



Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY152150
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Inspector Melanie Cullen

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Registered person Just Learning 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?

Just Learning Nursery at Progress Park, Elstow, Bedford opened in 2002. It is one of 71 nurseries run by Just Learning Ltd. It operates from a purpose-built building situated on the outskirts of Bedford, Bedfordshire. A maximum of 112 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday, all year round from 07:30 to 18:00. All children have access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 106 children on roll. Of these, 36 receive funding for early education. The nursery makes appropriate provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 members of staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualification and five are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because there are clear policies and procedures which are followed by staff and are clearly reflected in their activity. For example, tables are wiped with antibacterial spray before children sit down for meals and staff clean up after messy activities promptly. Staff demonstrate good practices when changing nappies. For example, they wear aprons and gloves which are changed between children and keep the changing areas clean, tidy and organised. Children who have accidents are managed swiftly and sensitively because a number of staff hold suitable first aid qualifications. First aid boxes, which are well stocked, are accessible in each room and at both ends of the building. Accidents are recorded in detail and parents sign on the day the accident occurs.

Children learn about healthy eating. They enjoy nutritious, healthy and freshly prepared meals and snacks. Children enjoy sitting together in small groups with the staff who encourage them to interact and talk to each other. Older children's independence is encouraged, they collect their own cutlery and meals, scrape their plates and take them away and choose when they have a snack. Younger children are encouraged to use spoons and forks and babies begin to learn to feed themselves and are able to use their fingers to taste and explore their food. All children are offered regular drinks and older children can help themselves to water at any time during the day.

Children are learning about the benefits of maintaining effective personal hygiene. For example, younger children have flannels to wipe their own hands and faces after lunch. Older children are very clear about the reasons for washing their hands and freely discuss 'germs' which will upset their tummies. Children have access to tissues, independently wipe their own noses and dispose of tissues correctly. Staff are vigilant in checking that children have washed their hands after using the toilet. Children's awareness of the procedures for hand washing is enhanced by the colourful, photographic visual displays of each step which are displayed on the bathroom walls.

Children enjoy opportunities every day to play outside and to practise their physical skills. They enjoy running around and use the fixed climbing equipment in the garden. Children learn to negotiate space, they steer themselves when running and using ride-on-toys and bikes. They begin to be able to find their own space during organised sessions of activity which include warm-up and cool-down exercises and

they enjoy stretching, marching and ring games which involve listening to and following instructions. Children enjoy taking part in organised activity which involves their parents such as a sports day. They have lots of opportunities to practise fine skills such as threading, cutting, manipulating construction toys and puzzles which helps to develop their hand and eye co-ordination and dexterity. Babies and younger children are encouraged to explore their surroundings and begin to learn to jump from one hoop to the next and to balance on beams supported by staff who hold one or both of their hands.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which is well maintained and shows examples of children's work, displays of photographs and information for parents. Children stay safe in the setting because there are effective measures in place regarding people having access to the building. All visitors and parents are greeted at the door and visitors and staff sign in and out. The outside play area is fully enclosed and has designated areas with low, openwork fences which allow children to see and talk to each other while ensuring they only have access to equipment and toys which are suitable for their ages. Children have access to fixed climbing equipment, they are carefully supervised and the garden has areas of safety surface, lawn and pavement. The baby garden has a permanent canvas sunshade to protect children from the sun.

Children stay safe in the sun and during hot weather because all parents are asked to provide a sun hat and sun cream of at least factor 25 which the staff administer before children play outside. Children play inside during the hottest part of the day and are offered extra drinks. Children stay cool because electric fans are used in all nursery rooms and blinds are kept down in the baby rooms. Sleeping babies are checked regularly and records are kept of their sleep periods, nappy changes and food intakes. All bottles and food are clearly labelled and stored correctly in fridges in the kitchen areas. Children's dietary and allergy information is recorded in detail and is easily accessible to staff in each room. Children are identified by photograph to help ensure they are given suitable meals, snacks and any necessary medication. The baby room has a 'no outdoor shoes' policy which helps to minimise the risk of cross infection. Children's safety is promoted because they are supervised by vigilant staff who manage a balance between safety and allowing children to stretch themselves and to learn about appropriate risks during the daily activities. Children's welfare is protected because all staff understand their responsibilities and the importance of reporting and recording any child protection concerns. They are aware of the need to maintain confidentiality and all staff have access to the company policies and procedures regarding child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy attending the nursery, they are happy, settled and are provided with a

good range of activities which are stimulating, fun and promote all areas of development. They enjoy positive, high quality interaction from staff and receive plenty of praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements. For example, staff use eye contact, smile and clap their hands as toddlers begin to gain confidence when walking which encourages the children to try again. Children enjoy singing and music, they listen to various styles of music throughout the day and participate in singing activities during small group time and while waiting for lunch or snack time. An effective balance of activities ensures children are actively engaged during the day and they benefit from the flexible routines which take account of their individual needs. However, some younger children do not have their independence, enjoyment and choices promoted. For example, children aged two years six months are limited in their choices when painting. There is just one paintbrush in each pot of paint and a member of staff takes the brush, dips it in the paint pot and gives it back to the child. Children of the same age watch a group of older children playing ring games. Staff do not distract the children by suggesting any activities or offer to play ring games with them.

