



Learn Through Play Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY300872
Inspection date	21 September 2006
Inspector	Christine Clint
Setting Address	Centenary Hall, Wheelers Lane, Smallfield, Horley, Surrey, RH6 9PT
Telephone number	07704 604918
E-mail	
Registered person	Maria McDermott
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

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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 satisfactory. 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?

Learn Through Play Pre-School has been registered since 2005. It operates from the Centenary Hall, in Smallfield, Surrey. Children are cared for in the large group room and they share the communal toilets within the setting. There is a fully enclosed outside play area.

The pre-school is open, during term time only, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Tuesday and Thursday, sessions operate from 08:55 to 11:25. Children may also stay for a lunch session until 12:25. On Wednesday and Friday the sessions operate from 08:55 to 14:55.

There are currently 27 children on roll. This includes 10 children who receive funding for nursery education. At the time of the inspection 14 children were attending. There is provision to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of 6 staff work with the children, of these, 3 staff hold a recognised early years qualification and one staff member is working towards a qualification. All staff currently hold certificates in first aid training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and organised environment where staff follow consistent routines for hygiene. Older children learn to be responsible for their own personal care, although they are always escorted to the toilets. Staff encourage them to smell the soap and agree that their 'hands feel nice once they have washed them'. There are satisfactory routines in place for nappy changing and for children to wash their hands within the pre-school room after craft activities and after digging in the soil. Children staying for lunch learn about hygiene by following regular hand washing routines before they eat their lunch.

Children's health is effectively maintained because all accidents and medication records are fully completed and parents sign all records. The initial registration form for children contains parent's written permission for emergency medical treatment. There are first aid boxes available and these contain a contents list with a named member of staff who is responsible for ensuring the boxes are updated. All staff have current certificates in first aid training.

Children are protected from contagious illnesses because there is appropriate information available for parents in the prospectus. There is also effective information about communicable diseases.

Children's health is fully considered when there are visiting animals because staff make sure that animals are vaccinated and have no health problems.

Children are encouraged to eat healthy foods and they have regular access to drinks. They open small packets of raisins at snack time and pour their own milk or water. Children are learning to follow new routines for snacks, they can decide when to eat and ask to sit at the snack table. Children help themselves to water during the session and staff responsibly move the water closer to the outdoor area for easy access, when children become thirsty during outside play.

Children bring their own packed lunches and these are stored in the kitchen. Staff sensibly remove and name any items which need to be kept in the refrigerator. Children sit together at lunch time and staff interact with children to encourage them to socialise.

Children have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise, they have access to outdoor play every day in fine weather. They excitedly line up and can choose from a variety of apparatus. Children ride in cars and manoeuvre along the concrete path. They kick balls with the staff and learn to throw and catch balls. They ride hobby horses across the grass. Children balance on the objects laid out on the grass, they use the stepping stones and the ladder to follow a circular obstacle course.

Children often use the larger outside play space for special occasions and they go for walks in the local community.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safe and secure in the setting. The community premises are well organised for the daily sessions to operate in one large room. Staff are friendly and welcoming towards parents and children although the pre-school is not easily identified from outside or within the centre.

Children have a balanced choice of play equipment which is rotated to link with the planned activities. Some resources are organised for children to access freely on the open shelves and craft materials are available in a storage unit. There are regular routines for managing and checking equipment.

Children are safe on the premises because staff show a good level of awareness and remind children not to run in the corridor when they visit the toilets. Children are competently supervised at all times when they leave the main room.

A full risk assessment is in place and an updated review is also noted. Community centre staff react promptly to any safety concerns in the premises and agree to cover the low level pipes in the room which become hot when the heating is turned on.

Children are learning to follow the pre-school fire drill when they practise an emergency evacuation, although this is not displayed and there are no recent records of fire drills completed.

Children's outings and any planned visitors, especially those with animals are appropriately risk assessed beforehand.

Children's welfare is clearly considered and there is a named member of staff responsible for child protection. Staff have ample experience and show confidence in following the planned procedures. All staff have attended training and the pre-school has up to date information displayed for parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are mostly happy and find activities to interest them during free play. Their individual needs are well known to staff, especially those who are new and settling. Staff respond to children according to the information given by their parents.

Children are beginning to socialise and make decisions, they move freely and can join each other at activities. There is some evidence to show that they are building relationships. They play alongside each other with the fort and sit with a friend for snacks. They have opportunities to increase their levels of confidence at group time, they are encouraged to sing in front of the group or to sing with a friend. Children respond well to questions about the colour of the week, they can mostly identify green items in the room.

Staff speak clearly and have regular routines to enable children to understand what is expected during the session. Children are learning to take turns at the snack table, to briefly line up for outside play and to sit together after tidying up. Children are consistently following the established codes of behaviour and respond very effectively to the music for tidying up.

Children's development and progress is recorded as soon as they start at the pre-school. Staff clearly recognise that some children show good skills of concentration, especially with the puzzles. There are organised systems in place for key worker staff to have responsibility for certain children although staff do not use the Birth to three Matters framework.

