

Little Oaks Nursery School - Ashford

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127517
Inspection date	19 November 2007
Inspector	Mary Van De Peer
Setting Address	William Harvey Hospital, Kennington Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent, TN24 0LZ
Telephone number	01233 616746
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Registered person	Little Oaks Early Years Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 Oaks Nursery School opened in 2001. The nursery is one of three settings owned by a limited company. It operates from a single-storey building set in the grounds of the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford, Kent. The nursery welcomes all children but the majority of parents work within the health service. There are currently 90 children from 0-11 years on roll. This includes 23 three and four year olds who receive nursery funding. The nursery has a number of play-rooms, including an extended baby-unit and its own kitchen and cloakroom facilities. There is an enclosed and secure outside play area. The nursery opens five days a week all year round and its operating times are from 07:00 to 18:00. There is also out of school provision, currently consisting of an after-school club which opens from 15:00-18:00 and a holiday club which opens all day during school holidays. The nursery is able to pick up children from Willesborough CP School. The setting is able to support children with Learning Difficulties and or Disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. There are 20 staff employed at the setting, including the manager, cook and mini-bus driver. The majority of child care staff, working directly with the children, have recognised early years qualifications to NVQ II or III. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The play and care areas are clean and organised. Children learn about the importance of self-care routines and are able to participate in effective personal hygiene procedures. They wash their hands before meals, after using the toilet or playing with creative play activities. Children are also actively encouraged to put their hands over their mouths when they cough or sneeze. A clear sick policy is in place, which states that children who are unwell must not attend the nursery. These good practises mean the risk of cross-infection is kept to a minimum. All members of staff have attended first aid training. Both accident and medication administration records are used when appropriate. If children sustain any minor injuries, they are dealt with effectively. Physical development is good. Children's large and fine motor skills are developing well. They are able to play with a good choice of activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. There is a wide range of stimulating indoor and outdoor equipment, including, climbing and balancing apparatus, sand and water play, balls, construction, puzzle assembly and mark-making. They are developing self-confidence in their physical play. All children are able to rest or sleep when they need to, this helps them recognise their own body signs. If parents want them to, the nursery provides all the children's meals. These are freshly prepared, using some local produce, for example vegetables. There is a selection of fruit and drinks, including milk and water, available during snack time. Children are beginning to have an awareness about healthy eating. They each have their own cups and plates to help avoid cross-contamination. Children's individual dietary needs are catered for.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Any hazards have been minimised. For example, stair gates are used to control children's access to certain areas, sockets are covered and dangerous items are kept out of children's reach. The registers for children and staff are well-maintained and completed every day. All visitors are recorded, they are also required to read a health and safety statement, ensuring they know what is expected of them in an emergency. The nursery's play rooms are child-friendly, with toys and activities stored at a suitable height so children can reach them easily. Children's toilets and hand basins are conveniently and safely located near to where children play. The equipment that the children use is appropriate to their ages, checked regularly for safety and hygiene. The outside play area is available and suitable for children to use every day. Risk assessments carried out daily at the premises, mean that children can play in areas that are safe. Staff make sure they achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits for all the children. An emergency evacuation procedure, involving everyone at the nursery, is carried out at regular intervals. This allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves. Children are well cared for by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and give good priority to their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children enjoy their time at the nursery and are making good progress. All staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of both Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage. The staff work hard to make children and their families feel welcome. They have created a

