



The Little Lot Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315319
Inspection date	13 November 2006
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Setting Address	Brackley Street, Stockton Heath, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 6DT
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Registered person	Peter Speed
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?

The Little Lot Nursery has been registered since 1992. It is run by a board of trustees who are in receipt of charitable status. The nursery operates from a self contained building providing two play rooms situated within the grounds of Stockton Heath primary school, Stockton Heath, Warrington. Children have access to a designated secure and safe outdoor play area for their use only. A maximum of 36 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.30 to 15.15 during term time only.

There are currently 47 children from two to under five on roll. Of these 28 children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend from the immediate locality and surrounding areas. The nursery supports children with special needs and there are currently two children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six staff. A total of four staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. In addition one member of staff is working towards an early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is promoted very well because of the positive routines and practices established by the staff. Children are developing an awareness of how to stay healthy. They independently access washing facilities at certain times of the day and understand why this is important, for example, 'to get rid of germs which could make you poorly'. An informative sick child policy, which is accessible to parents and carers, outlines the procedures followed and makes them aware of the group's responsibilities in relation to sick children. Information regarding infectious illnesses and exclusion periods is on hand for parent and staff reference. Effective systems and procedures followed ensure hygienic practices are followed for the preparation and serving of meals. The staff wear protective clothing, use antibacterial sprays for cleaning surfaces and the majority of the staff have completed food hygiene training. Good systems are in place for the cleaning and maintenance of the building. For example, cleaning rotas are in place, regular checks are made of certain areas throughout the day and a cleaner is employed. As a result of these effective practices, children are cared for within a healthy environment that protects them from the risk of infection.

Children's physical development is promoted very well through the worthwhile and varied opportunities available both indoors and outside. Children have regular access to the very well resourced outdoor play area as part of the daily routine. Children develop large physical skills as they climb, ride, crawl, slide and run. They pull their bodies up to straddle across the tunnel as they pretend to ride a horse. They coordinate their feet to peddle bicycles, skilfully negotiating space well to avoid collision with others. Younger children are assisted by staff in their attempts to balance using the stilts. Children and staff take part in the weekly physical education (PE) session with enthusiasm. During the session they learn to move their bodies in time to the music, negotiate space and express themselves through movement as they follow various actions. They are developing small physical and manipulative skills as they access a range of activities and resources, such as scissors, spatulas, paint brushes and modelling materials. This assists in the development of the children's physical skills and abilities, enabling them to develop control and coordination of their bodies.

Children enjoy a very good range of healthy snacks and drinks mid-morning and mid-afternoon and a substantial two course lunch is available to them at lunch time, all outlined on the menu displayed. For example, snacks include exotic fruits, such as melon slices, kiwi and passion fruit. At other times children are served with plain biscuits, raw vegetables, tea cakes and crumpets as various alternatives. During the inspection children are served with a pasta dish and garlic bread, with homemade cake and custard for dessert. Children enjoy their food and comment that it is 'delicious'. The routine allows for continual snack provision for the children to access by choice during a period of thirty minutes in the morning and afternoon. Snack times and meal times are very social occasions where staff sit with the children in smaller groups, to

promote a socially interactive time for all involved. Staff discuss healthy foods and photographic evidence reflects the involvement of the Dental Health officer to further promote children's understanding of healthy teeth and foods. Therefore, children's understanding of the importance of healthy eating is promoted very well from a young age. In the main, children's independence is encouraged at snack and meal times. For example, some children serve their own lunch selecting the amount of their choice from the serving dishes placed on the tables. Children collect a bowl for their snack and select for themselves from the variety available. Children are consulted about the drink of their choice which includes milk or drinking water. However, these drinks are mainly prepared by staff, therefore, not fully promoting children's independence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming and secure environment. Staff make good use of the available space to offer children access to a wide range of activities and opportunities. The two rooms available provide different surroundings for the children, which they confidently move between during their stay. The bright, well maintained, stimulating rooms are set out well prior to the children's arrival to offer a range of free play experiences, opportunities and more structured activities. Therefore, the very effective organisation of the setting contributes to the children's care, learning and enjoyment enabling them to eat, play and relax in comfort.