Nursery Education

Children are learning to share, they take turns on the computer and show patience when waiting for each other. They happily follow staff requests in the home corner during pretend play and when sitting together at group time. Children practise pouring their own drinks at the snack table and they are praised. Children self register when they enter, they put their named apples on the magnetic apple tree board. Some children interact well with staff, they are listened to and encouraged to participate, but others are not very confident and some children show little curiosity.

Children are learning to recognise their own names when they enter. There is some labelling within the room to introduce meaning to marks and older children are practising emergent writing, they are keen to write on their own envelopes. Children follow actions without words and repeat movements, they watch and remember.

Children are encouraged to form words properly and to name vegetables in the home corner.

Children enjoy songs and rhymes, they join in with the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' story and repeat the phrases. There is little evidence of linking sounds and letters or experimenting with rhyming sounds to extend children's understanding of language. Children enjoy stories in a group but do not use the book corner by themselves.

Children use their fingers when singing about frogs and can easily say how many frogs are left. They are encouraged to recognise the different sized puppets in the Billy Goat Gruff story. Children count each other at the end of the session to see how many children are left for lunch. They quickly recognise how many girls are left and identify that there are no boys remaining. Younger children, who dig and fill plant pots with soil, can count but cannot identify quantity. There is less use of number symbols or identifying written number signs and some missed opportunities for counting and calculating during snack and lunch time.

Children show interest in the natural life around them and flying insects. They enjoy visits from different animals throughout the year and go on walks and outings in the local community. They have opportunities to use the computer and staff help them when they are learning. Children have previously learned about 'people who help us' and they have celebrated Chinese new year and Diwali.

Children can use their own design ideas when they are following a planned activity, they make different patterns when painting with their fingers. Some children show less enthusiasm for

talking about themselves, their homes or families and have few opportunities to include this during the session.

Children show enthusiasm and excitement when they line up for outdoor play. They ride in wheel cars and negotiate on the path. They balance on the obstacle course and step across the pretend stepping stones on the grass. They ride hobby horses and throw and catch balls with staff. Children play on a small slide and balance each other on the seesaw. Children show good skills of movement when the 'Sabre Dance' music starts, they jump and wiggle, some children excitedly do handstands until they are reminded that it is not safe. They show that they are very inspired to move by the music. Children use hand, eye co-ordination when drawing, painting, digging in the soil and manoeuvring on the outside play equipment.

Children are learning to identify colours at group time. They are joining in with favourite songs and learning to repeat the words of stories or rhymes. They are copying actions and following a sequence of actions at group time, when they are asked to watch and silently repeat the movements; children concentrate and do this well.

Some children join in with role play in the home corner and show an ability to pretend play, but many children play alone or alongside others and do not extend their imaginative ideas.

The teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are moving forward in their understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the early learning goals. They have good opportunities to become familiar with the aims and objectives of the activities, because these are displayed on the weekly plan and each learning intention is stated above the activity.

All staff have copies of the weekly plan and they contribute ideas for activities, this helps to increase their understanding. Staff are mostly well deployed, they are following the established routines and concentrating fully on completing all the activities in the planning, but they do not always fulfil the role of extending or encouraging children's learning through everyday activities and routines.

Staff observe and record children's progress, they recognise children's achievements and can also identify children's learning needs. These are evaluated before a stepping stone is noted as being achieved. Staff also compile photographic evidence of individual children's achievements and each child has a small book to take home with samples of their work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning to develop positive attitudes towards differences because they play with some resources that reflect differences within society. They wear dressing up clothes and play with cooking utensils in the home corner. There are small world people in the doll's house of different nationality and in the pictures on the puzzles. Children have previously celebrated festivals from other cultures and special books have been borrowed to reflect the individual needs of children attending. There are policies and procedures for meeting the needs of any children who attend with learning difficulties or disabilities and there is an identified member of staff responsible for co-ordinating children's needs.

Children behave very well during the session, they respond positively to staff and follow all regular routines obediently. They follow the clear instructions from staff and there is good continuity at each session. Children immediately recognise the music to signal tidying up, they know the changes to the rhythm of the music and manage to complete the clearing away in time to be sitting on the mat when the music ends. They are praised by the staff who clap and cheer. Staff are good role models and show consideration and respect for children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are strongly supportive of the pre-school, they recognise that staff have good individual knowledge of their children and they receive regular feedback following the daily sessions. Parents know that they can raise any concerns and most parents are aware of their child's key worker. They fully recognise the process of inspection and clearly indicate their knowledge of the previous judgements; they are happy to be involved and to give their opinions of the pre-school.

Parents know that they have the opportunity to see their children's records of achievement and that they can contribute to these. There is a full prospectus and parents regularly receive newsletters. Staff display important notices on a flip chart as there is limited space for displaying information.