friendly environment which is fun for all the children, as well as educational. Children benefit from going on outings, for example to local animal parks, they can see and learn about different species from around the world. The nursery has various play rooms which provide a range of opportunities for children to learn and experiment. The main child care room has equipment and resources covering the main areas of development, for example, role play to encourage imaginary play and a creative table where children can experiment with various different art and craft materials, such as paints, glue and recycled materials. There are also quiet areas where the children can relax and look at books. The art and craft room contains an additional selection of resources, tools and mark-making equipment to support children's creative skills. Several computers and child-friendly software allow all children to gain familiarity with information and technology. A classroom is equipped with more challenging games, activities and puzzles for the three and four year olds. There is also an area set aside for older children, where they can relax, read, play music, do homework or just talk with each other after a busy day at school. All children learn the importance of interacting appropriately with each other. They are encouraged to take turns and share during their play, using activities such as sand and water play and construction. The nursery walls are full of examples of children's work as well as photographs of them involved in a variety of interesting activities such as building a model of a volcano. This helps promote children's self-esteem. The baby care area also has a wide range of age appropriate resources, such as sensory play, colourful, musical toys and treasure baskets, helping to provide visual stimulation as well as a calming atmosphere for them. Generally, children are able to choose their own activities. However, there are times when they have to stop what they are doing, for example at snack times and story time. This slightly reduces the opportunities for children to further develop their independence and make their own decisions.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are able to experiment and have lots of fun learning through the availability of good quality toys, activities and resources. This supports them in all areas of learning. Children are keen to learn and show confidence in their play. They listen intently to stories and eagerly take part in any actions related to the story being told. Children are able to mark-make to represent their ideas, for example, by using paint, chalks, pencils and crayons. More able children take great pride in trying to write letters appearing in their name. Role play areas are popular with the children and this encourages positive social interaction. Children are able to count and recognise numbers up to ten and often to twenty. Staff use different number activities to promote skills such as problem-solving, which helps develop children's memory use. Children work well together, for example, building constructions and joining in outdoor games. However, there are some missed opportunities for children to extend their play. Staff ensure they know about children's skills, interests and needs. This is used to inform the future play plans. Staff observe and record children's achievements and this helps identify the next steps in their learning. Activities are also monitored and evaluated to see how successful they are. This enables children to benefit from appropriate challenges in their play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about other cultures and disability through the wide range of activities made available. They have access to a range of books, dolls and figures showing positive images of equality. There are also children from several different countries and cultures attending the nursery. Staff ensure they know some basic words such as hello and goodbye in the languages spoken at home by the children. The individual needs of all children who attend are well met.

Although there are no children currently attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there are effective arrangements in place to provide them with appropriate support. Children receive lots of praise for their achievements. Staff are enthusiastic about giving encouragement. They use effective, positive behaviour management strategies, which are shared with parents. Staff are good role models, they help children learn the importance of showing respect for each other. The children play freely within acceptable boundaries and develop good self esteem. Samples of children's work is on display all around the nursery. Children receive good care and support from the staff. Parents confirm that they feel able to approach staff to talk about their child. They receive verbal feedback on how their children are developing. Parents of babies are also provided with daily information on feeds, sleep patterns and nappy changes. A contact diary is completed by staff and this helps ensure children receive continuity of care.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive clear and regular information about their children's progress and development, for example, through regular updates about their achievements. Details about the Foundation Stage are made available for parents to refer to. Play plans show how activities and themes relate to the early learning goals. The nursery provides an operational plan and a prospectus containing substantial information about the care and education children receive. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery is very well organised. There is plenty of indoor and outdoor space which has been planned and laid out to provide good play opportunities for children. The required documentation and record-keeping is in place. This contributes to maintaining children's health, safety and wellbeing. The setting's registration certificate is displayed along with the public liability insurance information. There is a robust and very effective staff recruitment and appraisal system. Children benefit from qualified and experienced staff. In addition, all staff members hold a current paediatric first aid course certificate. This all helps to ensure the nursery's policies and procedures are consistently applied. The leadership and management of the nursery are good. The company directors and managers have lots of experience and enthusiasm. All staff are committed to the continuous improvement and development of the nursery. They are continually looking for effective ways to progress and develop the nursery in all areas, thus improving the learning experiences for children. The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider has followed the previous recommendations to improve the provision. They were asked to improve the presentation of the outside play space and ensure there is an area suitable for use by the under twos. Improvements have been undertaken and extensive work on the outdoor area has been carried out. There are now sensory activities, wooden climbing and balancing equipment, push and pull along toys, balls and hoops, a play house, sand pit and chalk boards. A grassed area is located near the baby care room. All the children use the outside play space several times a day, benefiting from the fresh air and exercise.

Another recommendation was for the management to review the content of nursery policies and the way they are shared with parents. All policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and kept up to date. A regular newsletter contains at least one policy every time and notice boards display relevant policy and procedure information. A new prospectus is ready for

distribution which contains summaries of the different nursery policy statements. This helps ensure the on-going care and welfare of each child.

The final recommendation was for a review of the statement of child protection arrangements and ensure that it contains the procedures to follow where there are allegations against members of staff. The management have carried out a comprehensive review of their child protection and safeguarding children statement. It now includes a procedure should there be any allegations made against members of staff. This is made available to staff and parents to ensure the children attending the nursery are adequately protected.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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.

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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):

- increase the choices children have in their everyday play, enabling them to think for themselves, therefore further promoting their independence

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):

- ensure children are provided with additional resources, to help extend their play opportunities

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