

# The Little House

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	305376
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Debra Elizabeth Jean Dahlstrom
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Cobbles, Lower Peover, WA16 9PZ
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<b>Registered person</b>	Susan Elizabeth Lake
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Little House Montessori Nursery is a privately owned facility, registered in 1993. The nursery is set in a rural location in the village of Lower Peover. There are currently 31 children on roll, with no children in receipt of funding for nursery education.

The setting is registered to provide full day care for 14 children from two years. It offers sessional care five mornings a week Monday to Friday from 09.30 to 12.30 and five afternoons Monday to Friday 13.30 to 16.00 term time. There is also a summer school for two weeks in August from 10.00 to 16.00, for children up to eight years. Children who are to attend both morning and afternoon sessions bring a packed lunch. The children have use of one room with toilet facilities and a small enclosed garden immediately outside, they can have use of the school field at the school which is situated across the courtyard during holiday times.

The owner who is also the person in charge of the nursery is one of six staff of whom all hold relevant childcare and or teaching qualifications. Several staff also hold Montessori Diplomas. Of the six staff, four are permanent and a further two provide cover for sickness or holiday.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff at the setting give high priority to promoting good health for young children in their care. They have excellent hygiene procedures in place to help children from an early age learn how to keep themselves fit and well. Children clearly understand the need to wash their hands after certain activities. For example, visiting the toilet or after creative activities or playing in the garden. They readily undertake these tasks without prompting and with great competence wash both the front and back of their hands with diligence and care.

Children's physical development is extremely well provided for. They have daily access to an extensive range of physical play activities. The outdoor play space, which comprises of an attractive garden enables children to express themselves and their physical skills exceedingly well. Children run, jump and hop, using hoops, they clap their hands with excitement and delight. During summer months children use a maypole as they skilfully change direction and speed. Indoors children, joyfully use the 'rainbow ring' a huge circle of multi coloured fabric and they sing and weave in differing directions. Children develop confidence when using the variety of equipment offered. Staff are able to skilfully balance the supervision of children and equipment with the need to allow children to take risks and develop skills. Children develop superb competence in their fine motor skills through access to an extensive range of equipment and activities. They use scissors, a variety of craft materials when being creative, writing materials and join together pieces when using the wide variety of construction equipment and jigsaws with great dexterity.

Staff at the setting are committed to enabling children to learn about a healthy life style and a broad and balanced diet. Children take huge pride in their achievements in the vegetable garden. They grow a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, such as, celery, peas, lettuce, courgettes and cabbage which they take home to be cooked and included in their mealtimes. Children independently access drinking water regularly throughout the session which is freely available, further promoting children's very good health and overall development.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children have access to an extensive range of resources and equipment on a daily basis and which is continually developed. Equipment is of a high standard and checked regularly for safety and hygiene ensuring children are safe at all times. Children are extremely independent as they make choices and self select resources and equipment from low level shelving.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are vigilant and assess possible risks to reduce potential hazards. They have an excellent understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits, and how to involve children effectively in organising their environment. Children for example, readily mop up spills, competently use scissors or other small tools or carefully carry equipment around the setting. This allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm. Regular evacuations of the premises are practised to ensure children know the procedure to follow in an emergency.

Children's welfare is given priority because staff have a secure understanding of the procedures to be followed regarding child protection. Staff are very clear about their role within this area and there is an identified member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding children, who has also undertaken relevant training. However, the written child protection procedures were written sometime ago and do not include the small yet relevant changes to current practice.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children arrive at the setting excited and ready to participate in the excellent activities and experiences which await them. They benefit greatly from extremely warm and supportive relationships with staff, who offer encouragement, use warm caring smiles and speak to children in gentle tones. Staff are involved in children's activities, they spend considerable time listening and talking to them. As a result children are very happy, confident and secure in their care.

Staff are highly skilled in enabling the children and supporting their learning, children are encouraged to question and find solutions. Therefore children are extremely independent and creative thinkers, choosing from a range of tools and materials when putting together their work.

Children have developed extremely good relationships with one another, they readily chat about what they are doing when asked by their peers. Older children are very confident in using language and express themselves extremely well. They have rich imaginations as they explain about the 'bad animal catching machine' picture they have drawn. They complement each other on their work and value the opinions shared. Children are extremely kind and considerate to each other, they instinctively offer help in carrying equipment or putting on a coat for example, or they share genuine delight in the recent arrival of their friend's new baby.

Excellent progress is made by children, as staff encourage them to develop their own learning. They support and challenge them in building on what they already know. Children are enthusiastic and work with sustained concentration, for example, in making a bridge or number line from one to 10 from numbered blocks at the table, they then walked over to another part of the room and made a row of wooden number rods on the floor. They then matched those rods with the corresponding numbered blocks, making clear links in their learning.

Children thoroughly enjoy the range of interesting activities available to them which readily engage and challenge them. They design and make a complicated pattern of beads which are threaded to make a beautiful necklace, worn for the rest of the day and complemented by many. They sit at the window identifying birds at the bird table in the garden, using a pocket book of British birds or larger laminated picture cards as a reference, with space for children to make marks against them once identified.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are treated with equal concern as staff have a very good understanding of their stages of development as they plan for their future learning needs. All children are welcomed and play a full part in the setting because staff value and respect their individuality. They work very effectively with parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure that children who have learning difficulties and disabilities are appropriately cared for and given support to enable them to participate fully in all activities. Children feel secure and their self-esteem is promoted

exceedingly well. They clap their hands and laugh in sheer delight as their efforts and achievements are consistently recognised and celebrated by all of those present. Children take part in religious festivals such as Harvest or Christingle at the local church close by, they help to contribute in making a wheat sheaf for the harvest display.

Children's behaviour is outstanding. This is due to the highly effective staff relationships and their involvement with children in their activities. Staff are excellent role models, showing respect and consideration for children, each other, parents and carers. Children are extremely polite, well mannered and show care and concern for one another. A calm and caring ethos encourages children to be polite, have respect for oneself and others and their environment.

Partnership with parents is excellent, they are well-informed through daily discussions about their children's routines and progress. Parents are extremely pleased with the service they receive from the setting. There are open evenings and equipment evenings, the latter enabling parents to understand and value the way children are learning and developing through the Montessori model.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Staff's commitment and caring approach creates an inclusive environment in which every child matters. High staffing levels also contribute to children's care and development. They are committed to a child-centred approach, so ensuring in the planning for children, there is a good balance of child and adult-lead activities and experiences.

The setting is small and well organised, with indoor and outdoor space attractively laid out to provide children with realistic and challenging learning opportunities.

Certificates of registration and insurance are prominently displayed with information for parents. All legally required policies and procedures are in place, although not necessarily reviewed on a regular basis and written consents are not necessarily obtained from parents for children to leave the setting. This is due in part to the small and consistent staff team who are thoroughly familiar with and implement the policies and procedures and also their strong partnership with parents.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to small changes to the wording on the application forms, thus to improve practice for children.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1st April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider 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

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.

### 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):

- review the child protection statement in line with the revised safeguarding children procedures
- ensure written consent is obtained from parents for outings.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)