



Little Stars

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY315147
Inspection date 12 May 2006
Inspector Karen Cooper

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Registered person Little Stars
Type of inspection Integrated
Type of care 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.

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Stars Pre-School originally opened in 1999. The current owners have been operating since 2003. The group operates from within the village hall of Barton-under-Needwood. The hall is situated approximately eight miles from Burton-on-Trent. There is a fully enclosed play area available for play.

There are currently 61 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 47 children receive funding for early education. Children attend a variety of sessions.

The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days a week, term time only. Sessions are Monday 9:15 - 15:00, Tuesday 09:15 - 13:00, Wednesday 09:15 - 11:45, Thursday 09:15 - 15:00 and Friday 09:15 - 13:00.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold an appropriate childcare qualification. The group receives support from a mentor teacher from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in warm, clean, premises where they are taught the importance of personal care, for example, washing their hands after toileting, craft activities and before eating. However, hand-drying facilities need to be revised to ensure the risk of cross contamination is reduced. There are appropriate arrangements in place to care for children who are ill. The written sick children's policy is made available for parents, which ensures children's health is protected. The staff are trained in administering first aid and have appropriate permissions and records in place regarding accidents and medication.

Children's health is promoted by staff taking a range of positive actions to encourage healthy eating. Children are encouraged to enjoy food and understand why some foods are healthy and others are not. Snack times are relaxed social occasions when children and staff sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each others company. They are provided with regular drinks and jugs of water are always available.

Children are helped to understand that exercise helps them to stay healthy through planned activities and topics. They enjoy a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities on a daily basis to help them develop their physical skills. This also helps them develop the confidence to enjoy moving with control, using their bodies in various ways, for example, moving to music or meeting the challenge of using a large parachute. Children improve control of their bodies and their awareness of outdoor space as they use push-a-longs and pedal cars. They develop their social skills through regular walks around the nearby field to find insects

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play, eat and rest in well-maintained premises and benefit from a range of good quality toys, furniture and resources. Equipment is kept clean and is regularly checked for safety. Indoor and outdoor space is used effectively, creating a child friendly environment which enables children to explore while being appropriately

supervised. Children are able to access independently available resources from tables and boxes at child height, which also helps to create a stimulating, learning environment. There are clear procedures in place for the children's safe arrival and departure and the pre-school have sole use of the village hall during operating hours, other users of the premises are excluded from the pre-school rooms during the sessions.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. They move freely and safely around the premises because staff carry out rigorous safety checks and risk assessments. They are kept safe on outings as they are escorted safely to places such as, nearby fields with the help of parents. Effective security systems ensure that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised and there are clear procedures to ensure only authorised people collect the children. Children are beginning to learn about their own safety through discussion and explanation. They gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the sun as they wear hats and regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures to ensure they are aware of where to go to stay safe. This helps children to begin to take responsibility for themselves and others.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the staff have a good understanding of how to protect them. They are aware of signs and symptoms of possible abuse and know the appropriate procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child. The pre-school has all of the required procedures and documentation in place to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted, which is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the warm and friendly environment. All children are well settled, enjoy their time at the pre-school and are helped to achieve. They know the routines and are keen to join in with the activities. Younger children play with a wide variety of toys and join in activities that stimulate their learning and development. They explore the texture of corn flour as they let it run through their fingers and develop their hand control as they make patterns in it. They use the play dough with enthusiasm learning to use the rolling pins and cutters to make shapes. During music and movement session, the children move around the room demonstrating their excitement squealing with delight.

Staff plan activities adapting the planning for toddlers to ensure this is in line with the 'Birth to three matters' guidance. During role play staff join in as 'Batman', responding promptly with genuine interest to the children's requests and interests. This helps them to feel valued and appreciated. The children happily take turns and co-operate with each other. They are sociable and close and caring relationships with staff increase their sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of belonging. This enables the children to make progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Staff are familiar with the curriculum guidance and have attended training in the foundation stage. They plan an interesting and exciting range of practical activities, which help children develop positive attitudes towards learning. The children are interested, excited and motivated to learn. Although, there are some missed opportunities during daily routines and activities, to encourage children to make progress in their mathematical and literacy development. Staff work well as a team and are very calm, patient and tolerant. They have good, trusting relationships with children and manage children's behaviour well. Children are encouraged to sit and listen at circle time. They help each other to resolve disputes and staff use positive behaviour strategies such as explanation and praise.

Children are monitored using the school transfer forms that record their progress in the six areas of learning and regular observations are carried out on each child's capabilities. However, activities are not evaluated therefore information gained is not used effectively to inform future planning, which could have an impact on the children's learning. There are appropriate systems in place to support children with special needs and who use English as an additional language and staff have developed good relationships with parents and other professionals so that all children are included in all aspects of pre-school life.

Children are eager to participate in activities and show good concentration when making a spiders web using glitter and other craft materials. They have formed good relationships with each other and staff and understand right from wrong, share, take turns and cooperate with each other when using play dough and dressing up clothes. They confidently express their needs and manage their self-care well when attending the bathroom. They regularly take part in activities that raise their awareness of the similarities and differences of others and have access to a wide range of resources that promote a positive view of our wider world.

Most children are confident and fluent speakers and engage easily in conversation. They talk confidently about things they have done at home or previously at pre-school and freely use descriptive vocabulary such as 'sleeping bag' to describe the cocoon of a butterfly. They enjoy looking at books alone and listen with interest to group stories such as 'Don't look under the bed' which is linked to the current theme. They join in with the words and actions of favourite songs such as 'hickory dickory dock' and learn to recognise letter sounds and words as they identify their names at registration and snack time. They explore mark making in a variety of ways for example drawing in a tray of corn flour. However, opportunities are missed during daily activities to see their name in print which encourages them to begin to form recognisable letters.

Children develop mathematical skills through both planned and spontaneous activities. They confidently count up to seven when counting the days of week during circle time and when joining in with action rhymes such as 'five fat sausages'. They begin to recognise shape and colour using large coloured shapes during a physical activity. However, opportunities are missed for the more able children to extend their understanding of simple subtraction. They learn about size, position and matching when sorting through construction bricks to build a tower.

Children explore and learn about the living and growing natural world around them

when going for walks around the nearby fields and local shops. They experiment with magnifying glasses as they look at spiders and other insects and discover new textures as they play in the organic soil. They continue their learning when they return to pre-school because staff help them understand why spiders spin webs and what a wormery and vivarium is used for.

Through planned topics, the children learn about changes that happen to their bodies. They are developing skill in control and co-ordination when using small tools and large equipment. For example scissors, glue spreaders, paint brushes, push-a-longs and a large parachute. They show an awareness of space for themselves and others when joining in organised games and action rhymes and can adjust their speed well when chasing each other.

Regular opportunities are provided for the children to be creative through activities such as, cooking, painting and exploring malleable materials including dough, sand, water, soil and gloop. The role-play area allows children to express themselves with increasing ability through imaginative play. Crayons and felt tips are freely accessible to encourage children to express their ideas. Weekly planned music sessions provide opportunities for children to be creative through dancing and listening to simple instructions using an audio tape.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are learning to respect diversity within their immediate and wider community through planned and spontaneous activities toys and resources such as, dressing up clothes, dolls and figures. They take part in celebrations of different festivals from around the world such as Diwali and have tasted food from other cultures. The pre-school welcomes children with special needs and ensures that they can access and participate in all activities offered. Staff involve parents in the development of individual education plans and liaises with outside agencies where necessary to learn the best strategies to help a child.

Children play happily and are confident, sociable and secure. They respond positively to the staff that ensures their behaviour is managed with the use of praise and explanation. Children are encouraged to show consideration for others and are helpful when it is time to tidy up. Younger children are well settled into the daily routine and are happy and eager to learn. Older children are confident, independent and self reliant as they choose activities. Children are listened to and the staff value what they say, which helps them to feel good about themselves and ensures that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Children benefit from the availability of staff to talk to parents at the beginning and end of each session and the regular exchanging of information regarding their daily events through a 'home book'. Parents receive good information about the group before their child starts and are told about current topics via the notice board and newsletters. They complete a child profile form on entry to the pre-school. However, they have limited involvement in their child's learning and receive little detailed information

about the progress they are making towards the six area of learning unless they specifically request it.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staffs have a secure knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and ensure their skills and knowledge is updated by regularly attending relevant training courses. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensures children are cared for by suitable staff, who follow the pre-school policies and procedures. Staff are well deployed and the grouping of children positively supports their learning and play.

The overall organisation of the pre-school ensures that children's needs are effectively met and that they are able to safely and independently access all available areas. All legally required policies and procedures are in place. These are often comprehensive and are known to staff so that they contribute to children's health, safety and well-being. Documentation is well organised, regularly reviewed and shared with parents. Children's personal information is stored securely, which helps to maintain confidentiality

Leadership and management of the pre-school is satisfactory. The newly appointed managers are beginning to understand their responsibilities. They have formed good relationships with staff who work together extremely well as a team. Children benefit from the group's long term commitment to encourage all staff to undertake any relevant training and workshops. The managers have a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement of the group and are committed to improving the care and education of the children with the support of a teacher mentor. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable as this is the first inspection

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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

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National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 and improve hygiene practices to prevent cross infection with regard to hand washing

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):

- improve and extend the programme for literacy and mathematics to include more opportunities for children to recognise their name and develop their understanding of simple subtraction during daily routines and activities
- improve planning to show how activities are evaluated and how the information gained is used to inform future planning
- improve opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning and development.

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