



# Layston Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY317322
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 May 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Nugent

<b>Setting Address</b>	Layston First School, The Causeway, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, SG9 9EU
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<b>Registered person</b>	Margaret Teresa Ball
<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?

Layston Pre-School registered in 2005. It operates from one classroom in Layston First School in Buntingford. Children share access to the school hall and playgrounds. The pre-school is open every weekday from 09:00 to 11:45 and from 12:45 to 15:15 during term-time.

The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 30 children at any one time. Currently there are 57 children on roll, of whom, 50 are funded for nursery education.

The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The pre-school has achieved the Hertfordshire Quality Standards Award. It employs seven staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

There are good procedures in place to promote children's health. All the necessary permissions are sought from parents and accident records are completed appropriately. A first aid kit is easily accessible so that children can be treated quickly in the event of an accident. Parents are made aware of exclusion times for infectious illnesses so as to protect other children. Staff are particularly attentive to hygiene. Children all wash their hands before snack and the tables are cleaned hygienically. Children are aware of why they need to wash their hands after going to the toilet. If staff need to change children's nappies, this is done in an appropriate and hygienic manner. Therefore, children stay healthy while in their care.

Children have a selection of foods at snack time. However, the choice is often limited to a piece of fruit and a biscuit, which doesn't allow children to explore a range of foods and learn more about healthy eating. They enjoy the social aspect of snack time but sometimes become a little bored while waiting to be given their fruit. All staff are aware of any special diets and take these into account when preparing snacks. Children enjoy cooking activities, for example, making jelly and porridge. They have access to drinking water at all times. Overall, they are well nourished. Children have very good opportunities to take part in physical exercise. They enjoy outdoor play, using a variety of resources in the playground. There are weekly PE sessions in the hall, during which children develop control and co-ordination, and learn to move in different ways. Consequently, they have plenty of fresh air and exercise which helps to keep them fit and healthy.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Very thorough risk assessments and safety checks are carried out on the premises to ensure that children are always safe. They are well supervised at arrival and collection times, and only allowed to leave with a known adult. They are prevented from opening any outer doors by themselves, as high handles have been fitted. There are adequate fire precautions in place. Children know how to evacuate the building in an emergency as they practise the fire drill regularly. They play safely in the playground because all the gates are padlocked. When outdoors, staff keep children in a defined play area. They carry mobile phones and are able to get assistance from the main school office if an emergency situation arises. Therefore, children keep safe at all times.

Children play with a wide range of resources which are safe and suitable for all age

groups. The toys are checked and updated regularly, and any old or broken ones are discarded. Children have good access to resources and can ask for any they cannot reach. The toys and games provide interest and stimulate a variety of play situations. Consequently, children can enjoy their play safely. They have an increasing awareness of personal safety. They discuss safety issues with staff and are reminded how to use play equipment safely. Visits from the local police also help to increase children's awareness of personal safety. Staff have a very good knowledge and awareness of child protection issues. They have all attended training and collected a file of relevant information. This means that they are well equipped to deal with any concerns. Therefore, children are well protected in this area.

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

The provision is good.

Children are eager to get involved in play activities as soon as they arrive. They especially enjoy imaginative and role play, using various 'small world' settings. They move around the room confidently, choosing from the large selection of resources on offer. They like to join in play with friends, for example, dig in the sand, manipulate playdoh, dress up or play with toy cars. Staff interact and talk with them while they play. Consequently, children show increasing confidence and ability to concentrate. They are learning through their play, because staff engage them in conversation and encourage communication. Children show particular interest in free-choice drawing and sticking tables, where they can use their imagination and practise skills. They show less interest in adult directed activities, which do not always stimulate their imagination. They have fun in group times and join in discussions enthusiastically. Overall, they are developing skills and making progress in their learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are making very good progress in all areas of learning. They are very attentive to staff and respond well to questions. They have plenty of choice and become very focused on some activities, for example, model making with various construction pieces. They enjoy listening to stories and are learning to recognise letters of the alphabet by way of a phonics scheme. They recognise the initial letters of words and are able to suggest other words that begin with that letter. They make good attempts at writing phrases and are beginning to understand writing for a purpose. Children have a particularly good understanding of number concepts. They count very well and they recognise, and use, different numerals. They are beginning to calculate when comparing how many items, or people, in different groups. Their lively participation in number rhymes reinforces this learning. Children learn about the local environment on walks around the school grounds. They find out about other cultures when taking part in activities based on festivals and celebrations. In some creative activities, however, children are not always encouraged to express their own ideas. They enjoy music and singing sessions, and have fun doing action rhymes. They show good manipulative skills when threading bobbins and making imaginative shapes out of playdoh. Overall, they are acquiring knowledge and developing a wide

range of practical skills.

Staff use a variety of teaching styles. They organise a welcome group time very effectively. Children are reminded about the themes of the week and do the daily calendar together. In other group times, staff support children very well, increasing their use of vocabulary and numbers in various activities. They make good use of children's own interests, for instance, different colour jellies, to stimulate their enthusiasm. Older children are challenged and extended in activities which prepare them for school. For example, they form their own names out of playdoh, match colour patterns and learn to read words on flashcards. Staff explain all activities clearly to children. However, when directing planned activities, they do not take opportunities to engage children in conversation and extend their thinking through further questioning. Children merely complete a task and are not always allowed to be creative themselves. At group times, staff make good use of open ended questions to stimulate discussion around a particular theme.

The planning of the activities is particularly detailed and provides good coverage of the six learning areas, showing what children are expected to learn in all planned activities. Staff also make use of some activity planning sheets to help focus children's learning. They have introduced elements from the 'Birth to three matters' framework to set alongside the Foundation Stage planning, so that children of all ages are included. There is an excellent assessment system in place to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff make regular observations on children and these are used to inform their Nursery Learning Records. The pre school leader collates all this information in order to set targets for children and guide future planning. This works very effectively in providing an educational programme which is suited to the needs of all children.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel valued and included. They are extremely well settled and very happy. They enjoy being welcomed individually when handing their name card in at the beginning of the session. They have good relationships with each other and also with staff. They have the opportunity to participate in all activities and often get some individual attention, which helps to focus their thinking. At story times, staff ensure that all children can see the book and join in the discussion. During free play, children confidently ask staff for extra resources or materials. They are becoming independent and take the initiative to use a wash bowl if wanting to wash their hands after a messy activity. Children with special needs receive very good support. All staff are aware of their needs and individual plans are drawn up to support these children in their learning. Children have a growing awareness of diversity in society through using resources, such as, books and play people. Overall, they have a real sense of belonging at the pre-school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff have a good knowledge of behaviour management strategies and promote positive behaviour. Children are co-operative,

and attentive, and learn to share fairly with others. Staff keep an eye on them and re-direct children before any problems arise. Consequently, children have an increasing awareness of how to behave responsibly. Staff have close links with parents. An attractive brochure provides detail about the pre school's procedures. Parents also receive information through newsletters and notices on the large notice board. The policy booklet is available at all times for parents and visitors to read. Parents provide information for staff about their children's individual needs so that children can benefit from appropriate care. Staff are available to talk with them at the end of all sessions.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. A very detailed curriculum guidance is available to parents so that they are well informed about the different areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. They also receive information about the weekly themes and are encouraged to help their children learn, through talking with them and bringing in associated items to show. There is a book borrowing system in place and parents are asked to comment on their children's enjoyment. Staff exchange information with them about their children's overall progress at termly consultations. This working partnership contributes effectively to children's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The documentation provides an excellent framework for children's care and education. Paperwork is very detailed and all necessary policies have been included. The documents are kept tidily in numerous files. All information about children is secure and confidential. There are good employment and induction procedures in place. Staff have annual appraisals and are keen to attend training in order to continually improve their practice. They have all recently trained in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They share new knowledge and ideas with each other. For example, they have much background information to support their planning of the educational programme. The outstanding organisation of documentation contributes effectively to keeping children healthy, happy and safe.

Staff make very good use of the available space to stimulate children's interests and promote learning. The room is bright and attractive, with many colourful displays of children's art work. Children are divided into four groups, having different coloured chairs to sit on, according to their group. The resources are sorted into labelled drawers so that they are easily accessible to everyone. Children particularly enjoy the comfortable book corner and wide selection of reading materials. Staff work to a daily routine and this is effective in offering children times of free choice, group work and adult-led activities. Staff ensure that all transition times are well managed and orderly. They make sure that they are involved with the children throughout the sessions, responding to their interests and needs. Children have good access to toilets and outdoor play space. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The leader is highly organised and ensures that all the correct paperwork is in place. She is very attentive to detail and consequently the planning and assessment of the nursery

education is very well managed. She encourages staff to work together as a team. They have regular staff meetings and also meet together to discuss any particular needs of the children. They have support from a qualified teacher and growing links with the main school. Staff monitor the effectiveness of the educational programme informally and make changes now and again to improve the provision. Children's learning is enhanced through the leader's close attention to good management.

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

At the previous inspection, staff were asked to increase the range of snacks and ensure that children wash their hands hygienically. Children now have a variety of fruit at snack time and use running water to wash their hands. These changes have helped to promote good health.

### **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):

- review snack time in order to encourage children to try a wider variety of healthy snacks and to develop their independence.

### **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):

- ensure that staff actively engage children in order to extend their learning

when taking part in adult led activities.

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