



## Little Stars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 251594  
**Inspection date** 27 March 2006  
**Inspector** Glenda Kathleen Field / Dorothy House

**Setting Address** Kirkley Sports & Social Club, Recreation Ground, Walmer Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 7LE  
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**Registered person** Allison Jane Bayfield  
**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](http://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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Stars is a privately owned group. It opened in 2001 and operates from the main hall in the Kirkley Sports and Social Club in Lowestoft, Suffolk. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.15 to 12.15 term times only.

There are currently 52 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 7 staff. Three of the staff, including the owner, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, staff clean tables with anti-bacterial spray prior to snack time and before making sandwiches with the children. Children are learning the importance of good health practices through the regular routines of the setting. They know to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating snack. Children's well-being is further promoted because staff are well informed about any care issues they may have and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. Should a child become unwell whilst attending the setting, appropriate measures are in place to support them until their parent or carer arrives to collect them.

Children's dietary needs are met through the provision of healthy snacks. They are able to choose from a range of fresh fruit, raisins, vegetables and sandwiches which the children help to prepare. Whilst children enjoy socialising at snack time they have to wait for long periods to be served by a member of staff. Children are not, therefore, being given the opportunity to make their own choices. Whilst children are able to choose from a drink of milk or water at snack time, which the staff pour, water is not freely available throughout the session. Therefore, a child is not able to satisfy their own needs should they feel thirsty.

Children's physical needs are supported. They are able to move around the hall freely from one activity to another and enjoy pushing prams and pushchairs. They have fun moving their bodies in time to rhymes such as 'head, shoulders, knees and toes' and 'I'm a little teapot'. Children have access to an outside area where they can enjoy rides on toys, rolling hoops, kicking footballs, throwing and catching bean bags, balancing on small stilts, running and jumping. They can practise developing their small physical skills through using scissors, pencils, brushes and threading. They use malleable materials such as play dough to pinch and roll with their fingers and hands.

Whilst the setting does not refer to the 'Birth to three matters' framework with regards to the care of younger children, their needs are being met through the support of staff and regular routines. They know, for example, to ask or indicate their need to go to the toilet and staff respond with sensitivity and praise, 'well done for telling me'. Each child has a key worker who works with their parents or carer to help them settle.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment which is suitable for its purpose. Their risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff take steps to reduce them. For example, staff carry out visual daily checks indoors before children arrive and outdoors before they go out to play. Staff make the setting welcoming by having the hall set-up ready for children's arrival. They greet each child by name and take a genuine interest in what they say.

Children have access to a good range of toys and equipment which are clean, safe and in good condition. They are easily accessed because they are displayed at a child's height. There are sufficient choices to enable children to choose freely. A well resourced home corner and dressing-up area give children scope to act out their imagination. They enjoy being a fireman, policeman or a bear for the morning.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe. For example, they know they must be accompanied by a member of staff to the toilet because it is situated away from their hall. They are familiar with the system to evacuate the building and know they must stop what they are doing and respond to adults when the whistle is blown. Children's safety is further promoted by good staffing ratios whilst playing outside.

Staff are very supportive of the younger children in the setting as they ensure they receive the support and guidance to begin to keep themselves safe.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted because of staff's awareness and understanding of child protection procedures should they have a concern about a child. Children are cared for by staff that are vetted and have a good level of experience and skill to promote their safety.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy being in the setting. They arrive enthusiastically and separate from their parent or carer quickly and settle at an activity. If a child were to become upset at this stage, they are sensitively supported by their key worker until they are ready to participate. Children respond well to each other and to staff. They greet staff with familiarity who are attentive and respond back to them. Children have their particular 'favourites' to settle at when they first arrive such as the train set, building blocks or puzzles. Children are confident to talk to unfamiliar adults in the setting 'What is your name?' 'Do you know my name?'; 'Can you do this for me?' pointing to their shoe lace which has come undone.

Younger children are encouraged to participate in the activities which are on offer. There is little opportunity for them to be spontaneously creative. They are unable to freely access painting, gluing and sticking or sand and water. The setting does not refer to the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their planning for under three's. Therefore, they are not always meeting their needs.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. However, some staff have limited knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and of how young children learn. Planning is in place, but requires further development to ensure that all aspects are covered to promote children's learning. Assessment records are in place for each child, and are sufficiently developed to enable planning for the next step in children's learning. However, not all staff maximise these learning opportunities.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff on arrival. Children display good levels of confidence and are eager to participate in new activities. However, at times they have access to a limited range of resources to support their learning. For example, mark making at trays containing salt had no additional resources for the activity, which means children are not always motivated by what is on offer. Most children are confident communicators, initiating conversations with adults and speaking to a familiar audience. For example, comments made on each others jumps over the candlestick during whole group time, such as 'that was fantastic,' and asking a member of staff 'have you filled my form in yet?'.

Most children recognise, and some attempt to write their own names. However, children are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their early writing skills in daily activities. For example, in the home corner, at the writing area or in the use of name cards. The writing area is poorly resourced and a lack of displays, such as letter lines and labels, does not help children to see that writing is part of their environment.

Children demonstrate an understanding of number. They enjoy joining in with number songs and rhymes and use some number names accurately in their play. Children are beginning to recognise size and shape, for example, triangle, square and circle. Some children are able to identify and count out objects from a larger group, such as the number of different coloured plates and beakers on tables at snack time.

Children are learning about the community they live in through visitors to the setting and outings made. They are learning about the wider world through topics on celebrations, such as, Diwali and resources that reflect diversity, for example, books and role play resources which include dressing up clothes. Children build and construct with a wide range of objects, for example, building blocks, Duplo and junk modelling.

Children learn about space as they enjoy running around outdoors, and use the ride on toys, balls and hoops competently. Opportunities for children to develop their physical skills when the outdoor area is inaccessible are taken inside, when activities such as dance, team games and musical statues take place. Children learn to use their fine motor control through using a range of small tools and equipment to support their learning. For example, brushes, scissors, pencils, pens and crayons.

Children use their imagination well in the role play area, playing alongside each other to re-enact familiar scenarios, for example a child used oven gloves to remove a cake she had cooked in the oven. When asked why she used the gloves she replied

'because the oven is hot'. Creative activities such as, vegetable and fruit printing, free painting, junk modelling and collage take place.

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

The provision is good.

Children are valued by staff who respect their individuality which is helping them develop a sense of belonging. They have equal access to toys and equipment. They are praised by staff who talk to them spontaneously about their home life, 'Is mummy going shopping to-day?' 'How is that older brother of yours?' 'Has he gone to school to-day?'

All children are included in the care and support of children less able than themselves. The setting's Special Educational Needs Coordinator works alongside parents and outside agencies to ensure children's specific needs are met. She is proactive in cascading information to other members of staff to enable them to play an active part in supporting children with their specific needs.

Children are well supported in being helped to learn right from wrong. Staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour. Children are reminded 'not to run' or 'not to push' by staff who speak to them in a calm voice. They are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' by staff who act as good role models in their own approach to each other as well as the children.

Children are learning to take responsibility for their actions. If they have upset another child they are supported by staff to say 'sorry'. When a child upset another by grabbing the chair they were about to sit down on at snack time, a staff member intervened and talked to the child about their action. The child said 'sorry' to the child they had upset and waited for them to sit down before finding another seat. The child received a 'thank you for being so helpful' from the staff member.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive information about the pre-school in the setting's prospectus and are informed of the curriculum topics in newsletters. Details of session plans are displayed on the notice board. Children benefit from the two way sharing of information between parents and staff to enhance their learning and provide consistency of care. For example, through daily chats, notice board information, regular newsletters and parents' contributions to their children's assessment records. Parents speak well of the setting.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered because they are developing confidence and self esteem, behave well and are developing a good understanding of right and wrong. Children relate well to each other and staff, and are developing an understanding of their community through visitors to the setting and outings made. Children are beginning to show an appreciation of other cultures and beliefs through topics and activities offered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure children are well protected by staff. The operational procedures and policies work in practice to support the smooth running of the setting.

The deployment of staff throughout the session is good and it enables children to maintain high levels of interest throughout the morning. However, during the whole group time at the end of the session when children come together to have a story, they become restless. The books used are often too small for most of them to see the pictures and their attention is not held. Whilst staff are there to support on these occasions, opportunities are lost to extend their language and thinking skills.

There is a registration system in place which records children and staff's attendance. All the required registration forms are in place and kept up to date to ensure children are cared for appropriately and in accordance with their parents' or carer's wishes. They are aware they can access their child's records at any time.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The owner and staff team are committed to continuous improvement of the pre-school. The owner and staff meet regularly as a team and, as a result, they are aware of their roles and responsibilities. However, there is no system in place to monitor the quality of teaching. Although an appraisal system for staff has recently been developed, appraisals have not yet been completed. Therefore at present, the owner is not able to use this as a tool for monitoring performance, to ensure that children's learning is effectively supported.

Overall, children's needs are met.

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

At the last care inspection the setting were asked to develop written procedures to be followed if a child was lost; to make the premises welcoming to children and parents; to monitor the heating to ensure an adequate temperature is maintained, and to develop written risk assessment procedures. The setting has implemented these satisfactorily, which has improved the safety and well-being of children.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting were asked to review the planning to ensure it is linked to the early learning goals and the stepping stones within them; ensure that all aspects of each area of learning is included and resources provided; provide parents with written information on the Foundation Stage of learning, and implement an effective assessment system for children which is shared with parents; implement a system to monitor the quality of teaching taking place, this to include an appraisal system for staff.

Planning is in place, however, this requires further development to ensure that all aspects are covered to promote children's learning. Some activities are still not resourced adequately. Parents now receive written information on the Foundation Stage and have regular access to their own children's assessment records. An appraisal system for staff has been developed, however, appraisals have not yet

been completed. Therefore, this cannot at present be used as a tool to monitor performance.

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

Ofsted has received one complaint since the last inspection. Ofsted received a complaint which raised concerns in relation to National Standard 4 (Physical Environment) and National Standard 6 (Safety). Ofsted undertook an unannounced visit on the 30 April 2004 to investigate these concerns. At the visit the provider gave evidence to Ofsted that satisfied Ofsted that the National Standards were met and no further action was taken. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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 satisfactory. 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 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 organisation of snack time to encourage children's independence; this is in relation to helping themselves to the food on offer and to pouring their own drinks
- review the availability of drinking water during the session to ensure children are able to access it at any time
- develop a suitable range of activities for the younger children as explained in Birth to three matters
- review the organisation of the whole group time at the end of the session to ensure children's interest is maintained.

#### **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):



- increase opportunities and resources for children to develop their early writing skills
- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and children's learning
- improve planning, to include clear learning outcomes, differentiation and evaluation
- implement a robust system to monitor the quality of teaching.

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