Younger children benefit from the highly effective use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework which is used to plan and record younger children's activities and achievements. Each child's records are well presented and contain regular observations and samples of their work. Children under three years generally have their development promoted because of the staff's clear understanding and implementation of this framework.

Nursery Education

Children are interested in the activities and readily settle to play. They choose from the fine range of play materials and activities and the staff are always available to encourage them to persist and complete games and puzzles. Children speak out with confidence in both large and small groups. They ask for support and assistance from staff and generally work well with their peers. They begin to learn to manage their own feelings and are encouraged to use words to deal with disagreements rather than actions. For example, children say sorry to their friends, check that they are alright following accidents and have been involved in setting rules for the group. Children help each other to find their names at snack time, to use programmes on the computer and show their friends where to find items in the rooms. Children show confidence when choosing and moving between activities. They are learning about self care and most can put their own shoes on and clearly understand the reasons for maintaining personal hygiene. For example, children take part in an activity using glitter to represent how easily germs can be spread and can also be easily washed away if the displayed step-by-step hand washing instructions are followed. Children comment when staff clean the tables with antibacterial spray before meals. They spontaneously explain that the spray 'stops you getting germs' and 'stops your tummy getting poorly'. Staff praise and confirm the children's observations which promotes confidence and self-esteem.

Children interact well with each other and readily join in with familiar songs and stories. The majority of children speak confidently to each other, staff and visitors. They are curious and ask questions. Children organise themselves verbally during play, deciding, or being instructed on who is to take on which role. Some leaders and

followers emerge. For example, very confident children give clear, definite instructions to their peers on how the game is to continue. Children's vocabulary is extended during activities. They describe the textures of things, using words such as 'cold' and 'squishy' to describe a bowl of jelly with dinosaurs in it. Children's awareness of writing and text is developed because there are visual displays around the setting including labels, letters and pictures. Children's confidence and self-esteem is promoted. They proudly point out their pictures on the wall displays which shows their efforts are valued. Children have unlimited access to books, they use the book corner spontaneously to look at pictures and to 'read' a story. Some children can write their names and others form some letters correctly. They have lots of opportunities to practise mark making and can select from a variety of paper, pens, crayons and pencils.

Children have a good deal of opportunities to practise counting during the day. They count during group time and activities. Children enjoy working with activities involving numbers. For example, they sort number peg templates into the correct order and count the number of pegs which relate to the template. Children show competence in counting during this activity. Staff support children and allow them to experience the beginnings of calculation. For example, 'one for me and one for you, how many have we got?' During construction, sand and water activities children use mathematical language including 'bigger', 'smaller', 'inside' and 'outside' and begin to learn about capacity. Children talk freely about shapes and have access to rulers which have measurements on them which develops their understanding of space and size.

Children take part in various activities which help them develop an awareness of the natural world. They look at mini beasts they find during a hunt in the garden and they have access to gardening equipment in a sensory area of the garden. They paint pictures and make masks of animals seen during outings to a wild life park and farm. Children talk freely about the outing and discuss the animals seen and activities such as the cows being milked. They begin to learn about the care of animals because there are pets in the nursery including fish, a hamster and giant land snails. Children learn about different countries and enjoy using various resources and books which show diversity. They create pictures of flags and complete collages of Dutch clogs. Children enjoy working with a range of construction materials. They use their imagination and describe what they build. Children's developing awareness of computers and programmable toys is enhanced, they use keyboards, telephones and the computer mouse to access games and tasks. A programmable ladybird is used to develop children's skills, awareness of direction and patience.

Children have fun taking part in a range of activities which encourage them to express themselves freely. They explore water, sand, paint, glue, jelly, play dough, bubble wrap and shells which helps them learn about texture and the properties of different substances. They create a wide selection of art and craft work. For example, they discuss and paint pictures of their homes and their favourite foods which have captions from each child describing the picture. Children have opportunities to play musical instruments and listen to a variety of music styles during the day. The planning includes sessions for the children to move around and to dance. Children's work is displayed which promotes self-esteem and demonstrates that their efforts are valued. They have a balance of opportunities to work on prepared shapes, printed pictures and free expression. Children enjoy role play, they use dressing-up clothes

and accessories and take on roles and voices during imaginative games with their peers.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most of the staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage which continues to develop through further and refresher training. Ongoing, daily observations of children participating in a key or spontaneous activity are recorded, evaluated and included in their individual assessment records. Each child has an in-depth observation completed every quarter which is used by key workers to identify the child's next steps for learning. All observations are linked to the relevant area of learning and to the stepping stones which demonstrates the staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage. Staff show confidence to extend or change activities as necessary and ask questions of the children which promotes and extends their learning. For example, 'What does it feel like?' and 'Tell me what will happen if.....'. Children are set achievable tasks and staff give them lots of praise, support and encouragement to try hard and to persist. Children's development and learning is promoted and enhanced because the children receiving funding for nursery education in the setting are divided into two groups depending on their dates of birth, which enables staff to work closely on topics and yet ensure that the activities are pitched correctly for the children's ages and individual abilities. For example, the children make animal masks following an outing to the farm. The younger group use paper plates and glue on items to make the face. The older group cut out the face shapes themselves and draw the features on the faces. Children recognise that they need help to cut out the eye holes and say 'it's a bit tricky to do the eyes'. The planning is linked to the six areas of learning and topics are identified. Individual next steps for learning are identified for each child which are taken into account when staff record the planning. This ensures that activities can be offered and prepared specifically for individual children. However, although detailed records are kept, there are some inconsistencies in recording the dates of observations, strategies and activities the key worker will use to enable the child to succeed in their next step for learning. All records have the next steps identified but only some record the strategies and activities the child will be offered. This inconsistency does not demonstrate the staff's knowledge and skill in effectively implementing the Foundation Stage. Staff manage the children effectively. They make time to listen and to talk to them and become involved in activities which promote children's learning and enjoyment. Staff make sure children clearly understand what is required of them. For example, they maintain eye contact and crouch down to be on the child's level. This ensures that children feel secure because they have knowledge about the setting's boundaries and understand what is expected of them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities which promote a positive view of the wider world. Diversity is celebrated in the nursery through discussion, labels, books, music and enjoying festivals. Children benefit from the positive attitude of the staff, they present themselves as sensitive role models and are willing to talk to children and to answer any questions they have about

people who are different to themselves. These attitudes help children relate to others and to be aware of the feelings of their friends. All children are valued and respected as individuals. Their needs are carefully documented and implemented effectively by the staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered. Staff make efforts to demonstrate to children the benefits of getting on with their peers and the importance of respecting, accepting and celebrating differences and diversity. All children are welcomed into the nursery. Individual plans and appropriate systems are in place to support children who have specific needs.

Children behave well and they happily share and learn to take turns. For example, children play a game of 'Isn't it funny how a bear likes honey'. They wait patiently for their turn and understand that they must not say who has the honey pot. The effective practice from the staff which clearly reflects the written policy ensures that children understand the rules of the nursery and the older children benefit from being involved in setting rules for their own group. Staff are consistent when working with children which promotes confidence and feelings of security and belonging. Children are engaged in purposeful and worthwhile activities which minimise behaviour issues and they eagerly respond to the reminders from staff to be careful and to think of others.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is good. This contributes positively to the children's sense of belonging and ownership. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's care and learning and a two way sharing of information is promoted through the use of verbal information every day and written questionnaires when children move into the next room. The link with children's home life is extended by the use of 'Bob the bunny' which is a toy the children are encouraged to take on holiday or home overnight or for a weekend. Parents are encouraged to write the activities that 'Bob' enjoyed with the child and most have also included photographs. Parents receive information about the nursery, topics, curriculum and child care and development through notice boards, newsletters, topic sheets and parents evenings. This involvement positively impacts on children's continued good health, safety, care and learning. Staff are friendly, approachable and make themselves available to parents when they drop off and collect their children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The quality of the leadership and management is good. The acting management team are strong and committed to offering children a continually improving experience during their time at the nursery. Children benefit from the professional, organised approach from all the staff who each have their own skills and strengths which enrich the experiences for children. Therefore, positive outcomes for children are promoted. The well-being, safety, care and education of the children is given high regard by the management and staff, and a robust system is in place to ensure that all staff working with children are suitable which safeguards their welfare.

All staff receive support through induction and annual appraisals to encourage their professional development. Staff work well together to develop the planning which

impacts on the children's consistent care, play, learning and the partnership with parents. Ratio's and staff deployment are maintained as effective most of the time. However, there are occasions such as first thing in the morning and when staff have breaks when ratio's are not effectively maintained. This impacts on children's safety. Regular team meetings are held to keep staff updated on company policies, procedures and training opportunities. Overall, the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to a number of recommendations relating to the care and nursery education of the children. The setting has developed a comprehensive behaviour management policy which includes clear instructions and strategies for staff to use when managing children of different ages. Close liaison with parents takes place to ensure consistency if necessary. Children's attendance is recorded at all times. All staff are aware of the procedure for initiating an emergency evacuation drill. A record is kept of each drill carried out. All staff have induction training during their first week of employment at the setting. All activities are evaluated and the next steps for learning for individual children are recorded. Children have various opportunities to enjoy activities which develop an awareness of their senses. The steps taken to address the recommendations has a positive impact on children's safety, enjoyment and learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004. 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 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 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 minimum staffing ratio's are maintained at all times

- ensure that all children are actively engaged in purposeful activities which promote enjoyment and development during inside and outside play

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):

- continue to develop the children's assessment records by including sufficient information and identifying the strategies used by key workers to enable children to achieve their individual next steps for learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk