



Little Stars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY222793
Inspection date	10 November 2006
Inspector	Sarah Catherine Jex
Setting Address	CYCD, 100 Leagrave Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU4 8HZ
Telephone number	01582 519506
E-mail	
Registered person	Abdul Halim
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Stars Pre-School opened in 2002 and operates from a room within the local youth and community development centre. It is situated in the Dallow area in the town of Luton in Bedfordshire.

A maximum of 16 children may attend each session at any one time. The pre-school opens each week day from 09:15 to 11:45 and from 12:45 to 15:15 during term time only. The children access the secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 32 children aged from 3 to 5 years on roll. All receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment. The pre-school welcomes children with learning disabilities and or physical disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is run by a management committee and employs three full time and one part time staff including the manager, three of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications of whom two staff are working towards further qualifications. The setting receives support from 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 extremely well-planned daily routines and topics which focus on independence skills and keeping children healthy. They follow appropriate procedures such as washing their hands after using the toilet, before snack time and after participating in messy indoor or outdoor activities. Staff encourage children with these practices by providing gentle reminders and by being good role models. Children recognise that they need to wash their hands as they 'might get germs' and staff offer children appropriate explanations for their level of understanding. Simple songs and rhymes reinforce the reasons for cleanliness and make routines fun. Children are protected from infection through effective hygiene routines which are practised by the pre-school. For example, procedures are in place with cleaning tables with anti-bacterial spray, well-maintained, clean toys and equipment. Staff maintain the accident and medication records appropriately and share these with parents. This ensures children receive continuity of care. Children are able to rest according to their needs. They have a quiet area where they can wait for parents to arrive if they are feeling unwell. This helps to protect the children from infection. Two members of staff hold first aid certificates and are able to administer first aid to the children as soon as possible to prevent them becoming distressed.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. Staff continually work towards developing nutritious snacks to promote healthy eating with the children. Staff take account of the wishes of parents and work with them closely to provide snacks that appeal to the children as well as meeting their dietary needs. For example, parents supply fruit such as apples, lemons, cucumber, satsumas and more exotic fruits like sharon fruit, pomegranate and guava. The pre-school operate an open café system which encourages children to become independent in their choices of snack and drink and when they want them during the session. A wide range of different cultural foods are offered such as noodles, toast, croissants and samosas. This enables children to gain an understanding of food from other cultures. Children are encouraged to try new tastes by getting them to "have a little taste" to see if they like it. Children have a choice of drinking either water or milk and are able to develop their independence skills by pouring this for themselves. The pre-school has been awarded the 'Healthy Eating' Award.

Children benefit from having fresh air and exercise daily. They enjoy a stimulating range of equipment to promote a healthy life and their physical development. They are keen to use their physical skills and develop these further through well-planned activities both indoors and outdoors. The outside play area is planned to incorporate different activities and used as another play space where children can access a variety of activities such as pairing up socks on the washing line, matching dinosaurs to the pictures along with planting flowers and using the static equipment for climbing and exploring. Children move with confidence and skill as they

ride cars and bikes. Children join in activities which are often adapted to meet their stage of development and staff are on hand to support and guide their play. Children's hand and eye coordination is well developed as they play with small world figures, manipulate jigsaws and one handed tools. They spontaneously take part in music sessions, join in with favourite songs and ring games and play with a range of musical instruments.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, bright, cheerful and child-orientated environment. Children and their parents and carers are made to feel welcome in the setting. They are greeted by staff on arrival where colourful and attractive posters are situated appropriately where children can see them. Children's work is well displayed to give them a sense of achievement and pride in their own work. Information to aid the parents' knowledge of how the pre-school runs is also displayed

Children use an extensive range of safe, good-quality and developmentally-appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are well planned and organised throughout the setting with lots of child-height storage units to encourage children to become independent and gain safe access to their resources. Equipment and activities are attractively presented to help children learn to respect and look after their resources. For example, imaginative play areas are well resourced and interesting.

Children's safety is of high priority. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to identify any potential hazards. Staff act quickly upon this information to remove risks to keep the children free from harm. The room is organised so that children move around safely to play, follow routines and choose from an excellent range of resources which are safe and appropriate for their ability. Staff are deployed to keep the children safe both inside and outside the pre-school offering guidance and close supervision as required. Children take part in regular fire drills to learn about the dangers of fire and the need for emergency evacuation. Children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe in pre-school as staff explain and practise simple procedures with them such as not running inside, picking up toys so they do not fall over them and being aware of the correct way of using scissors. This helps them gain an awareness of safety and for them to take some responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Where some children have difficulties responding to the boundaries, staff manage this effectively by explaining to the children in a simple but positive manner, aimed at their level of understanding so they can operate safely within their environment.

Children are protected as staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. However, the child protection procedure needs amending in line with new regulations. A designated person is responsible for child protection issues throughout the pre-school and has updated their training. Staff ensure they have robust systems in place to safeguard children when students and visitors are present. This ensures children are protected from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are actively involved in the setting. They arrive eager to learn and have a true sense of belonging. They know the routine well and enter the setting full of enthusiasm. Staff are very welcoming and introduce the different aspects of the routine to help all children feel safe and secure. Children enjoy exploring the activities and resources provided by the staff. They are supported well by the staff and this helps to build their confidence.

Children acquire new knowledge and skills and respond to challenges because the staff show an interest in them. They talk and listen to the children, asking questions to extend their play and make them think. Opportunities are provided for them to build on their natural curiosity as learners. For example, children explore different textures, they use their senses to investigate and make patterns with lavender smelling playdough, or to shape and break up pieces through their fingers. Through effective interaction with staff they begin to learn about words and meaning such as big, little and squeeze. They talk, listen to stories, and join in with rhymes and simple songs. For example, children have fun singing 'Rat a tat tat' making the actions and noises with each having two sticks to tap the rhythm as they sing within the group. Children use positive expressions to show they are happy and share achievements, for instance telling their friend what they are doing. Children become confident using different tools and technology, they cut with scissors and can programme, push buttons and levers on the home play toys. Children express themselves creatively. They make patterns with a variety of tools and mediums to decorate the home corner walls. Staff meet all of the children's needs well because they have a good understanding of their different stages of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are progressing well due to the staff's sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn effectively. Achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones and regular written observations are completed of the children participating in various activities which are recorded as notes; a formal, focused observation is recorded on a regular basis. All the observations are linked to the relevant areas of learning which demonstrates the staff's awareness and understanding of what the children are doing. A good balance between adult and child-led activities in a range of small and large group situations enables the children to achieve well in most areas of learning. Staff provide realistic challenges, having discussed their starting points with the parents. This ensures children are able to progress. Staff provide an interesting and welcoming environment which reflects most children's backgrounds and the wider community. Planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively. This gives a clear picture of the aims and objectives of each activity and the learning intention. Activity plans clearly shows the activity, the main learning intentions, staff deployment, key vocabulary to introduce, resources and how the activity can be adapted for individual children. Good observation and assessment systems are in place which are used to inform planning for the next step in each individual child's learning. This ensures that appropriate challenges are set for the children to make progress at their own pace. Both the plans and assessments link closely to the stepping stones and early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. The variety

and level of challenge is sufficient to interest all of the children and staff are skilful at adapting activities to meet all the needs of all children. There are effective systems in place to support children with learning disabilities. As a result most children are motivated and make positive links in their learning. Evaluation of activities is thorough and provides staff with information about where they have been successful in promoting learning and any aspects which need improvement. Each child's individual needs are continually monitored by their key person and the stepping stones are used to record their achievements.

Children are interested and motivated to learn, they eagerly take part in self-selected activities. They are engaged by the staff who encourage them to try new activities and to persist and complete activities such as using the programmable toy the 'beep-bot'. Most children are able to concentrate on their chosen task because they enjoy it and are given sufficient support from staff. The pre-school has introduced a 'friendship tree' where children initiate sticker rewards for their friends who have helped or been kind to them during the session. Children are beginning to become confident in speaking out in circle time or in small group where they ask for help as required and generally work well together. They begin to learn to manage their own feelings and use words rather than actions to deal with issues and disagreements which arise. Children help each other. For example, they assist friends to find their names at snack time and show their friends where to find certain items in the room. They begin to understand other's feelings, they say sorry, check their friends are alright and give comfort to friends. Children are confident to choose and tidy away their own play materials and begin to learn self-care. For example, most children take themselves to the toilet and put on their own coats.

Children are confident speakers. They ask questions of each other, staff and visitors and show awareness to the person who is talking to them. They interact well with each other and join in with stories and songs which are familiar. Children participate in games matching or finding the number, shape, colour or letter of the week. Each is backed up with a makaton sign which both the adults and children use freely throughout the rest of the session. Children benefit from the access they have to visual displays of letters, labelling and pictures around the room which they refer to during activities. For example, a child describes an object being the same as a picture on the alphabet poster. They also talk about the weather and days of the week. Children enjoy the shared reading scheme the pre-school have implemented and parents are encouraged to come in once a week at the beginning of the session to share books with their child. Children also have access to taking books home to read. Some children can write their names and others form some letters correctly. Children's mark making skills are promoted because they have good opportunities to practise writing and they use a variety of writing materials such as writing out menus and till receipts with crayons, felt tips or pencils.

Children have an abundance of opportunities to practise counting during the session and they are beginning to match numbers to their fingers and objects. Children's learning is enhanced by the displays of numbers around the room. Most children can count to ten confidently. Children have experiences of simple calculation. For example, 'one for me and one for you, how many have we got?'. They use mathematical language, such as bigger and smaller, square and cylinder, during activities. Children begin to learn about capacity and measurements through activities, such as water and sand, taking part in cooking activities and measure quantities on scales and in cups. Children match patterns, colours and shapes to compare differences and similarities, or to complete puzzles and jigsaws.

Children take part in various growing activities, they plant plants and talk about the need for water and light. Children are learning about nature, form and how things grow. For example, a life-cycle of a caterpillar incorporating stories, songs and creative activities. Children are able to explore and investigate using natural objects and through practical play with construction and creative techniques such as making aeroplanes with balsa wood, using child sized carpentry tools. They explore and investigate and their learning is increased because of the extended activities. Children have regular opportunities for activities using calculators, keyboards and a digital camera which encourages their technology awareness. Children talk about and recall events from the past both at nursery and in their home lives. These have been extended through discussion about other countries, particularly those familiar to members of staff and children. Children celebrate various festivals from different cultures throughout the year, the activities are threaded throughout the planning. This provides the children with a positive insight into the world around them.

Children use large movements during physical play inside and outside, they are developing a sense of space, health and bodily awareness. Children use equipment, tools and materials which promote the use of their small motor skills. For example, children are involved in painting with different implements, cutting with scissors and construction with different brick and blocks.

Children enjoy taking part in activities which allow them to express themselves freely. They explore sand, water, paint, seeds, pulses and play dough. They create pictures of fireworks following careful discussion with staff. Children enjoy music as it threads itself throughout the session and children respond well to it. They have access to instruments, try them out and are shown how to use them efficiently. Children's work is displayed throughout the setting which promotes self-esteem and a sense of pride. Children enjoy role play and use the home corner for a variety of imaginative environments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome and take part in the full range of activities on offer. They are respected and valued as individuals. The staff join in with their play and take time to listen and talk to the children, praising them appropriately on their achievements. This develops the children's self-esteem and gives them the confidence to rise to challenges and try new experiences. Children have access to an extensive range of activities and resources which reflect positive images of different cultures, gender roles and disabilities. This includes posters displayed around the room, puzzles, dressing up clothes and books. Children broaden their experiences by listening to music and participating in activities such as food tasting from different countries. Children have an understanding of their place in the community and share information about their homes and how they live. They recognise that there are different languages spoken in the wider community. Children and staff use odd words in Urdu and Polish as well as using English. They use traditional stories, puppets and story sacks in order to make stories accessible which help children to understand about different cultures in a meaningful way. Children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet individual children's needs and ensure they are included fully in the life of the setting. Staff have an inclusive approach and provide additional support when needed to ensure children can access the activities and resources

appropriately. This ensures all contributions are valued and helps children to be aware of their own needs and the needs of others.

The staff set good examples and use appropriate strategies to manage behaviour which helps the children to understand that their behaviour may have an impact on others. As a result, the children are well behaved and considerate towards others. For example, they share resources and negotiate which toys are chosen in the free-play area, deciding when to change them over without adult intervention. This enables children to make choices, take decisions and build harmonious partnerships. Praise is given freely to children, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem, understanding when they have done well. Children are encouraged to use please and thank-you appropriately in all situations during the session. The positive approach of staff ensures children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Information is gathered from parents both verbally and in writing to ensure staff are aware of each child's developmental ability and their routine at the outset and throughout their time at the pre-school. This strong partnership provides consistency in the children's care, supporting them in their routine and progress. Parents receive regular information about the provision through newsletters, the notice board and prospectus. They are also encouraged to put forward any suggestions or give feedback about the provision for their children. However, the complaints procedure lacks some detail. Parents have the opportunity to exchange information about their children on a daily basis with the experienced and friendly staff.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Children benefit as there is a strong emphasis on parental involvement in the pre-school. Parents regularly participate in the shared reading scheme, which helps them enjoy books with their children. Parents share information in each child's profile folder which includes samples of their work and photographs, recording their activities and achievements. Assessment records are kept up to date to show how the children are making progress towards the early learning goals. However, parents do not have a formal opportunity to discuss their child's progress and achievements. Parents comment positively through regular questionnaires about their children's learning and feel the staff provide relevant information on the notice boards and keep them informed of the topics being followed. Children benefit as parents receive information outlining the policies, procedures, expectations and responsibilities. This includes information about the Foundation Stage, giving a description of the six areas of learning which enables them to be involved in their children's learning in a meaningful way.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the professional, organised approach from all staff. They are well protected and cared for by the team who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and of managing each child's individual needs. Staff plan appropriate activities and provide assessments which show how the children are making developmental progress. Children feel confident and secure because the staff are warm and positive towards them. They always have time to listen, are willing to become involved in children's play and offer suggestions to enhance the game they are playing while allowing the children to lead. Children benefit as a broad range

of policies and procedures which are of a good standard are in place and shared with parents which ensures continuity of care. Thorough recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are in place. Staff have a high regard for the well-being of all children and ensure there are robust systems in place regarding students, parent helpers and visitors. This ensures children are safe and secure. Systems are in place to communicate with parents to provide consistency in the children's care and meet their individual needs. The key person arrangement helps children develop trusting, safe and secure relationships and provides a link for parents to share information. Children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievements and their ability to take an active part at pre-school is enhanced by the effective staff deployment throughout the session. Children benefit from the positive environment which is happy and productive. Overall children's needs are met.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good.

All staff receive induction training along with having regular appraisals to acknowledge their strengths and highlight any training needs which help forward their professional development. The manager continually enhances her knowledge through training and promotes staff development by involving them in training and regular staff meetings. Their views and opinions are valued and used in their action plan to continually improve the provision for children. The staff work together to plan activities and play for children to learn and make progress through the Foundation Stage. They have developed positive working relationships and are committed to promoting an inclusive environment which enables every child to reach their full potential. An inclusive environment has been created which clearly shows that each child matters and the pre-school has a clear vision for the setting and they acknowledge the importance of personal development for the children and staff alike.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last educational inspection the provider agreed to develop and promote a system where parents and carers are encouraged to be more fully involved in their children's learning.

The key issues have been implemented. The pre-school have implemented a shared reading scheme for parents to share books within the session and at home with their children. Weekly plans are available for the parents to be aware of what activities the children are doing and they contribute by providing a wide range of healthy snacks.

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 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):

- ensure child protection and complaints procedures are in line with current regulations

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 a more formal system for parents to access children's development records to gain an understanding of their child's progress and achievements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk