



Little Hollies

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY240115
Inspection date	14 December 2006
Inspector	Carol Johnson
Setting Address	The Pavilion, Bablake Playing Fields, Norman Place Road, Coventry, CV6 2BN
Telephone number	07981 323710
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Registered person	St Thomas Pre-Schools Ltd
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.

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 Hollies Pre-school Group is one of several settings managed by St Thomas Pre-schools Ltd. It opened in 2002 and operates from a sports and social club in the Coundon area of Coventry. A maximum of 24 children may attend the provision at any one time. The group offers both a sessional preschool and after school care. Both open five days a week during school term times. The operating hours for the preschool are from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.15 to 14.45. Children may stay for lunch from 11.30 to 12.15. Children can attend all or any combination of sessions. The after school club operates Monday to Thursday from 15.00 to 18.00 and Friday from 15.00 to 17.00. Children have access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 44 children from two to five years on roll in the preschool and 19 children on roll in the after school club. Nine children receive funding for early education. The group provides for the local community but children from other areas of the city are welcomed. The

group has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also those who speak English as an additional language.

The provision employs eleven members of staff, who work with the children. All hold appropriate early years qualifications. Students are supported in working towards a recognised early years qualification. Little Hollies Pre-school Group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and healthy environment. They are effectively protected from the risks of infection and are learning about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle because staff ensure that hygiene routines are followed and effectively use opportunities that arise during everyday practice to help children understand why health and hygiene routines are necessary. Children wash hands before touching food and after toileting or messy play. They are developing their personal independence as they are encouraged to be responsible for washing and drying their own hands with minimal help. Staff plan activities and invite professionals into the setting to help to raise health issues. For example, children have had several visits from a dental hygienist who used a variety of methods, including a puppet show, to teach children about the importance of caring for their teeth.

Children benefit, in the event of illness or a medical emergency, from the high number of staff who have attended first aid training and the setting's well-stocked and easily accessible first aid supplies. Several staff have received training in the use of an 'epi-pen'. A clear written sickness policy makes sure that parents are aware of the procedures for administering medication and know not to send children who are clearly unwell and could pose a potential health risk to others. Children's medical information is exchanged between parents and staff and relevant documentation is well maintained.

Children's dietary needs are well met. Children in both the preschool and the after school club are offered a drink and a light snack. Preschool children are given the opportunity to stay at the setting over the lunch time period and they bring a packed lunch from home. Healthy eating is actively promoted, both in the guidance given to the parents of children stopping over lunch and in the range of snack items offered. For example, snacks provided include crackers, sandwiches, raw vegetables and fruit. Most staff have attended food hygiene training and the contents of lunchboxes are stored appropriately. Staff are aware of children's dietary needs and preferences; they sit with the children whilst they are eating to encourage conversation and ensure that food is not being swapped. Children display good manners.

All children in the setting benefit from regular physical play and exercise that helps to develop their muscles, co-ordination and confidence. Staff plan for physical exercise both inside and outdoors and resources to support children's play and to develop their skills are plentiful. For example, children can access a parachute and a climbing frame and a selection of balls and wheeled toys. Space indoors is safely organised to allow room for some physical activities to

take place inside. For example, dancing, basketball and badminton. Consequently, children can continue to enjoy physical play activities in inclement weather. Also, staff take children on regular outings in the locality, for example, they walk to the shops and go for jogs around the playing fields. Children are beginning to understand the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active and know that regular physical exercise is good for them.

Children are able to rest according to their requirements because staff talk to parents about routines at home and respond to children's needs. Areas within the setting are appropriately organised to encourage quiet activities. For example, looking at books and these allow children to relax and rest in comfort.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children positively benefit from the provision's spacious, secure and welcoming premises. Displays are bright and attractive and include examples of children's work, photographs of staff and children and general information about the setting. Consequently, children are helped to develop a sense of belonging and parents are given lots of visual information about what their children are doing and how the setting operates. Space is effectively arranged to provide different areas for rest and play and resources are stored to encourage children's independence. Toys, equipment and furniture are safe, clean and in a good condition. Resources are plentiful and staff ensure that toys are maintained and used safely and that they are developmentally appropriate for the children in their care.

A good range of security and safety precautions are in place. For example, the main doors are secured whilst sessions are in operation and staff are deployed effectively to minimise accidents and to ensure appropriate levels of supervision. Staff are generally vigilant with regards to visually checking all areas of the premises and equipment on a daily basis and most staff have attended specific health and safety training. Extensive written risk assessments identify and minimise most potential risks to children. However, children's safety is potentially at risk as not all hazards to children have been considered as part of these assessments. For example, children can easily access the plug and cable attached to the Christmas tree lights and staff caring for children after school have not fully considered all the risks associated with the use of the outdoor play area.

Children are made aware of safety issues and are invited by staff to help make the environment safe after planned activities. They are reminded not to leave toys where they could become damaged or present a tripping hazard to others and they understand about the need to walk when inside. Fire safety issues have been raised with children as part of a theme around 'Bonfire Night'; a fire officer visited the setting and he showed the children his uniform and talked to them about protecting their own safety. For example, by not touching matches. Children who attend the after school club are aware of the need to walk sensibly from school and listen to instructions given by staff. A 'walking bus' is operated and children wear reflective bands and wait for staff before crossing roads.

Children are well protected by a staff team who demonstrate a good knowledge and awareness of child protection issues. They are confident of their ability to accurately identify possible

signs and symptoms of abuse and they know that their first priority is children's safety. Most staff have received specific training in this area and the setting's policy is clearly written and easily accessible to both staff and parents. Children are not left with persons who have not been suitably vetted and they are only released into the care of known individuals.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good balance of spontaneous and carefully planned activities that help to improve their all round development. They arrive at the setting happy and eager to participate and learn. Activities meet the needs of children at their different stages of development and key staff accurately use their knowledge of individual children to gauge the amount of support and adult involvement they require. They regularly observe children and talk to their parents to help assess their needs and individual starting points. Staff caring for the younger children make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help enhance children's learning and range of experiences and this is reflected in their everyday good practice.

Plans for all age groups are displayed for parents to see and include craft activities, physical exercise and imaginary play. Children go on outings and enjoy regular walks in the local environment. Resources to support children's experiences are plentiful and of good quality; they are clean and attractively presented. Children are able to make choices about their play and learning because staff encourage the development of independence and low-level and easily accessible storage methods allow children to freely select such as craft materials, role play items and writing implements.

Children are treated with kindness and concern by caring staff. They are settled because sessions generally follow the same pattern and staff members take time to get to know children's individual personalities and offer them lots of support and encouragement. Good relationships have been formed and children are at ease to go to staff for comfort and reassurance. Most children are confident and they happily interact with adults and each other; some friendship groups have been formed. Staff spend time talking to children and show interest in what they have to say. They communicate clearly with the children; they ask questions to extend their learning and patiently wait for responses.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and carefully plan experiences around a range of themes that are used to inspire children's learning. For example, during a topic covering 'Light and dark' children explored their senses by experimenting with torches in a dark space created in the role play area. Staff members demonstrate a clear knowledge of why they have chosen activities and what they hope children will learn from them. Plans are kept flexible and follow children's interests. Children are actively involved in the planning and evaluation of activities; staff value and take into account their comments and ideas and as a result children's self-esteem and confidence is increased.

Ongoing observations through the year help staff to plan appropriate challenges for children and staff use these to identify and build on what children already know and can do. They are shared regularly with parents; both verbally and in written form and parents can ask to view their child's development records at any point. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve with appropriate support and they motivate children by showing enthusiasm and offering them lots of praise and encouragement. Staff members are actively involved in children's play and effectively guide and support children's learning. They demonstrate a good awareness of when to intervene and when it is more beneficial to stand back and allow children to explore and learn independently. Staff are aware of children's individual needs and ensure that activities are planned in ways to enable all children to actively participate, develop to their full potential and feel secure.

Children are confident, outgoing and relate well to others. They show good levels of independence and select resources and activities for themselves. Children self-register using name cards that they place on a Velcro board and some children write their name on signing-in sheets. Children are developing good pencil control and more able children can write recognisable letters. A rolling snack time encourages children's independence and name recognition. When they wish to have snack children take their name card off a board and place it on the table. After washing their hands children pour their own drinks and select the snack item they would like. When they have finished they hand their cup and plate to a staff member and put their name into a basket.

Children are learning about everyday technology and how it can be used. They have free access to a computer and most children understand how to use it appropriately and demonstrate good mouse control. Staff offer children support, as necessary, so they do not become frustrated or lose interest. Children have access to a digital camera and some children understand how to use a mobile phone to take photographs. Staff increase children's learning and development by thoughtfully giving instructions, asking open-ended questions and offering suggestions to extend their play. Children display high levels of involvement in activities and persist for extended periods of time at self-chosen activities.

Children show an avid interest in numbers and counting. Spontaneous and planned activities are used on a regular basis to encourage children's awareness of numbers and mathematical concepts. Children understand mathematical concepts such as more or less and they use maths language in their play. Most children can recognise numerals to five and more able children to ten and beyond. Children investigate shape, colour and form through craft activities and playing with construction toys. They create three-dimensional models and pictures using recycled materials and a wide range of materials, for children to explore and experiment with, are freely available. For example, children can access glitter, glue, sellotape and a variety of paper and card. Children are developing their use of scissors

Children enthusiastically engage in role play and use talk and actions to convey meaning in imaginary situations. For example, they pretend to be 'Santa' going down the chimney whilst going down the slide and they make play food with the play dough to fill their shopping baskets. Staff facilitate children's learning by ensuring that this area is well resourced and taking part when asked. During the rehearsal for the Christmas nativity production children demonstrated a clear understanding of the characters and plot. Several older children acted out the main

roles and followed simple instructions given to them by staff. The other children joined in with singing familiar Christmas songs and all listened attentively to the story expressively read by a staff member.

Children demonstrate developing physical skills. They are able to negotiate an appropriate pathway when walking, running and using wheeled toys. They show good control and co-ordination when using large climbing equipment and understand why they need to take turns before going down the slide. Physical activities both indoors and outside are planned on a regular basis and include practising ball skills and playing games such as 'Simon Says...' The provision has access to small outside area, to the side of the premises, that staff enclose using temporary fencing. However, this becomes muddy in inclement weather and allows little space for the use of wheeled toys. The provision is in the process of developing plans for this area but currently the access to the outdoor learning environment, for all children attending the setting, is restricted.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Self-esteem is flourishing in an environment where children are warmly welcomed and cared for as individuals. Staff take time and make the effort to get to know children and their families and record and respect any individual requirements. An effective key worker system is in operation and this enables children and parents to identify a consistent adult with whom they can develop a trusting and supportive relationship. Flexible settling-in arrangements allow children to settle at their own pace and offers reassurance to parents. An induction questionnaire is completed with parents and helps to gather useful information about 'new' children and assess their starting points.

The provision has good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. A clearly written statement demonstrates the provision's commitment to inclusion. Positive steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of all children within the setting. Staff work closely with parents and outside agencies to help plan and monitor appropriate activities that build on what children know and can already do. The premises are all on one level and toilet facilities are available for people with disabilities.

Children freely talk about their home and community life and they are learning to respect and value both their own culture and that of others. Activities are planned around a range of religious and cultural festivals. For example, Diwali and Christmas and posters around the setting display words in a range of languages. Children are able to choose from a wide range of toys and resources that reflect diversity. For example, a selection of books, dolls, dressing up clothes, puzzles and small world figures. Care and concern for others is promoted. For example, children are due to sing Christmas songs at a local care centre for the elderly and children and their families have taken part in fund-raising efforts for 'Children in Need'.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children generally behave well because they know what is expected of them. Staff expectations are high and children receive clear guidance with regards to rules and boundaries. Staff provide children with good role models and they react to situations calmly and explain the reasoning behind rules. Older

children are beginning to understand that their actions affect others and are learning to deal with minor conflicts independently. Children respond positively to staff requests. They help to tidy away and demonstrate good manners.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Relationships are effectively enhanced and supported because staff and parents work together to help children learn and develop. The setting actively seeks the views of parents and carers and lots of positive comments have been received. For example, they comment on how they are welcomed by staff and they confirm that their children are happy, confident and settled. Children's well-being is increased because lots of useful information is shared to ensure consistency of care. Staff, parents and carers have opportunities to chat at the start and end of each session and all parents receive a copy of the provision's comprehensive prospectus. Parents and carers kept informed as they are able to view lots of examples of children's work and the wealth of information displayed on tables in the room and on notice boards. However, confidentiality for children and their families is compromised as existing injury record forms are easily accessible to others as they are left out in a folder on the parent information table.

Parents are helped to carry on their child's learning at home because staff ensure that activity plans are displayed and they encourage parental involvement. Parents are asked to send items in for interest tables and craft activities and to share any expertise or knowledge gained through their jobs or everyday experiences. Some parents have done so and this adds to their own child's self-esteem and helps to extend all children's knowledge and experiences. Parents and carers can stay and help during sessions and ideas of activities that they can do at home, with their children, are included in regular newsletters. Report evenings are arranged twice yearly and if requested, daily diaries are maintained for younger children. Parents receive frequent information about their child's progress and care and know that staff are available to discuss any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. The management demonstrates a commitment to providing quality care and education. The owner enthusiastically shares her vision with the staff and a good relationship exists between staff, families and children. Regular staff meetings ensure that any weaknesses are promptly identified and strategies are put in place to address any gaps in staff knowledge or understanding. Policies and procedures generally work well in practice and the management team is constantly assessing the service that they provide. Staff regularly observe each other and then as a team discuss their findings to improve future practice. The manager welcomes regular involvement from the local authority to offer necessary advice and support.

Staff recruitment and vetting procedures are robust. Management ensure that new staff and students receive a thorough induction to ensure that are able to effectively implement the setting's policies and procedures. This helps to ensure children's safety, welfare and development. Staff work cohesively as a team and are well aware of their individual and collective roles and responsibilities.

Children and their parents positively benefit from the dedication and commitment from staff members, evidenced through their everyday good practice, qualifications and continuing professional development. The setting has recently achieved the Preschool Learning Alliance's quality assurance award, 'Quality First'. Staff have attended a variety of courses including, 'Managing Children's Behaviour' and 'Equal Opportunities' and their ongoing training needs are continually assessed through appraisal and regular discussions with management. Staff from individual settings within the company can loan resources from the main Tommie's children's centre, for example, books on play, circle time and maths. These can be used to help with planning, for personal staff development and as a tool to share knowledge with parents.

Staffing is organised well to enhance children's welfare and safety. Space and resources, within the setting, are effectively organised and children's experiences are carefully planned to meet their individual needs. Care is provided in one large room but during preschool hours designated areas have been created that reflect the different areas of learning. This creates an attractive and well-ordered environment that offers children security and helps to ensure their safety. Documentation to ensure the safe and effective management of the setting is well organised and available for inspection. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to a number of improvements to enhance children's safety: to ensure fire safety recommendations are complied with and records kept; to ensure that bench style seats are maintained in a safe condition; develop a lost child policy; ensure that risk assessments are complied with; and provide a written risk assessment for the storage of 'Calor' gas.

Satisfactory improvements have been made. Emergency lighting and smoke alarms are in place and these are regularly checked and records kept. Seats have been upholstered and a lost child policy has been developed. Extensive written risk assessments are in place. Staff are alerted to any newly identified risk and told of actions that they need to take to either minimise or eliminate the risk. A risk assessment was drawn up in respect of the 'Calor' gas bottle and gas bottles are no longer stored in the kitchen. However, there is a bottle within a heater stored in a room that children walk through on their route to the outdoors. Children are always supervised in this area but the existing risk assessment has not been revisited to reflect this issue.

At the last inspection of nursery education the provider was asked to provide large equipment for 3 and 4-year-old children to practise climbing skills and to use observation and assessment information to plan the next steps of children's learning and meet their individual needs. Additional climbing equipment was purchased, including a larger climbing frame and this has resulted in children's increased physical skills and confidence. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the need to carry out effective observation and assessment. Regular observations take place, both planned and spontaneous, and the information gained is effectively used to inform future planning around children's individual needs and interests. Consequently, children's learning and development is enhanced.

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):

- improve risk assessments to ensure that all potential risks to children are identified and minimised
- ensure confidentiality, this specifically relates to existing injury record forms.

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 develop the outdoor learning environment (also applies to care).

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