All regulatory documentation requiring parent's written consent is in place and parents have opportunities to give a clear indication of children's level of development before they start with the pre-school. There are individual routines for settling children and these are organised with parents, parents can also have a final meeting with key workers before their children leave for school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and learning is sufficiently organised and planned. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. There are full procedures in place for staff recruitment and checking. The provider is entirely aware of her responsibility for making decisions about staff suitability to work with children. All staff information is in place and staff have regular appraisals and opportunities for individual supervision. The pre-school has a comprehensive operational plan which is linked to the National Standards.

There are good levels of qualified staff and newly appointed staff have started suitable training. Staff attend short courses when they are available.

Staff are encouraged to work together as a team, they share ideas for planning and take turns in suggesting activities and carrying these out. Regular volunteer staff members are suitably checked and included in the ratio of staff to children.

The pre-school has adopted policies and procedures and these are regularly reviewed and updated to include current information. Staff re-read individual policies at each staff meeting to ensure their knowledge is up to date.

All available space within the room is used during the session and staff prepare and organise the resources in advance. The daily register is available and up to date, with times of staff and children's attendance recorded. All visitors are also signed in and times of attendance noted. The provider is developing close links with the adjacent school and information is shared.

Leadership and management is satisfactory

The majority of documentation to support the pre-school provision is in place and the provider shows an understanding of meeting the needs of children and staff.

There have been several staff changes since the last inspection and the provider has included systems to evaluate the educational provision and to plan training for staff. New systems of planning for children's learning have been devised and practised, although there are clear difficulties for staff to complete all the planned activities on a daily basis and the time constraints have not been noticed or included in evaluating the provision. This impacts on the staff time with the children and many learning opportunities within the daily routines and regular activities are missed.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection required the provider to send an action plan to Ofsted to show how the quality and standards of care would be met and this was completed in June 2006. The provider has recorded details of how the action plan has developed and a programme is in place with the local authority early years department, showing how different areas of the provision have been evaluated.

The provider was asked to review the organisation of the pre-school routine and ensure that staff are effectively deployed to maximise the learning opportunities and improve care routines for all children.

Staff are well deployed and understand and follow the routines for managing and providing opportunities for children, they are effectively caring for children during the session and providing some opportunities for learning.

The provider was also required to ensure staff implement appropriate behaviour management strategies to enable children to understand acceptable boundaries.

Staff are consistent with the everyday routines and children show that they are aware of these. Children are responding very well to staff requests, they are learning to share and take turns and develop a knowledge of the boundaries in place. Children respond exceedingly well to the music for tidying up, this idea has been introduced and implemented since the last inspection.

The provider was requested to improve the care and provision for children by ensuring that their individual developmental care needs are recognised and respected. Staff show a good level of awareness for individual children's needs. They respond appropriately by calling parents to collect children early if children are upset or unsettled. They respond to children according to the information that parents have given.

Staff are continuing to train and learn about child development.

The provider was also required to improve the opportunities for children to develop positive attitudes towards respecting diversity and learn about the wider world.

Children do have some resources to reflect diversity within society and staff include the celebration of festivals from other cultures, they also seek resources to fit children's individual circumstances.

At the last inspection the provider was required to improve the quality and standards of the nursery education and was asked to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of Foundation Stage curriculum planning, to enable them to deliver activities which provide appropriate and suitable challenge for all children.

Two staff have attending training for the Foundation Stage curriculum planning and one staff member has begun a Diploma in Preschool Practice. Other staff have attended short training courses.

Planning does show that staff understand how to include learning objectives in the plans and to focus on certain stepping stones to meet the developmental needs of the children. Staff are implementing the plans however there are constraints on their time because staff include several separate activities to cover separate stepping stones and there is less time for children to learn through regular activities and daily routines.

The provider was asked to improve staff's understanding of how to plan for, observe and monitor children's individual progress and use assessments records to inform future planning and learning.

Staff have had opportunities to observe other settings and are liaising with the adjacent school. They are evaluating the daily focus activity and the children's development profiles show that staff have a good understanding of how to observe children's development and record this to inform future planning.

The provider was required to increase opportunities for staff training and ensure pre-school practice is regularly evaluated to identify areas for improvement.

Staff are attending local cluster groups and have opportunities to attend three training sessions a year.

The provider has used the local authority early years evaluation format to fully cover the educational provision, she is aware of some areas for improvement but has not highlighted the issue of time and the impact on the children.

The provider was also required to increase the opportunities for children to develop their language, mathematical skills and creative development within all areas of the daily routine.

Some opportunities are available for children to begin to develop in these areas, although there are missed opportunities for mathematical development and communication, language and literacy in many everyday routines.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- ensure that there are clearly defined procedures for emergency evacuation of the building and that records are kept of all fire drills practised

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):

- continue to improve staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the Birth to Three matters framework to enable staff to facilitate in all levels of children's play
- include opportunities during everyday activities and routines for children to develop communication, language and mathematical skills

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