

Little Oaks Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY357026
Inspection date	21 January 2008
Inspector	Cordalee Harrison
Setting Address	Little Oaks Pre School, School Lane, Waddesdon, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP18 0LQ
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Registered person	The Trustees of Little Oaks Pre-School
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 satisfactory. 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 pre-school has been open for over 12 years and moved to its current premises in 2008. It operates from a purpose built building in the grounds of the local primary school in Waddesdon, near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. The pre-school is run by a management committee, which is mainly made up of parents of children who attend the group.

Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area, and have occasional use of the school hall. There are currently 50 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 37 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The setting supports for children with learning difficulties and or disabilities.

The pre-school opens term time only. Sessions are from 09.00 to 15.30 Monday to Thursday and from 09.00 to 12.30 on Fridays. Children attend a variety sessions. The pre-school employs eight staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Most children are enthusiastic about playing in the garden; it is a part of their daily routine. They get fresh air and exercise as they move around freely and explore the area. Some planned activities are used to help children to develop their awareness of space and to extend children's learning whilst they are playing outside. Children develop their balance and coordination as they play with balls and negotiate their way around the obstacles placed by staff. They make good use of the outdoor space to extend their topic of patterns, as they explore the different textures in the outdoor environment. Children are learning to respect other children's space, for example, many children carry out different activities successfully because other children do not disrupt them.

Children are encouraged to develop their self-care skills. For example, they are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water throughout the day and they know that they are to wear their coats and boots before playing outside because it is cold and wet. Many children use the toilet and wash their hands independently. Suitable resources, such as, warm and cold water, hand washing liquid and paper towels that are easily accessible to children help them to develop good hygiene practices. The risks of cross infection for children is further reduced, because the health and safety policies are used effectively. For example, parents are informed about infectious diseases and standards of hygiene and cleanliness in the preschool is good.

To meet children's first aid needs a high number of staff are qualified in first aid, and the first aid equipment is satisfactory. Accidents records contain all of the required information and staff are clear about the procedure for the management and administration of medication.

Children are learning to make healthy choices about their snacks, because the setting works closely with parents. Children eat snacks of fresh fruit and salad vegetables, they are learning to recognise a variety of different fruits. In addition, to the water that is available children may choose to drink milk at snack time. To safeguard children's health, their allergies are known to staff and suitable procedures are in place to ensure that children's health is compromised, for example, children learn not to touch other people's food and staff supervises the snack and lunch tables consistently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into a warm, bright and attractive preschool environment, which is safe and very well equipped. They have sufficient space to carry out a wide range of activities indoors and outside. Children move easily between a wide range of tabletop and floor based activities and makes independent use of the good quality safe age and stage appropriate resources. Bright posters help to create a child centred environment and encourage children's independent learning. For example, the children identify the different shapes whilst making their way to and from the toilet. In addition, sufficient suitable tables and chairs enable the children to participate in large group activities, such as, sitting together at snack time.

Children are secure in the preschool; they are not able to leave unattended and only people who are permitted by staff are able to enter. The preschool environment is generally safe for children, for example, they do not have access to substances that will harm them and the

premises are free of tripping and slipping hazards. Fire exits are marked and kept clear and fire-fighting equipment is readily available. However, children have not yet practised the evacuation procedure to ensure that they are able to evacuate the premises quickly. Although staff acknowledge their responsibility to provide a safe environment for children there is no documentation to provide information and assurance of risk assessments and that the safety procedures are followed consistently daily.

Staff are clear about their responsibility to safeguard children's welfare in the setting. They are clear that if concerns arise about a child's welfare or well-being they would bring it to the attention of the manager. Although not all staff has secure knowledge of child protection issues, they are all clear about lines of communication for dealing with concerns within the setting. Some staff know that the local and registering authority must be informed of safeguarding children issues. The setting's safeguarding children's policy contains good quality information and is readily accessible to staff and parents in the setting, they are therefore able to act immediately to safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle very well in the pre-school, because they are supported well by staff; this helps them to separate easily from their parents. They are familiar with the daily routine and most select their names independently. Experienced and confident staff use guidance, such as, Birth to three matters, which helps them to provide appropriately and care well for the needs of the younger children. Children have many opportunities to promote their learning with meaningful activities. Most children are confident and familiar in their surroundings, they speaking freely and share experiences. For example, they are eager to talk about the clothes they need to wear for outdoor play.