Children have access to an excellent range of good quality play materials to support, extend and challenge their learning. These are added to regularly to further extend the provision available. Equipment and resources are checked regularly for cleanliness and safety and any damaged items are removed. Children develop their independence as they make choices about their play from the areas established, which relate to the Foundation Stage curriculum and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. In addition they can request or access alternatives from the efficient and easily accessible storage systems in place.

Children are cared for within a safe environment because staff have good safety policies and procedures in place to ensure children's safety at all times. Staff are diligent in their care of children and the provision of a safe environment through the use of suitable safety equipment, procedures followed and supervision. For example, the exit door has a security system in place; staff oversee parents and visitors arriving; the outdoor area is fitted with a safe play surface and gates are secured and sockets are protected at low level. The Pre-school Learning Alliance risk assessments are completed and reviewed annually and daily checks are made to ensure areas are safe for the children's use. The detailed health and safety policy in place reflects the effective procedures followed to minimise the risks to children. Children are learning to keep themselves safe because the staff make them aware of unsafe practices and explain the consequences of their actions. The photographic evidence in place reflects the involvement of a visitor from the child safety department to discuss safety in the home with the children. Children learn about fire safety as they practise evacuation drills at regular intervals, and procedures are displayed within each room.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the staff have a clear understanding and awareness of the procedures to be followed should they have concerns about a child. The policy highlights that the nursery's prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of the children. However,

the procedures lack detail about how allegations against staff are handled. The manager demonstrates her understanding of the correct procedures to follow through discussion and adopts the role of the designated child protection officer. She is clear about the indicators of abuse and recognises the procedures to follow, and relevant reference materials are accessible. Most staff have completed child protection training and the manager has attended additional courses in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children have access to and benefit from the wide range of activities and opportunities offered to them. Qualified and experienced staff use the 'Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage' and the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively, with individual staff taking responsibilities for the different areas. This results in the positive organisation of a varied routine to ensure children receive a good level of care and education. Children's good learning and development is well supported by a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Children's overall care, enjoyment and success is achieved through effective planning and the provision of a wide range of experiences and extensive resources. Children are assigned to individual key workers who effectively observe and assess their development through the activities, play and care they receive. Staff organise key worker activities which ensure children throughout the week receive more individual support and interaction to promote their learning and development.

Children arrive happy and eager to participate in the wide range of opportunities set out for them. Very good staff supervision and interaction engages children in interesting play opportunities and activities, resulting in their development being promoted in all areas. Children have access to a wide range of activities each day. These activities, toys and equipment are rotated regularly throughout the week to sustain children's interest and enjoyment. The good range of resources and equipment supports a well planned programme of activities and opportunities. Children are happy, enthusiastic and extremely confident as they play cooperatively and make decisions for themselves.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff are actively involved in the planning of a broad and balanced curriculum for children, based on their secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. For example, long, medium and short term planning in place is reviewed and evaluated. Staff plan weekly for PE and baking. The planning is based on themes and topics which are clearly displayed. Children are actively involved in varied, interesting and enjoyable activities to support their learning and development across all six areas of learning. They are provided with a good balance of adult led and child initiated experiences. Plans are monitored and there are systems in place for evaluating activities. Staff take account of the children's starting points when planning activities, which are recorded in the main by parents using the child profiles in place. The observations completed during activities by staff take account of the children's achievements and areas of improvement. These aspects are used to inform future planning and promote the children's learning. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is monitored effectively. They complete assessment forms on each child which are linked to the areas of learning and the stepping stones to demonstrate the progress

they make. The child's profile contains a section for staff to complete regarding the children's development when they leave to go to school. Parents are encouraged to share this development record with the school the child is to attend. Assessments in place are supported by the children's work books. All entries are dated and annotated, which contributes to the checking of children's progress.

Children are confident communicators as they engage in conversation with staff and their peers. They are actively encouraged to think for themselves as the staff ask open ended questions during activities, play, circle time and story telling. For example, 'What day is it today', 'What is the weather like outdoors'. They talk about the pizzas they make and discuss sharing them with their family and friends. Staff use visual aids such as 'Lettuce the rabbit' to encourage children's language and conversation. She asks them questions and encourages them to sing a song and children are in awe of her as they respond. Therefore, children are regularly using language to communicate, build their confidence and self-esteem. Numerous opportunities are in place for the children to learn about written words and develop their mark making skills. For example, many areas are labelled around the room using upper and lower case letters. The writing table and trolley contain writing materials for children to access independently. Children practise letter formation as they complete work sheets in place and trace their names. Name cards developed allow children opportunities to recognise and select their name at registration and snack time. Children's entries to their 'special books' are annotated by staff and some of the older children are confident in writing their names on their pictures. The storage drawers reflect the written word with an associated picture. This enables the children to associate written words with objects to promote their learning. Children select from the books available and are attentive at group story time. They recall the names of fictional characters and anticipate what happens next as stories are read to them. Children regularly access the books independently and show interest in the content as they turn the pages. Children imitate the actions of the staff as they pretend to read to an audience, retelling the story in their own words and holding the book up so the pictures can be seen by others.

Children count confidently and natural opportunities are made available for them to count and develop an awareness of number during play and activities. For example, they access the computer programme and enjoy singing along to the familiar song of 'five little speckled frogs'. They count the children present up to 13 and often show their fingers to represent numbers during action rhymes. They confidently count the owls on the front of the story book and name numbers correctly on the dot to dot sheets. However, staff do not maximise opportunities during everyday situations to encourage children's understanding of simple addition and subtraction and extend the use of number in the outdoor play area. Children learn about shape as they build structures using the different shape bricks and reproduce the design from the cards in place. Children access the tape measure and can be seen measuring the trees outdoors, when asked they comment that the tree measures '10 metres'. They use positional language as they line up at the door and talk about positioning items, such as 'next to' and 'behind'. Therefore, children are developing their understanding of number in a variety of ways.

Children take part in effective activities to enable them to explore and investigate. For example, they have access to the magnifying glasses which they test out in the outdoor and indoor areas. Children investigate what happens when you manipulate two different colours of the modelling materials together, identifying that 'red and white make pink' and 'red and yellow make orange'.

Good use is made of the outdoor area to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the natural world. For example, children plant daffodil bulbs and watch them grow knowing that plants have to be watered. They collect the apples and the pears from the trees in the garden to eat at snack times. Older children are very confident in the use of the computer and younger children recognise their limitations and ask for assistance. They are competent in manoeuvring the mouse to select the programmes of their choice and complete the tasks skilfully. Children can access the camera for taking pictures around the nursery which are displayed with pride to reflect their achievements. They access a wide range of programmable toys and show interest in the recent addition of the traffic lights. Children begin to learn about the wider world through the good range of resources accessible to promote diversity, such as jigsaws, posters, books and play figures. In addition the staff are developing 'theme boxes' to further extend the children's understanding. They celebrate different festivals during the year for example, Christmas, Diwali and Chinese New Year. Photographic evidence shows examples of children tasting cultural foods using chop sticks, decorating their hands and making patterns associated with different cultures.

Children are making good progress in their physical development. They have regular, organised opportunities to promote and extend their physical skills. For example, in the outdoor area they climb with skill negotiating small spaces to access the climbing frame and slide. They confidently peddle the bicycles, and manoeuvre wheeled toys around the space available. Therefore, children are learning to develop good control and coordination over their bodies. Children show developing competence in the use of scissors, writing materials and tools. Where necessary staff guide and support their efforts. They skilfully use the glue sticks taking care not to apply too much. Therefore, their finer manipulative skills are developing with increasing control.

Children are provided with many worthwhile opportunities and experiences to express themselves creatively using a variety of resources and techniques. For example, they make symmetrical butterflies by folding the paper and using string dipped in bright coloured paint. They produce owls using collage materials and mix paints to produce different shades of red. They use sponge pieces cut into the shapes of leaves to print with and create autumn pictures. Children enjoy tactile play using sand, water, 'gloop', modelling materials and foam. Children confidently express themselves as they join in with familiar action rhymes and songs with great enthusiasm. They take part in physical play during the PE sessions where they match movements to music, for example, hopping like rabbits using two feet and swaying their bodies from side to side representing the wind when discussing the weather. Children act out stories such as 'The three little pigs' and use masks to reflect the role they play. They learn about rhythm as they move their bodies and play instruments in time to the music. The role play area changes periodically, for example, creating the pet shop, Percy's park and the pirate ship. Therefore, children have many worthwhile opportunities to develop and use their imagination within the planned activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are included in all the activities provided. Staff develop knowledge of children's individual needs and circumstances through information obtained from parents, which enables the staff to provide a good level of care to all children. They celebrate various festivals and respect individual cultures and beliefs. Children share resources and take turns which promotes their understanding of consideration for others. Access to a range of appropriate resources, contributes to extending the children's understanding of diversity. For example, dolls, books, play figures and jigsaws reflect disability, race and culture. As a result children's understanding of diversity is promoted well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

Staff work effectively with parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure that children who have special needs are appropriately cared for. For example, the setting provides one to one support if necessary and seeks advice and guidance from the advisory teacher, should they have concerns about a child in their care, this is done in conjunction with their parents. Staff have regard to the 'code of practice' when assessing the children's individual needs. They produce Individual Educational Plans (IEP) for children and promote inclusion of all by moderating their approaches to play and activities. A written special educational needs policy is in place and a member of staff takes on the role of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) within the setting.

Children are well behaved as a direct result of effective staff interaction during play and the provision of a stimulating environment. They show respect and consideration to others, play cooperatively and take turns and share resources during play. For example, an older child shows concern for a younger child as she takes his hand and offers support as they access different play materials, crouching down to his level when talking to him. They are responsive to staff direction and enthusiastically tidy toys away as part of the daily routine. Staff regularly praise and award stickers to children in the recognition of the children's achievements, attempts and good behaviour. This successfully fosters children's self-confidence and self-esteem, which was very apparent during the inspection. Staff are good role models, showing respect and consideration for children, each other, parents and carers. As a result the children show considerable respect for the staff who care for them. For example, they courteously refer to them by their title and surname and politely say 'excuse me' when wanting to attract staff attention. Staff approach situations calmly and provide explanations to children when dealing with minor conflict which successfully diffuses the situation. They comfort children who become upset and children are responsive to staff asking them to apologise to others that may have been affected by their actions. Where necessary they would work with parents to provide consistent management of behaviour exhibited. The written behaviour and discipline policy is made available for parents to read making them aware of the practices followed.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Introductions to the nursery are managed well. For example, children are invited to attend introductory visits with their parents and their attendance is built on gradually if children are reluctant to leave their parent or carer. Parents are welcomed into the nursery on arrival in the morning and at the end of their child's day. Some parents stay for a short while and can be seen playing with resources to settle their child

before they leave. A very good level of information is displayed for parents in the entrance hall which includes: details regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum; photographs of the staff and the details of their qualification; the names of the trustees; the planning of activities; the policies and procedures document and the parents hand book. Parent evenings arranged during the year keep parents informed of their child's developmental progress when records are shared. They have access to information about funded places and aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. In addition, the parents provide information which outlines the individual needs of the children, therefore, children benefit from the effective exchange of information between their parents, carers and staff. Parents in the main complete the 'child profile record' which informs key workers of the family members, pets at home, children's preferences, and their starting points relating to aspects of their development. However, the staff are currently developing this record and as a result not all parents have completed the document when children's attendance commences. Effective home links are in place to encourage parents to continue the children's learning at home and contribute in other ways. For example, the newsletters issued and the information regarding topics asks parents to provide items for the interest table and keeps them informed about the changing themes and topics and activities planned. The child's final developmental report, which is completed by the staff before moving onto school is shared with parents to which they can contribute to by choice. These are accessible for parents to see at any time and aspects of their development may be discussed upon collection of their child. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the running of the nursery as they are encouraged to take part in fund raising and family events. Parent's comments about the nursery are welcomed. For example, a suggestions box is available in the hall and parents are asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the nursery care bi-annually. Staff collate and publish the responses they receive to the areas raised and answer any questions asked. The parent's share positive and complimentary comments about the nursery and their children's care, learning and enjoyment. They welcome the open door policy and know they can discuss concerns or other issues at any time with the staff or manager confidentially.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Established systems are in place for the recording of staff employed. These include details of training, annual appraisals, personal details, copies of the job descriptions and their qualifications. However, not all files contain information about the clearance of staff, although these procedures have been completed for all staff. The two recent appointments to the board of trustees have not yet completed the necessary clearance, but the manager confirmed this will be completed once their appointment has been confirmed.

The relevant ratios of staff to children are maintained at all times and there is a high ratio of qualified staff employed. For example, of the six staff employed, three hold relevant early years qualification's, one holds a certificate in education and one is in the process of obtaining an early years qualification. All staff have many years experience. Staff are extremely committed to attending additional training and they have all attended numerous short courses available to them to further enhance their knowledge and understanding, which in turn benefits the children cared for. These have included: child protection for the majority of the staff; 'Birth to three matters'; food hygiene; SENCO training; behaviour management; local early years cluster

meetings; observations; reflections training and creative Christmas. Details of staff training attended are recorded on file and refresher courses are planned for as certificates expire. All of the staff have completed first aid training. Staff are very clear about their individual roles and responsibilities within the group and have designated roles assigned to them within the staff team.

The written policies and procedures in the main provide sufficient detail of the nursery practices and procedures. These are reviewed and updated regularly or as changes occur. However, the complaints policy does not outline clearly the changes in recent regulation and the child protection policy does not incorporate specific procedures followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff. All legally required documentation that contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is generally in place. However, minimal attention is necessary to ensure the complaints record is fully developed and accessible for use in the future which parents can see on request. The confidentiality of records is respected as they are all stored in a lockable filing cabinet. Entries to accident, incident and medication records are individual to the child concerned. Parents acknowledge entry by signing against the details recorded.

The leadership and management is good. The manager is very clear about her role and that of the staff employed. She meets with the trustees on a quarterly basis and submits a report regarding the nursery progression, evidenced through the minutes of the meetings recorded and are made available. The manager and her staff regularly and effectively evaluate their practices and procedures during the weekly meetings they hold. The minutes of the meetings held reflect the aspects discussed and provide worthwhile evidence of the committed approach to the development of the care and education within the setting from which the children clearly benefit. The staff team complete self evaluation action plans which are discussed at the 'reflections' meetings they hold. The area for development and the target date by which it will be achieved is outlined in the records held. All the staff are actively involved in the planning of activities, observations and assessments carried out to ensure children are making good progress towards the early learning goals and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Information gained is used to positively guide future planning, developed according to the individual needs of the children cared for. The individual files in place, record 'the year at Little Lot' and provide a good level of evidence including photographs to reflect the areas of learning the children encounter. This ensures the educational provision is monitored to a good standard and developments are ongoing.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

During the last care inspection the following recommendations were raised: ensure medication records are signed by parents and include the Ofsted contact details in the complaints procedure and display for parents. Since the last inspection attention has been given to provide parents with contact details for Ofsted, which is displayed and included in the complaints policy. Parents now sign against all medication recorded, therefore, promoting children's welfare.

During the last nursery education inspection there were no significant weaknesses to report however, it was recommended that consideration be given to further develop the information given to parents about the early learning goals and the Foundation Stage of learning. Since the last inspection information is now clearly displayed in the entrance hall to keep parents informed of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- develop a system for the recording of complaints which can be seen by parents on request and review the complaints policy to reflect the recent changes in regulation
- ensure Ofsted are notified of changes to the trustees appointed and a robust system is in place for the clearance of all staff. Make reference to the procedures followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff in the child protection policy.

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):

- further develop opportunities for children to attempt simple addition and subtraction in everyday situations and further develop the use of number in the outdoor area.

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