

Little Angels Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY356060
Inspection date	10 April 2008
Inspector	Elizabeth Margaret Grocott
Setting Address	St. Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School, Rossall Grov, Little Sutton, ELLESMERE PORT, CH66 1NN
Telephone number	0151 3396141
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Registered person	Little Angels Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Angels Childcare was registered in 2007. It is owned and managed by a joint partnership. The pre-school opened first in 2007 and the holiday club registered in April 2008. Both groups operate from within St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School, in the residential area of Little Sutton in Cheshire. A maximum of 26 children under five years may attend at the pre-school at any one time. A maximum of 42 children up to the age of eight years may attend the holiday club at any one time. There are currently 61 children on roll in the pre-school, of whom 43 are funded for nursery education.

The pre-school group is open each weekday from 09.00 until 15.00 in term time only. The holiday club is open on weekdays from 08.00 to 18.00 in the school holidays. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area. Children attend from the local area. The pre-school offers care to children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The provision currently employs six staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications or are working towards one.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well-organised setting. They understand the importance of maintaining good hygiene and can explain that germs make them ill. They routinely wash their hands after toileting and messy play. Staff maintain high levels of hygiene by cleaning tables at snack times and ensuring equipment is cleaned regularly. Routine cleaning of the premises, toys and equipment is carried out daily, resulting in a healthy environment being maintained. Children's health and dietary needs are very effectively met because staff work closely with parents. Some children have very specific medical needs and staff undertake training in order to manage these effectively. All documentation regarding accidents and medication are confidentially maintained.

Children who stay all day bring their own packed lunch and perishable items are stored in a fridge. Children are provided with very healthy snacks during the sessions. For example, they help themselves to banana, melon and apple or crispy wholemeal bread rolls with cheese spread and raisins. They are offered milk or water during the session and know they can help themselves to more water if they are thirsty. This helps children to learn to recognise when their body needs hydrating. It also helps them to form good habits for the future.

Children's physical health is very well supported. They have daily outdoor activities, such as obstacle courses, balancing and scooting. They use varied apparatus and have indoor music and movement sessions which are much enjoyed by all. Staff supply waterproof clothing so children may play outside and take part in activities in all weathers.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and child-friendly environment. Due to restrictions placed upon the group only a small amount of children's artwork is attractively displayed. This creates an inviting atmosphere and gives the children a feeling of belonging. All the children benefit from playing in a well-organised environment, which allows them to move around safely and freely to access resources. For example, they play a game of matching worms, build a robot from papier-mâché and use paper, pencils, scissors and sticky tape to make envelopes by themselves.

All the children have access to a good selection of quality, age-appropriate learning resources, suitable to their stage of development. Effective measures are in place to ensure toys are safe for the children to explore and investigate. Areas of learning are easily identified and well resourced to successfully promote learning.

Children are kept safe whilst at the pre-school. The main door remains locked throughout the day; risk assessments are in place and cover such items as gates and doors, mopping floors and playing outside. Emergency evacuation procedures are displayed and the fire drill is practised each term, meaning children learn to keep themselves safe, should an emergency arise. Children are signed in when they arrive and out when leaving. Staff attendance is also noted down and visitors to the pre-school sign in and out.

Children benefit from good ratios of staff, who are aware of safeguarding children in their care. Staff are aware of policies and procedures regarding child protection. They are familiar with

the possible indicators of abuse or neglect and a written statement is provided to this effect. The pre-school has a thorough vetting procedure and induction for new staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy in the pre-school environment because they are warmly welcomed and their parents build good relationships with staff. Staff are committed, experienced and enthusiastic. They work successfully together and know the children well. Plans are made for all children. Older, more able children attend mainly in the mornings and follow the Foundation Stage of learning. Children who are not yet three years old attend in the afternoons, however, there is no differentiation for them. Staff are familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework, but do not use it to chart the children's progress. As yet, staff are not planning for the children's next steps.

All children are well settled. They are confident learners and come to the visitor to see what she is doing and ask her name. Staff are approachable and respectful of children's individuality. Children receive praise and encouragement when trying new activities and for kind behaviour. Children observe good role models in staff who set consistent boundaries. They move freely around the setting and confidently choose activities. Resources include the role play, a writing station where children make their own envelopes and books and a comfortable book corner. Both child-initiated free play and small group time with adults is encouraged. Children help tidy up between sessions.

Some children stay for the lunch session and bring a packed lunch, whilst others enjoy a meal cooked at school. They take pleasure in sitting with staff at snack and meal breaks and engage happily in conversation with them and each other. Children benefit from the undivided attention of staff who talk to them and focus on their needs throughout the session.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have sound knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones for the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Children's starting points are noted through information from parents, detailing social development; and planning takes into account past evaluations of activities. However, observations are sporadic and children's current progress is not clear, as assessments along the stepping stones have generally not yet been done. Attractive books of children's achievements are made and documented through photographic evidence, examples of children's work and some written evaluations. Good use is made of the digital camera, which has been used enthusiastically to show a broad range of children's achievements and enjoyment.

Children are generally happy and contented in the pre-school environment. They build good relationships with staff and each other, although some children tend to be boisterous. They move around freely and become involved in activities. For example, they use Chinese artefacts to act out adult roles in the Chinese restaurant role play. They are generally polite and independent. Snack time provides good opportunities for them to make choices and demonstrate their independence through practical activities, such as spooning food onto their plates and pouring their own drinks. Their self-esteem is fostered well and they are proud of their work. Activities are accessible and allow children to self-select and make choices. They are able to take care of their personal needs, such as dressing and using the toilet. However, during large

group activities, such as circle time and stories, some children are unable to sit and concentrate. This means that the children who do want to listen and concentrate are not always able to.

Most children speak clearly and audibly with confidence. They hold lengthy conversations to satisfy their curiosity. For example, they enquire about the visitor's role and talk about the activities they enjoy. They happily enter the comfy book corner and select books of their choice to look at. Some children enjoy sitting on the 'teacher's chair', telling a story to other children. They mimic the style the teachers use to tell the story, encouraging other children to join in with counting. Staff tend to spend time with small groups of children, encouraging and extending their language. Children have access to a writing station and spend time making envelopes and books. They 'write' letters and post them and are encouraged to label their own work.

Children use number recognition to find pieces of jigsaws and most confidently count up to 10, some beyond. They know that eight comes after seven and can competently point to objects in a book and count them. However, children do not have sufficient opportunities to extend their knowledge of number, to solve simple mathematical problems. Children have a good understanding of space and measure. During the story of 'Dear Zoo', children use mathematical language, such as 'too big', 'too tall' and 'too wide' as they describe the animals that will not fit in the house.

Children have frequent opportunities to use computers independently. Good use is made of educational learning programmes. These promote hand-eye co-ordination. Children take it in turns to use the computers and they are content to wait for their turn. Most children are happy to turn to staff for advice if they are unsure of what to do. Children learn about the wider world as they celebrate Chinese New Year and have food tasting sessions. They make a model of a robot out of junk and cover it in papier-mâché. They prepare to make a wormery and explore the natural world around them. They enjoy topics, such as mini beasts, growing, and the changing seasons.

Creative development is also promoted well. Children have opportunities for free painting, gluing, cutting, sticking and creating. They try marbling and produce some lovely work. Musical activities are developed. Children show great interest and pleasure in choosing musical instruments, playing along to familiar songs and working as a group to develop sound. They play enthusiastically and confidently and learn to keep rhythm. Role play is a favourite where they can be a shop assistant, a helper in Santa's workshop or a waiter or waitress in a restaurant.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are recognised extremely well. They are mostly confident and happy. Staff are non-discriminatory which enables children to feel valued. Children are spoken to warmly and have a warm relationship with the staff who they share their day with. Boys and girls play with resources regardless of gender. Children benefit from activities and resources, which help them to learn about other cultures. However, the environment does not show any positive images of differences and similarities in society. There is good support for children and families who have learning difficulties or disabilities, and staff have developed sound links with outside agencies to support them in their work. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is generally appropriate, although some children do tend to be boisterous. This causes others upset, at times. Children generally respond positively to requests from staff

to tidy up at the end of activities. Good behaviour is affirmed with praise. If children do act inappropriately, staff go down to the child's level and talk to them about why something may not be safe or kind to do or say. Staff also use distraction techniques and children are encouraged to say sorry to one another.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are very happy with the care that they receive and describe staff as very approachable, friendly and very supportive. Parents receive comprehensive information about the pre-school, policies and procedures through newsletters and the pre-school's parent pack. If they have any concerns they know they can come and talk to staff at any time. Parents are invited to parents evenings where they view their children's work. However, parents are not familiar with the curriculum and the stepping stones their children work towards. As yet, they are not encouraged to be involved in their children's learning either at home, or by being involved in the children's assessment sheets.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from having experienced staff who are enthusiastic and motivated. This impacts on the children who feel secure and confident. Good use of space is made, both inside and out. Children settle quickly and receive good support from staff. They develop well emotionally, socially and personally at the pre-school. Staff work well together and are generally effectively deployed.

A robust recruitment system ensures that staff who work there, are suitable to do so. They have regular meetings together to plan, and appraisals with managers to look at their individual development. Several staff members are currently undergoing training to continue their professional development. New staff have a full induction and are made aware of the policies and procedures. Unvetted staff, visitors and students are never left alone with children. The organisation of the day enables all the children to access structured and free play several times throughout the session. Staff show a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to ensure all the children have opportunities to enjoy learning through play.

Effective systems are used to record information on the children in line with regulations, and to obtain the required consent from parents. This safeguards children's welfare. Clear policies and procedures are in place to support staff in their work and to promote children's health and safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in developing children's learning. The managers have identified some weaknesses in planning and assessment and are in the process of putting systems in place to address these weaknesses, to secure better outcomes for the children. This means that the system for monitoring and evaluating the nursery education is not yet effective. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

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 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):

- ensure knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework is put into practice and used to enhance planning and assessment for young children
- improve opportunities for children to understand differences and similarities in society by displaying positive images.

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):

- extend children's knowledge of number to solve simple mathematical problems through fun, everyday activities
- adapt the grouping of children to meet their needs, to ensure that their concentration, listening and speaking skills are appropriately developed and develop planning and assessment to identify where children are in relation to the stepping stones
- provide more opportunities for parents to understand the Foundation Stage and for them to be involved in their child's learning
- further develop systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of nursery education.

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