Nursery Education

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have good knowledge of the guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum and the stepping stones. They plan a wide range of suitable activities; they clearly identify learning intentions and link their plans and activities closely to the stepping stones. In addition, staff carry out regular observations of children and keep records of children's achievements. They use the opportunities that arise spontaneously to extend children learning, they ask open questions to encourage the children to think. For example, as the children play with the vehicles they are encouraged to think about what the crane operator sees from the high position. However, the next step in individual children's learning is not consistently identified to ensure that suitable challenges are planned for individual children. Interesting topics and resources are used to engage the children in learning. Topics, such as, 'Carnival of Culture', provide opportunities for children to learn and explore all areas of the curriculum. They learn about different cultures in the British Isles and extend their knowledge of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. They use their creative skills to illustrate their understanding of the topic as they make Celtic jewellery, and learn about the natural environment. For example, as they discuss and recreate the 'White Cliffs of Dover'. Children are becoming independent learners, for example, two children share books in the comfortable book corner they look at the pictures, trace them with their fingers, they identify the different animals and laugh together. Another small group of children count the objects on the number poster; they are beginning to set their own challenges. Children are beginning to write for a purpose; they write their names to identify their work. They use many mark making implements often, which enables

them to develop good pencil control; many of the letters they write are recognisable. In addition, they are beginning to recognise, familiar words and symbols.

Children use mathematical language in their everyday play, they sequence numbers and use positional language as they sing number and action rhymes. However, there are few planned activities to help them to practise solving simple number problems in practical ways. Children are learning to recognise different shapes and patterns. For example, a child recognises that she has made a square with the play dough, a member of staff extends the learning by encouraging the children to further explore the three dimensional shape. She introduces the word cube to help the children with the description. Children explore different patterns and textures, for example, they identify different patterns on animals, such as, zebras and cheetahs, and further explore different patterns in nature as they make rubbings of the different surfaces they find in the outside play area. They examine plastic insects closely under the magnifying glass and discuss the different markings.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Through topics, such as, 'All about me' children learn to value themselves and others. In the positive pre-school environment they build their self-esteem and show pride in their achievements. For example, children proudly show what they have created with the construction set. They use resources that are diverse and reflective of the wider community including disability and cultural diversity and deepen this area of their learning. Children behave well, for example, children know that they are getting the stickers for helping and doing as they are asked. The noise level in the preschool is high on occasions throughout the day; however, children show respect of other people's personal space. They are also learning to care for the preschool resources. For example, they tidy items away and put them in the correct places. Positive and timely intervention from staff helps children to resolve conflicts and let them know when their behaviour is not appropriate. This helps children to understand that there is an expectation that they are to behave well and show consideration for others. Spiritual, cultural, social and moral development is fostered.

There are sound policies and procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and or disabilities. The inclusion Officer is well trained; in addition, the setting maintains good links with local areas inclusion training team. The setting is experienced at developing individual education plans, setting targets and carrying out reviews to ensure that all of the correct resources and strategies are in place to meet the needs of children as identified. An inclusive atmosphere is achieved in the setting.

Partnership with parents is good. The setting communicates effectively with parents. Information leaflets, parent's notice board and verbal communication are some of the methods employed. Parents are provided with information about the Foundation Stage curriculum, which keeps them involved in their children's learning. For example, all of the parents are aware of the topics that the children are studying this term. They are pleased to contribute resources and their expertise to support and extend the children's learning. In addition, there is a system in place for parents to share their children's achievement record. Parents praise the staff; speak highly of the education, and care the setting provides for their children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are making good progress in their learning, because they use ample good quality safe, age and stage appropriate resources in their daily activities. Children enjoy many first hand experiences, which enable them to explore, experiment, and spend their time in purposeful ways. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The preschool is bright, attractive, and generally safe for children's activities. The recruitment procedure is sound. To safeguard children's welfare only staff who are cleared through the vetting procedure are alone with children. However, the records do not show that all staff are cleared through the vetting procedure, there is therefore confirmation that all staff who work with the children are fully vetted to do so. Most documentation required to safeguard children's welfare is in place and most include the necessary information. However, the attendance record does not always provide accurate information about children's time of arrival, and departure. A number of informative policies support practice in the setting and most are familiar to the staff, who use them for the benefit of the children. For example, the behaviour management policy is used to achieve suitable and consistent behaviour strategies. In addition, the policies are readily available for parents in the setting.

Leadership and management are good. The leadership and management team works closely with the setting's manager and staff. They ensure that ample good quality resources are available, that staff are appropriately trained and supported to deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum. There is some evidence of evaluation of the daily activities. Sufficient staff work in the setting and they are deployed effectively to support children's learning. Children's achievement record are up to date, however, they do not consistently identify the next step in children's learning. This reduces the opportunities for staff to set individual challenges for children to maximise their progress towards the early learning goals. There is a suitable procedure in place for parents to contribute to their children's achievement record; however, there is no procedure to evaluate the setting's overall performance.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration, 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 complaint 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):

- make sure that all staff have knowledge of the setting's safeguarding children policy, practise evacuation of the premises with children and develop a risk assessment that is specific to the premises
- make sure that all staff are cleared through the vetting procedure and ensure that the record of children's attendance is always accurate.

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):

- put in place a system to evaluate the setting's overall performance (also applies to care).
- improve children's achievement records to consistently identify the next step in their learning.

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