen resources supports children's learning across all areas of development. Children independently access the stimulating and challenging range of activities and are forming good relationships with staff and other children. They are confident to approach the practitioners to ask questions or for help and support. Children seek out friends to share experiences such as becoming firemen in a group activity and to enjoy time together when they choose to have their snack. They use their imaginations well and with enjoyment as they construct buildings and take part in a wide range of art and craft activities. Their needs are met through effective organisation and planning for the progress of all children. Staff are beginning to develop their use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework as a formal developmental system for the younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage guidance and plan an interesting range of activities to provide opportunities for learning in all six areas of the curriculum. Effective use of time helps staff support children in a mixture of adult and child-initiated activities and enables them to make progress. A key worker system ensures that one member of staff takes a special interest in the development, welfare and progress of each child in their group. Staff use appropriate questioning and challenge to help children develop. Observations and assessments of the child's progress towards the early learning goals are used for planning for the individual child's progress. Initial information of abilities is received from parents but further information gained from the parents is not formally used to inform planning and suggestions of how parents can extend their children's learning at home are limited.

Children begin to make sense of the world around them as they explore a variety of materials. For example, they use their hands and tools in gloop and add extra glitter and water to see what happens. Children investigate how things are made and how they work as they explore construction materials and make models and puppets. They use simple working technology such as tills, programmable toys and cameras to support their learning and usually consolidate their learning on programmes on a computer. Children are aware of their own bodies and their ability to use their senses through planned and unplanned activities. They make the most of the outdoor space and the opportunities offered in the large clear spaces within the premises. Children take part in gardening activities and explore different elements of the environment. They begin to explore the wider world through looking at holiday destinations and taking part in the celebration of festivals.

Children use their imagination well in role play using a good range of dressing up clothes and with small world figures. Their artwork is displayed on the walls and models the children have made are valued. Children's hand and eye coordination develops as they play with construction kits, complete jigsaws and use one-handed tools. Older children are confident speakers and have a good vocabulary. Children begin to differentiate between letter sounds and to recognise their names. They regularly share books and enjoy story time. Children use marks to represent their ideas, for example, as they colour and paint and as they begin to write the letters of their names. Older children are beginning to develop the use of mathematical ideas, including sorting and counting large numbers, playing maths games and solving problems in planned activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the pre-school where they are valued and respected as individuals. They gain confidence and self-assurance through making choices about activities and moving around the room interacting with staff and other children. Children have good access to resources, including free access to the hall or outdoor area during most of the session, which develops their independence. Older children understand their own needs and begin to respect the needs of others. They make sure their friends are included in the activities and are aware that some children have different needs to themselves.

Children's individual needs are discussed with parents in detail and their achievements are recorded on settling in at the pre-school. This process often includes a home visit to the child and parent. A comprehensive policy is in place regarding learning difficulties and/or disabilities which details how the service will be provided to children. The very good levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive a great deal of individual attention so that their needs are effectively met. This includes children with English as an additional language. Children begin to understand the wider world as they gain knowledge of different cultures and religions and celebrate festivals and national days. They participate enthusiastically during sessions when visitors share their skills and knowledge and they enjoy meeting other people on walks around the town.

The children behave very well as they respond well to the consistent boundaries set for them and the encouragement to behave well given by the caring staff. Children's self-esteem and confidence is promoted by the use of regular praise and reassurance. Staff have high expectations for all children and are good role models. Older children begin to take responsibility to manage their own behaviour and to negotiate with others. They include friends and adults in the games they have initiated and many enthusiastically help tidy up. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well.

The children's well-being at the pre-school is enhanced by the good partnership with parents. Parents are informed about how the pre-school operates and receive a comprehensive welcome pack, written notices and newsletters about the care of the children. Many parents are involved in the management of the setting, help on a regular basis, make the toast when needed or just spend time in the group watching their children play and learn. They speak positively about the group.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving funding for their nursery education is good. This helps foster children's progress in the pre-school. Colourful displays inform parents of the activities provided. Regular discussions take place to ensure that parents know how their children are developing, formal observations are shared and parents' evenings are offered. However, formal systems are not in place to show parents how they can contribute to their children's progress and how parents can consolidate and extend what the children have learnt previously.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The good quality care and education offered to the children is based on effective organisation throughout the pre-school. Space and resources are laid out well and children benefit from this as they make the most of the play and learning opportunities for active play, both indoors and outside, and for quiet times and messy play. Practitioners know their roles and responsibilities and effectively implement routines to give children a broad range of experiences. Good staff to child ratios ensure that the children are well supervised and benefit from the resulting relationships and interaction. Records and documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. Policies and procedures which make up the operational plan are not reviewed regularly and lack some information. The recruitment and vetting procedures of staff are sound which helps ensure children are well protected and has a positive

impact on children's well-being and development. There is an effective system to ensure that staff remain suitable.

The leadership and management of children receiving funding for their nursery education is good. Management and staff are committed to continuous improvement and development of the nursery care and education. Staff have child care qualifications or are working towards higher levels which enhances the care and education of the children. They attend training events to further develop their knowledge and practice. However, the current employment framework does not ensure that there is always a suitably qualified person to Level 3 in Early Years Childcare in place. There are systems in place to evaluate the care and education offered. The setting uses support from professional agencies to guide development of practice. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to develop the staff's understanding of child protection issues and food hygiene. The staff have attended appropriate training and have reviewed their practice to ensure the well-being and welfare of children is not compromised.

At the last inspection of nursery education, the setting was asked to increase the opportunities for children to count spontaneously, solve mathematical problems and to develop their physical skills. An action plan has been followed to review these areas and has resulted in further development opportunities for the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that an action plan is set out detailing how training and qualifications requirements are met
- ensure that the operational plan, which includes the setting's policies and procedures, is reviewed regularly.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop further a formal system to obtain information on progress from parents and use to influence planning for their children.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk