



## Little Fishes Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** EY315940  
**Inspection date** 11 April 2006  
**Inspector** Margaret Coyne

**Setting Address** 4 Molivers Lane,, Bromham, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK43 8JT

**Telephone number** 01234 825152

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**Registered person** Julie Ann Lawrence

**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](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 Fishes Nursery opened in 2006 and operates from a purpose built building situated in Bromham, near Bedford in Bedfordshire. The group have access to 4 rooms, toilets, an office, laundry facilities, staff facilities and a kitchen. All children share access to an outside play area. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30 to 18.00. The nursery is open for 51 weeks of the year.

There are currently 28 children aged from 2 years to under 5 years on roll. Of these 13 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs 9 staff. Of these, 7 staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The group receive support from the a early years teacher and the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned daily routines, excellent role modelling by staff and posters displayed about good procedures to follow when using the toilet and washing hands. Children have gained a very good awareness of how and why we wash our hands and when it is important to do so. For example, before meals and snacks and after messy activities. However, children do not always have access to hand washing products. The children are protected from infection through well-managed hygiene routines which are practised by the nursery. For example, the sick child policy and the good practice by staff as they ensure all areas are cleaned thoroughly between sessions. Overall the high standard of cleanliness throughout the nursery contributes to the children's good health. However, the nappy changing facilities are limited to ensure good hygiene practise and so the privacy of the children can be maintained. Windows and doors are opened to ensure the rooms are well ventilated and children receive fresh air. Toys throughout the nursery are maintained to a high standard and a record is kept of the cleaning rota in all areas. Staff are well informed about children's health issues and all relevant records and documents are in place. A high level of staff hold first aid certificates and are confident they can administer first aid to the children to protect their health and prevent them becoming distressed.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They are provided with varied, nutritious meals and snacks in accordance to their needs and any allergies or dietary requirements are complied with. Snacks are varied and healthy and children have opportunity to take part in cooking experiences and snack preparation themselves. This has an impact on their understanding of healthy food as they extend this into their imaginative play suggesting healthy foods to eat such as fruit and vegetables. The meals provided are ample for the children and they have free access to drinking water at all times. Menus are displayed showing parents the healthy options on offer. Children are introduced to new tastes and experiences through meals and activities. They join in discussions about their meals, such as where tuna comes from. Some imaginative answers suggest tuna comes from a can, and lives in a sandwich, others think it comes from a factory and some could describe that it lives in the sea. Meal times are an enjoyable social occasion where children can ask for more food to satisfy their appetites and express how much they enjoy their meals. Cooking activities are used to introduce children to the concept of preparing and cooking food and staff make this a valuable learning opportunity as they use descriptive words to

explain the process fully involving children of all ages in the activity.

Children enjoy a stimulating range of equipment to promote a healthy life and their physical development. They take part in activities to encourage them to use their bodies to keep fit and healthy in all weathers. Children move with confidence and skill as they ride scooters, cars and bikes. However, climbing and balancing equipment for older or more able children is limited thus restricting opportunities to further their control and skills. Children take part in action songs both indoors and outdoors and staff involve them in excises to warm up their muscles before taking part. After, they do breathing control to cool down and gain an understanding how excises effects our bodies. Children's dexterity and hand and eye coordination is developed well as they enjoy playing with small world figures, construction equipment, manipulate play dough and manage domestic style equipment in the home corner. They cut, glue and paint using a variety of tools and techniques. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well to provide a broad range of stimulating physical play experiences for younger children. Younger children are able to nap and sleep as required. This benefits all children as individual sleep patterns are observed.

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

The provision is good.

Children's safety is paramount to the organisation of the nursery. Staff recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Effective security measures are in place to protect the children from harm and promote safety around the nursery with the children. The group have secure systems in place for the children's protection and welfare. Systematic risk assessments are carried out and all staff share in the responsibility for keeping the children safe. Health and safety reporting books are used by staff in each room as they notice areas of safety to be rectified. These are listed and details recorded so to how they have been addressed. Accident records are maintained and shared with parents. This information is correlated for risk assessments in order to recognise and reduce risks to the children. The setting is well planned with lots of space for children to move freely and safely around activities. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe in the group as they explain and practise simple procedures such as emergency evacuation and the boundaries necessary to keep safe. For example, helping to tidy up their play areas, learning about safety when cooking and road safety on outings. Staff effectively explain safety to the children. This is done in a simple but positive manner aimed at their level of understanding so they can operate safely within their environment. Supervision is high throughout the nursery and deployment of staff is efficient.

Children have access to an abundance of safe, good quality, age-appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are well-organised throughout the nursery in child height storage units to encourage children to become independent and gain safe access to their resources. Children show respect for their toys and equipment and eagerly help to tidy items away. Resources are well presented to encourage children to participate and the purposeful use of space throughout the setting separates areas into different activities such as the home corners, comfy reading areas, creative

areas and messy play areas. On each level of the nursery there are two rooms which link together. These are planned for children to move between activities and their movement can be controlled for group times, such as story time. The garden is a safe area and is next on the list to be revamped with imaginative plans to make it an interesting and fun area for children to access.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through current policies and procedures for the protection of children. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection and are encouraged to attend training in this area to further enhance their understanding. All procedures are up to date and all supporting literature and comprehensive records are in place and available for all staff. Their good practice ensures any concerns are dealt with in a sensitive manner and a designated person is responsible to share information with outside agencies to ensure children are protected at all times. Parents are aware of the nurseries responsibility to protect the children in their care and appropriate guidelines are followed at all times.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, contented and secure throughout the nursery. They confidently access the stimulating and challenging range of activities and form secure relationships with staff and other children. Staff have a growing awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has started to have a positive effect on the younger children's achievements. Staff plan activities in line with this framework and have gained a secure knowledge about what children can learn. Young children receive lots of cuddles and attention which increases their sense of well-being and contentment. They are eager to participate in the activities because staff make them fun and interesting. For example, when making Easter cakes the children joined in with the whole process and enjoyed mixing the chocolate and shredded wheat. They had opportunity to feel, smell and taste as they went along and showed delight with the end result. They enjoy the various activities such as a domestic play area, creative activities, exploring natural objects and manufactured toys. A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's self-assurance, confidence and sense of belonging. Young children develop their communication skills as they respond to others around them. With the use of verbal and non-verbal language they make their needs known to staff who are adept at interpreting these. Children of all ages and abilities use a range of creative materials such as paint, sticking, collages, play dough, and other messy activities. Children learn through these experiences and are directly involved and interested in their play. Children learn about responsibilities and are allowed to make errors, decisions and choices as they select activities and share their play with others.

Children exhibit high levels of confidence and security and this has been achieved by the consistent support and direction of staff. Staff value the children and speak positively to them. This results in children emulating adults in their own play as they copy their speech and mannerisms. Older children resolve their differences as they learn to share with others. Staff encourage them to use language to find their own solutions and negotiate differences. Younger children confidently share experiences

with staff and ask for support when required. For example, when taking part in a cooking activity. Large group times such as story time are very well managed as children sit together with staff who make the stories fun, interactive and interesting. Children join in enthusiastically with hands on activities such as making their own play dough. They have the correct tools for the job and all play a part in measuring the ingredients and mixing the dough. Older children are able to relate the recipe for the dough through the excellent explanations given by the member of staff leading the activity.

Staff throughout the nursery make the experiences enjoyable and meaningful for the children which in turn aids their concentration and confidence to participate. Children are receptive to the constant praise and encouragement that is provided by staff. This has a clear impact on their self-esteem and encourages them to try new tasks and participate in activities. Children of all ages and abilities develop a concept of counting, sorting, shape, colour and problem solving through the very well-planned and managed activities on offer. For example, cooking activities and exploring their local environment.

### Nursery Education

Children are secure, happy and occupied throughout their time in the nursery. They confidently move between activities playing freely or joining in with a structured learning session. They have a strong sense of belonging as they seek out friends, join in activities and clearly know the routine. Behaviour is very good as the children know what is expected of them. Children share very well and this was demonstrated when children helped unpack new equipment for the home corner. They became very excited about the kettle, toaster and microwave oven but shared with other children making 'tea' and 'chocolate milk' for the adults. Children's independence is well developed in all areas of play. They access equipment to extend their own play and initiate games and activities themselves. Staff are adept at stepping back letting a child take over the activity using their own skills and imaginations. Children enjoy using language in their imaginative play and during group discussion. They enjoy books and will sit comfortably together in the book area as they share stories. Children are learning sounds of letters and can recognise some familiar words. This is extended with the use of labels on familiar objects around the room. Older and more able children confidently write their own names on their work and some children can complete their whole name. Children confidently count and can recognise written numbers and match objects. They solve simple problems applying their own skills. For example, children work out how many pieces to cut the pears into at snack time so each child receives a fair share. Staff introduce children to mathematical language in everyday play and children are heard to use this as they discuss position and when counting, matching and sorting. This underpins their knowledge and experiences.

Staff provide children with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They have fun with the computer and this shows their growing skills and knowledge of the mouse and keyboard functions as they access various learning programs to support their literacy and numeracy skills. Children enjoy exploring simple science as they take part in hands on discovery with nuts and bolts, magnets, mirrors and magnifying glasses. Children discovered if they look

through three magnifying glasses together the object becomes even bigger. Creative activities give children a sense of achievement as they are able to create spontaneously using their own imaginations and skills. They can freely access a range of different textures and techniques to create and staff are adept at allowing children opportunity to do so spontaneously through child-initiated art and craft. Children enjoy the dressing up clothes and happily choose outfits from the range on offer often adapting these into a theme such as weddings.

Children's achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones. Staff use the entry stage profile assessments and on-going observations extremely well to plan the next steps in children's learning. Each child has a portfolio containing examples of their work and a clear assessment of their progress. Written observations are included from staff to provide more detailed information about a child's achievements. These identify any gaps in a child's learning which staff use when developing future planning.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children take part in a wealth of experiences with well-planned activities and resources. Staff have a good awareness of children's starting points and use this to plan the next steps in their development. Consistent staff impacts on children's high levels of confidence and security. Staff know the children well and have created a realistic balance between adult-led and child-initiated play. Staff are excellent role models and inspire, praise and encourage children to try things for themselves. This helps children succeed and builds their self-reliance skills. Staff encourage children to participate by making the activities interesting and aimed at the children's individual abilities. This extends their capabilities and arouses their natural curiosity to learn through their play. The interaction between staff and children is wonderful as they enjoy their time together. Staff are skilled at the level of explanation they give children to encourage them to take part. They maintain children's interest and increase their concentration as they make activities interesting. However, some activities are not always extended for more able children. Staff are secure with the early learning goals which reflects on the progress the children make. Their open-ended questioning skills are excellent as they encourage children to think for themselves and take part in discussions. They encourage children to gain the confidence to succeed and support them well as they aspire to do so. Staff have updated their knowledge through training and support. This ensures the planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively. Planning is being evaluated in line with the groups other settings to include a clear picture of the aims and objectives of each activity, resources used, deployment of staff and key vocabulary to introduce. An evaluation of activities ensures they are meeting the needs of all children. Staff are enthusiastic and dedicated and this impacts on the children's enjoyment and learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity. For example, a range of books promoting all kinds of people and all kinds of feelings,

family figures with range of family members from grandparents to babies so children can relate to these. Children take part in a range of activities of both familiar and unfamiliar festivals and celebrations. For example, Christmas, Easter, Chinese New Year and Diwali. Staff have very positive attitudes and present themselves as sensitive role models which in turn helps children relate to others and gain a secure understanding of the needs of others. Through discussions and activities children are able to acknowledge each others differences and show great respect for those around them. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Full information is gained from parents for each child's individual needs and this enables staff to fully meet these needs while showing respect and valuing each child. Children play in an environment where they are nurtured by adults and free from any type of stereotyping or discrimination.

Staff are clearly committed to supporting each and every child in order to meet their needs. No children are attending at present with a special educational need, however all systems are in place to support any child. Detailed pre-registration forms gain full information from parents about each child in order to meet their needs effectively.

Children have a secure understanding of the boundaries within the nursery and respond to direction from adults in a caring manner. A consistent approach is followed by all adults. This impacts clearly on their security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. Children gain an understanding between right and wrong because staff are consistent and employ highly effective behaviour management which helps defuses situations and distracts and engages children in worthwhile activities. Children's self-esteem is nurtured and promoted with praise and encouragement by staff. Children share in the responsibility for their own behaviour as they learn to listen to others, share and wait turns and are kind to their friends. For example, children work cooperatively together as they tidy up and share new equipment. Staff are caring role models for the children, creating a calm, positive, fun and interesting environment in which they thrive. Staff have high expectations for all children which impacts positively on the children's behaviour seen at the nursery.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. This partnership impacts significantly on each child's sense of belonging, their security and well-being. Parents play an active role in their child's care with the regular exchange of information. Parents are invited to open days and play an active role in the evaluation of the new plans for the nursery. Questionnaires have been used to gain parents views and action is taken when possible on their comments. Staff present themselves in a professional manner while being approachable and friendly. This helps parents feel secure and at ease, confident with the care provided for their child. Parents are fully informed about their child's progress and achievements and their involvement impacts greatly on the children's good health, safety, care and learning. A high level of information is available to parents including all policies and procedures and information on the National Curriculum, planning of activities and information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This encourages parents to get involved with their child's learning and helps them feel secure and comfortable with the care provided. This impacts on the children's sense of security and confidence.



## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The effective organisation throughout the nursery ensures children's care and learning is enhanced. Leadership and management of the nursery is good. This benefits the children as they move through the group from the baby unit, toddler rooms and on to the pre-school rooms. The manager works closely with the deputy and area manager offering a wide range of support and knowledge. The management team enhance their knowledge through extensive training and encourage staff to attend additional training. This is reflected in the good progress the group have made since their registration. Action plans have been implemented and high priority has been given to moving the group forward and reorganising the nursery with extensive decoration and plans to revamp the garden area. The team have sought guidance and support from appropriate bodies such as development workers. The management team are responsible for all aspects of the nursery including staff supervision and employment, ratios and deployment, operational plan, staff training and qualifications. A robust system is in place for the recruitment, supervision and induction of all staff. Staff have a secure knowledge of the National Standards and implement these throughout the setting. This is enhanced with their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. High regard for the well-being of the children, their group sizes, adult support and well-planned activities, contribute to children's well-being, enjoyment and achievements. Team building excises take place to build on the team spirit and this is evident as the staff are working enthusiastically together. A positive, motivated and dedicated staff team is emerging. Opportunities for children to play and learn are enriched because each member of staff has different experiences which they bring to the care provided for children.

The premises are very well organised. Indoor space is effectively arranged to maximize the play opportunities for children through the different age groups and abilities. It provides children with safe, imaginative areas and resources which they can access independently. Children's daily routines are well-organised throughout the setting. Through this children have time to play and achieve working at their own pace. Routines also takes account of part-time children so they have opportunity to participate in the weekly activities.

Children's welfare is maintained because staff share in the responsibility for the highly effective organisation of all records and documents. Staff are actively involved in evaluating and improving their own practice and work closely together with the management team. They play an active role in planning the activities and routines for the children and designated roles are implemented such as special needs coordinator, child protection and planning officers. Complaints are logged and procedures are met including a written response to any complainant. An inclusive environment has been created which clearly shows that each child matters. Overall, the needs of the children attending are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable

### **Complaints 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.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration

## **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):

- ensure children can follow good hygiene practices when washing their hands with regard to independent access to soap
- ensure suitable equipment is available to ensure nappy changing procedures can be carried out safely, hygienically and also maintain children's privacy.

#### **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):

- develop planning to ensure there are regular opportunities to provide further challenge for older and more able children.

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)