



# Little Dragons Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY301081
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 April 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Anne Legge
<b>Setting Address</b>	Lady Seawards C of E Primary School, Clyst St. George, Exeter, Devon, EX3 0RE
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<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Little Dragons (Clyst St George) Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 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 Dragons (Clyst St George) Ltd previously ran under the name of Little Dragons, which opened in 1998. It became a limited company in 2004, and continues to be led by a voluntary committee. The group operates from purpose-built premises at the Lady Seaward Church of England Primary School, in the village of Clyst St George, near Exeter. Children use 2 rooms, 1 of which is shared with the school. They also have access to the school hall, an outdoor play area and the school playground. The

pre-school is open in term-time, on Mondays to Thursdays, from 09:15 to 15:15. It is registered to care for up to 16 children, aged from 2 to 5 years, and currently has 28 children on roll, including 22 funded 3- and 4-year-olds. There are 4 staff members, 2 of whom have appropriate child care qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities to be physically active. They use the school playground daily, for energetic playtimes with the school children, when they run, skip, climb and balance. They use their own outdoor areas very effectively, to develop their throwing skills, build with large blocks, or play in the sand and water. In poor weather, they play in a covered outdoor area, or enjoy physical education lessons in the school hall, using large and small equipment, to develop their physical skills. Children benefit from eating some healthy foods, such as the fruit which staff provide at morning snack. However, some children do not consistently eat balanced meals and snacks, as staff do not work effectively with parents, to encourage them all to provide suitable packed meals. Children are offered regular drinks, especially after exercise, but they do not have constant access to drinking water.

Children have mainly consistent care, when they are unwell or injured. Staff have current first aid qualifications, and records of accidents are shared appropriately with parents. Medication records are not always shared appropriately, after administration. Children are adequately protected from infection, as staff have appropriate systems for cleaning surfaces before snacks and meals. Toilets are shared with the reception class, and standards of hygiene are acceptable. Children learn good routines regarding hand washing, although there is currently no hot water available, which reduces their ability to be hygienic. An effective sickness exclusion policy helps to limit the spread of infection.

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

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe and secure environment. There are good systems in place, to ensure that they are secure within the school grounds, and that access is carefully monitored, throughout the school day. Children move freely, between indoor and outdoor areas. Staff allow them to take appropriate risks, such as when playing with older children, but they are carefully supervised, and staff use their good understanding of safety issues, to ensure that all children play safely. Daily checks of the premises and grounds help to protect children, as staff address any hazards observed. Activities and outings are risk assessed appropriately, to ensure that children's safety is assured.

Children choose from an excellent variety of toys and resources, which are suitable for their age, clean and in good condition. Staff check all equipment regularly, to

ensure that it is safe for children to use. Children are protected from abuse or neglect, due to the staff's recent training and good understanding of all child protection issues and procedures.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy an excellent variety of activities, which keep them purposefully engaged, throughout sessions, and effectively promote their development. They have plenty of free play, but the pace is fast and there is a good balance of structured activities, to keep children interested. Children aged under three years attend one day a week, and the planning is carefully adapted to meet their needs, including plenty of sensory play, such as with dough, sand and water. Staff are beginning to use the Birth to three matters framework, to plan for the youngest children.

#### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan a very wide range of interesting activities, which cover the whole curriculum. They observe children's achievements and use this information to plan for future progress, although assessment systems do not clearly track children's progress towards the early learning goals. This occasionally limits the exact matching of activities to children's abilities, such as when very young children are unable to fully engage in a whole-group music session, in which older and more able children make excellent progress. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and usually support children's development effectively. For example, able children discuss the texture of cornflour and water, and staff encourage them to experiment with it in a variety of ways, effectively developing their skills and understanding. Occasionally, staff are less clear about the learning intentions of daily activities, such as role play, and do not consistently provide appropriate support to individual children.

Children are very confident, independent learners, who engage enthusiastically in all activities. They concentrate very well at chosen and adult-led tasks, such as role play and story time. They make excellent progress in their understanding of letter sounds, as they discuss initial sounds and match them to letter shapes in their play. They recognise and begin to write their own name, when appropriate. Children count in daily routines, such as when lining up, and learn to recognise and write numerals, in an excellent range of practical tasks. Able children extend their understanding of number by comparing and combining groups, such as at registration. They learn about shapes, as they throw shaped bean bags into nets and discuss their features.

Children enjoy many excellent activities, which enable them to explore and investigate materials, such as dough, sand, water and cornflour. They develop a good sense of time and learn about the natural world, in topics such as 'growing'. They have very good opportunities to develop their understanding of information technology, as they use their own and the school's computers. Children create freely, using a good range of art and craft resources to paint, draw or make collages. They are very imaginative in their role play and they enjoy singing familiar songs, or

learning about different rhythms. They develop very good co-ordination, as they use small equipment, such as scissors, pens and cutters, or large equipment, such as wheeled toys.

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

The provision is good.

Children's behaviour is excellent. They know the clear routines of the pre-school and always respond appropriately. For example, they understand what to do when a bell rings, and immediately tidy up or wait for instructions. They enjoy plenty of praise and encouragement from staff, who explain clearly what is expected and why. The youngest children are supported very well, as they learn the routines and expectations of the group. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn to share toys and take turns with resources. For example, staff help them to share the space on a chalk board, and they take turns at placing building blocks on a tower. They learn about cultural differences, as they celebrate a variety of festivals, such as Divali and Easter. There are no children with special needs on roll, but good systems are in place to support any who may attend in the future.

Partnership with parents is good. Children's care is consistent, due to good systems for exchanging information with their parents. Staff supply detailed information about the policies and procedures of the pre-school, and the prospectus includes general information about the curriculum. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about current and future topics, so that they can support their child's learning. Children's records are available for parents to see or to take home. However, assessment systems are not sufficiently detailed to show parents clearly how their child is making progress towards the early learning goals, so they are unable to help children achieve the next steps in their development.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by qualified or experienced staff, who are committed to constantly updating their skills, by attending relevant training courses. Leadership and management are good. Staff and the committee work closely together, to monitor the quality of provision. There are effective systems for identifying staff training needs, through an annual appraisal scheme. The pre-school also has excellent links with the school, which help children to make a smooth transition into the reception class.

The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the good organisation of time, space and resources, to provide them with a very good variety of activities, both indoors and outside, at each session. They play in a safe and child-friendly environment, but their welfare has not been fully promoted in all aspects of hygiene and healthy eating. Children's care is underpinned by all the required documentation, although medication records are incomplete.

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

Since the last nursery education inspection, the pre-school has made very good progress in improving children's mathematical understanding, through a wide range of practical tasks and daily routines. Children now have many opportunities to count, or to compare or combine groups, throughout each session. The assessment system has not been improved sufficiently, to allow staff and parents to see clearly how children are making progress towards the early learning goals. The lack of detail in assessment information sometimes limits the ability of staff and parents to fully support children's progress towards the next steps in learning.

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

In March 2005, concerns were received, regarding the security of the premises. This relates to National Standard 6: Safety. The pre-school was asked to conduct an enquiry and the National Standards were found to be met, so 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 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):

- improve children's health by actively promoting healthy eating, and by providing constant access to fresh drinking water and warm water for hand washing
- improve the consistency of children's care, by sharing with parents all records of medicines administered, after administration.

#### **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):

- establish effective assessment systems, which enable staff to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals, so that individual targets can be set for learning, and parents can be kept fully informed about their child's achievements
- continue to develop staff's understanding of the learning intentions of daily activities, and of children's individual learning needs, so that all children are able to make good progress in all activities.

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