



## Little Fields Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123862
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 June 2006
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<b>Registered person</b>	Little Fields Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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 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 Fields Pre-school opened in 1997 and operates from a separate unit in the grounds of Fairfields Primary School in Cheshunt. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 12:45 to 15:15 and Tuesday and Friday from 09:00 until 11:30 during school term times. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 46 children aged from two years to three years on roll, of these,

38 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The pre-school welcomes children with learning and physical disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through well organised routines, examples set by the staff and interesting activities. They wash their hands before eating snacks and meals, after messy play and after they have been to the toilet. Children take part in routines to help tidy up after play and snack time. They are aware that they need to prepare themselves for arts and craft activities by putting on their aprons. Children are protected from infection. The staff make sure they are well informed of each individual child's health requirements and have a good policy and procedure in place with regard to sick children. All of the necessary documentation to support the health of the children is available, such as written parental consents to seek emergency medical treatment and advice.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They help themselves to drinking water throughout the session. Children have a choice of healthy and nutritious snacks of either fresh fruit or vegetables. Specific dietary requirements are respected by staff, who ensure all foods comply with children's individual dietary needs. Effective systems are in place to communicate any food allergies or intolerances to make sure all staff are aware and that the children only eat foods that are safe for them to do so. Children are beginning to learn about the benefits of healthy food through planned activities, interesting information and story books and discussions during play and snack time.

Children enjoy activities which contribute to their health. There are daily opportunities to play with large and small equipment to develop and enhance their physical skills. Children learn to coordinate their bodies as they follow the actions to simple rhymes and songs. In the fresh air they lift the parachute up and down and run under it and move around in a circle as they play 'The farmer is in his den'. Inside they cut, paste and stick different materials to create junk models or manipulate play dough to create shapes. They press push and bang a variety of musical instruments. Children enjoy fixing the train track to push the trains along, thread cotton reels and colour pictures of sea creatures. They have the opportunity to be active or rest according to their needs. The daily routine for each session and organisation of the room offers space and appropriate areas for quiet activities.

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

The provision is good.

Children's safety is a priority. They move around freely to play and access resources and accidental injury is minimised. Security systems include a good range of effective procedures. For example, risk assessments are carried out regularly to ensure all areas are safe and staff are deployed to make sure children are supervised at all times. Children use a varied range of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate resources. These are cleaned and checked for breakages to ensure they are suitable for the children to use.

Children learn to take responsibility for protecting themselves. They have fun with visitors who teach them about road safety, the dangers of fire and being aware of strangers. Children know why they must evacuate the building quickly in an emergency: they participate in regular fire drills. Sensitive reminders from the staff ensure they keep themselves and their peers free from harm. For example, they adhere to rules to play with the sand with a maximum of four children around the sand tray and to use scissors carefully. Brightly coloured illustrations in information and story books, discussion and planned activities, help reinforce their knowledge and understanding of safety.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues. They are aware of the policies and procedures through frequent staff meetings and regular training. All of the required documentation to enable staff to take appropriate action if they have any concerns is to hand.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in a very supportive and caring environment. They make positive relationships with the other children and staff. Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and take part in a broad range of interesting and stimulating activities.

All children acquire new knowledge and skills. They respond to challenges because the staff are enthusiastic, have a great sense of fun and show an interest in what the children do. They are attentive, talking and listening to children and asking questions to extend their play and make them think. For example, some children are learning the meaning of 'round' and 'circle'. They are encouraged to make comparisons with objects and pictures that they recognise to gain an understanding. The round shape found within half an orange is compared to the picture of a sun and drawn in the air with fingers to get a sense of the shape.

Through effective interaction with staff they begin to learn about words and meaning through stories, rhymes and songs. Children are beginning to understand that print represents language and communication as they see labels around the room and share books. They become confident using different tools and technology: children have fun using the tool bench, shopping till and home play toys or manipulate the mouse on the computer to create colourful pictures. Staff understand and meet all of the children's needs well. They have a good understanding of children's different stages of development and plan activities accordingly.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well, supported by staff that have a competent understanding of the Foundation Stage. Plans cover all six areas of learning. There is a good observation and assessment system in place which is used to determine the next steps in each individual child's development. Both the plans and children's assessments link closely to the stepping stones and early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. The level of challenge is sufficient to interest all of the children and more able children's learning is extended. There are very effective systems in place to support children with learning and physical disabilities.

Children become involved in their play. The role play area is a favourite activity. They act out their experiences and feelings as they care for dolls, prepare food for their peers and adults and dress up as princesses. They show increasing levels of concentration to colour pictures carefully, listen attentively to stories and cut materials using scissors skilfully. Children enjoy singing favourite songs and joining in with appropriate actions. They move their hands and arms slowly as they sing 'Wind the bobbin up' and laugh with joy and enthusiasm as they speed up their actions to 'Wind the bobbin back up' faster and faster.

Children practise their mark making skills as they draw and write using different equipment. They use pencils and crayons to shade pictures and chalk to make large marks on the path outside. Children are developing an understanding of sounds and letters as they write over the letters of their name and sound them out. More able children are beginning to write recognisable letters of their names on their own artwork independently. They can pick out their place mats with their own names on. Children follow stories enthusiastically. They enjoy looking at books on their own or sharing them in groups. They become confident at speaking in small and large groups. They use speech to explore real and imagined experiences. Children talk about their holidays or initiate play creating characters with the small world toys, narrating their actions during their imaginary day.

Children develop simple counting and calculation skills. They have fun participating in songs, nursery rhymes and daily routines. For example, they hand out the trains to share equally with their friends. They count their peers at registration time with more able children counting confidently to ten and beyond. Children know how many makes four around the sand tray. They recognise numbers to mark the date and know which number represents their age. They become aware of space, size and measure. They compare their height to the towers they create with large bricks, or look at different amounts of liquid in clear bottles. Staff make the most of opportunities during play and routines to reinforce and encourage counting and calculation skills, asking the children questions, such as 'how many have you got?' and 'how many are left?'.

Children have some opportunity to observe changes and the natural environment. They watch the tadpoles in the pre-school room or monitor pot plants as they grow. They build and construct using different size bricks or make junk models with various size boxes and materials. Children develop a sense of place and time through their routine and topics about themselves. They know that hearing the music play means

'tidy-up time' and talk about visiting the nursery to prepare for moving on to nursery school. They are learning about the wider community, playing with interesting resources and reading books about children from other countries. Children celebrate different festivals, such as Easter, Christmas and Chinese New Year.

Opportunities to go over, under and through using large play equipment to balance and coordinate their bodies is limited at the moment while the outside area is being refurbished. But, they enjoy regular music and movement sessions, use the parachute to move up and down and under, and have great fun chasing bubbles on the school field or participating in running and jumping races. Children's hand-eye coordination and fine physical skills are developed using a range of arts and craft materials, mark making equipment, toys, puzzles and information technology. Children enjoy creating a large frieze of creatures who live under the sea, draw pictures of dinosaurs and produce a variety of pictures and prints in 'orange' to add to their display for their colour of the week.

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

The provision is good.

All children receive a warm welcome and take part in the full range of activities. Flexible settling in procedures to meet the children's and parents' individual needs ensures they feel relaxed and secure when they take part in the sessions. Parents are provided with verbal and written information regarding the setting's daily routine, policies and procedures. However, they have not updated their complaints procedure to ensure there is a system in place to record or share appropriate action regarding a complaint, to make sure parents' concerns are respected and acknowledged and the children's welfare fully monitored.

The children work harmoniously together in small and large groups, sharing and taking turns. Behaviour is good. Children are learning right from wrong due to positive role models, clear guidance and the staff's ability to manage behaviour effectively. For example, they offer lots of praise and encouragement and value children's achievements. The pre-school is decorated in the children's creations and parents are welcome to share their successes at the end of each session. The children's self-esteem is promoted by the compliments given by the staff and stickers rewarded to mark their accomplishments. Children have a sense of belonging which gives them the confidence to try new experiences, feel settled and enjoy their time at pre-school. The staff encourage children to talk about their feeling and experiences. The children learn to be independent, they respond positively to tidy-up time and are keen to help collect the place mats after snack. Pre-school rules and brightly coloured pictures reinforce messages to be considerate and caring towards others. They benefit from the high level of support from staff who know the children and their care routines well. Children enjoy a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity. They play imaginary games with figures and dolls representing differing abilities and ethnicity.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good.

Children prosper from the staff's positive partnership with parents. All families are

made to feel welcome, valued and included. Staff spend a long time talking to parents at the outset to get to know the children and provide them with good quality information about the provision, including the six areas of learning which are in the prospectus. Parents are informed about current topics, through the regular newsletter, letters and notice board. They are invited to speak to the staff before or after sessions, attend consultations and open days to share their children's progress and achievements. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning by sharing topic related items and books. Children are keen to change their books regularly, taking home favourite stories or trying new books to share with their parents. The staff are experienced and friendly. Ofsted have received very positive feedback from parents about the provision regarding the high standard of care and learning opportunities provided. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Robust vetting and recruitment procedures ensure children are protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. The risk of harm is minimised because children are not left alone with persons who have not been vetted. Parental consent is required to release children to adults who are authorised to do so, to make sure they are safe. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to allow the effective running of the pre-school and to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Children enjoy whole group times, such as snack, story and circle time, when they join in an experience together. Throughout the session they engage in a broad range of planned activities, free choice and good organisation of resources which enables them to choose their play independently. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support their planning and children are stimulated and sufficiently challenged. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager promotes the professional development of all staff. They have annual appraisals to highlight their strengths and training needs. All of the staff are keen to update their knowledge and training which they do on a regular basis. They work as a team to plan for the foundation stage at their weekly meetings. The curriculum is monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure the children have a balance across the six areas of learning.

Children benefit from an organised and welcoming setting. The manager and her dedicated staff team work effectively together. They work hard to continually improve the setting, for example, they are currently working towards the Herts Quality Standard and work is being carried out to provide an outside area for sole use by the pre-school.

Little Fields Pre-school has very close links with Fairfield School and Nursery and the manager attends regular meetings with senior members of staff. Pre-school children join nursery sessions to get to know the new surroundings and staff from other

schools visit to meet the children moving on. This helps them settle quickly and feel secure and relaxed about the change in their routine. The staff have positive working relationships and are committed to providing an inclusive, exciting, secure environment in which every child matters.

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

At the last inspection the pre-school agreed to update some of their policies to enhance the care of the children and meet the National Standards. A sick child policy is in place and shared with parents to ensure infected children do not attend the pre-school and make other children ill and to make parents and staff aware of procedures if a child becomes unwell during a session. The behaviour policy includes appropriate strategies to deal with bullying to protect children from this and encourage positive behaviour.

Children's understanding of addition, subtraction and writing for different purposes is developed through a variety of planned activities and reinforcement by the staff during play and daily routines. Children are encouraged to think about how many items or toys they need during play, they sing simple songs which include subtraction using props, such as 'Four currant buns' and enjoy writing letters which they pretend to post to friends. Planning includes the observations made of children's development to inform the next step in their educational programme and ensure they make progress towards the early learning goals.

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

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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):



- update the complaints procedure to make sure there is a system in place to record or share appropriate action regarding a complaint. This is to ensure parents' concerns are respected and acknowledged and the children's welfare fully monitored.

### **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 activities in the outside area to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development further.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)