



## Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	322990
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 February 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Victoria Gail Halliwell
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<b>Registered person</b>	Just Learning Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Just Learning Private Day Nursery Wigan is one of a number of nurseries owned by Just Learning Limited. It opened in 1998 and operates from five rooms within a detached two storey building on the outskirts of Wigan town centre. A maximum of 79 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 until 18.00 for 51 weeks a year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 78 children aged from six weeks to under five years on roll. Of these, 21 receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 members of staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's good health is effectively maintained, because staff consistently implement good hygiene practices. For example, wearing protective clothing when changing nappies and using hand sanitizer before bottle feeding or after wiping children's noses. Systems to improve standards of cleanliness within the nursery are regularly reviewed and new practices introduced, such as, the use of shoe covers. As a result, parents escort their children through the nursery, without walking through areas used by young children for floor play in their outdoor shoes. Thorough systems are in place to ensure all staff are aware of individual children's allergies, dietary and medical needs. A discreet colour coded system alerts staff who are able to check easily accessible records for more information. The use of children's photographs is particularly useful to ensure staff who are covering staff breaks or sickness are able to identify individual children accurately.

Children are developing healthy eating habits. Menus are developed in consultation with the nursery staff and the qualified cook, who is responsible for preparing a broad range of nutritious meals using fresh ingredients. For example, mushroom stroganoff with rice, mixed vegetable risotto or shepherd's pie made with turkey quorn mince served with carrots and swede. Good consideration is given to ensure meals offered to young babies are age and developmentally appropriate. In consultation with parents, the nursery menu is gradually introduced using vegetable and casserole type meals. Good arrangements are in place to meet individual dietary needs. Staff are available to discuss individual requirements and preferences with parents, who may, for example, substitute some of the milk or sponge based desserts with fruit. All mobile children have independent access to water throughout the day; drinks are routinely offered to babies to ensure they do not become thirsty.

All mobile children have daily timetabled opportunities to play outside in the fresh air and sunlight which helps contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Planned outdoor activities, such as, follow my leader or putting on wellington boots and pretending to be fire fighters encourage children to develop new skills and move freely in the open space. A good range of physically challenging large apparatus is available for use by the older children under close supervision, who are able to practice and refine their climbing and balancing skills. Routine indoor sessions such as, catching and throwing help promote children's co-ordination. Many pre-school children are able to use a wide range of small tools and equipment very skilfully, for example, sharpening their own pencil or pretending to dispense medication from a small syringe during role play.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and their families are individually welcomed on arrival at the setting by both the staff in the immediate vicinity and their own key staff. The layout and structure of the building is not ideal; as a result, older children have to pass through two rooms to access their own area which does cause some disruption to the young children based in these areas. Many older children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging as they move confidently around the setting

to their respective rooms, greeting familiar staff along the way. Children's photographs and art work help create a welcoming and child centred environment and detract from the tired and worn appearance of some areas and resources. Children's rooms are generally suitably equipped and take account of the ages and developmental stages of the children. The pre-school room in comparison is well equipped, with many toys and play materials stored at low level, so that pre-school children can confidently select their own resources making meaningful choices about how they spend their time.

Staff throughout the nursery are mindful of the children's safety. They routinely check their own rooms completing daily check lists and take appropriate action, so that children can move around and play safely. For example, following the identification of a potential hazard around the entrance area, a small fence has been erected to effectively minimise any risk to young children who may be playing in this area. A designated health and safety officer is in post, who monitors the effectiveness of safety inspections and oversees aspects of fire safety within the nursery. Routine fire drills ensure staff are able to evacuate children quickly and safely in the event of an emergency situation.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded by designated staff who have a clear understanding of child protection issues and are able to implement the setting's child protection procedures, to protect children from possible harm. Staff knowledge and understanding is varied in line with individual training and development, but all staff are aware of the role of the designated person and their duty to report concerns. A child protection statement is routinely given to all parents, to ensure they are informed of the nursery's duty to report any concerns they may have.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are settled and enjoy their time at the nursery. Older children particularly enter the nursery confidently and happily say goodbye to parents and carers. There is evidence of some secure attachments as pre-school children seek out particular staff to share experiences or join in with their role play. One younger child who recently moved into the next room, seeks the attention of a previous carer as she enters the room. Staff caring for the youngest babies are responsive to their immediate needs and follow positive practices in relation to bottle feeding, for example, holding the baby close, giving lots of eye contact and speaking gently to them. However little is done to implement the key worker system and new babies who are unsettled do not have sufficient opportunities to spend time with a consistent carer. For example, one baby is passed from his key worker to another member of staff, who subsequently passes him to a third member of staff who feeds him and changes his nappy. Organisational arrangements impact significantly on the ability of the staff to provide consistent care. For example, staff have to leave the room to retrieve many items or for prolonged periods to store and make up babies bottles. Information relating to children's individual needs and routines is recorded for many babies, but is not consistently sought from parents of babies who are still settling into the nursery. Consequently staff do not have details of comforters or sleep preferences; verbal discussions ensure staff are aware of feed times.

Children of all ages benefit from a varied range of age and developmentally appropriate activities. The provision of sensory experiences is particularly good throughout the nursery. Young babies are able to enjoy a sensory corner, which includes a wide range of textured surfaces, mirrors, lights and draped fabrics. Older children explore and investigate a range of substances, such as, jelly, flour, cooked pasta and custard mix on a daily basis. Planning for children's learning and records of children's development are loosely based around the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, staff's knowledge and understanding of the framework is varied and this is reflected in the delivery of planned activities, which are in some instances overly directive. Subsequent evaluations of children's achievements are not consistent throughout this age group and in some instances records of children's progress are not completed on a regular basis. As a result, staff are unable to use these records to inform future plans for children's learning.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children over three years experience a broad range of well planned activities and experiences, which help them make good progress towards the early learning goals. The continuous provision of accessible resources which stimulate all areas of learning provides excellent opportunities for children to routinely practice and refine new skills. For example, children enthusiastically write their own notes in the mark making area, choosing lined, coloured or plain paper, they sharpen their own pencils, use stampers to personalise their envelopes or use a small machine to shred notes they no longer want to keep. The provision of mark making resources throughout the pre-school area is very good, children are encouraged to record appointments in the clinic, finding the relevant child's name and recording their details. Pencils and paper are readily accessible for children to record their findings in the number area.

Staff plan interesting activities which are woven into the continuous provision. For example, during a topic on people who help us, the role play area is effectively converted into a clinic, a good range of medical supplies, such as, sponge swabs, sample pots, plastic syringes and medical leaflets create a realistic environment for the children to explore. Children are motivated by their learning environment, they operate independently, selecting their own resources, for example, adding mini beasts to the sand tray or using alternative construction materials to build their models. Staff value children's achievements, completed models are displayed and children respect the work of their peers. One child collects his own model to play with for a short while and when this is admired he is eager for his friend to join him and show his model as well.

Staff evaluate children's progress well and use routine evaluations to plan the next steps for children's learning. Clear records of each child's participation in planned activities are maintained to ensure all children take part. A formal recording system is used to collate details of children's termly progress along the stepping stones, however, entries are not dated and as some children attend for more than three terms, some records are not clear.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Pre-school children have developed secure relationships with their peers, they play harmoniously, taking turns and sharing resources. For example, children who are listening to story tapes and songs remove their headset so they can listen to a child who questions them about the song, one child then offers to share his headset, so they can both listen. Staff are positive role models; they value children as individuals and listen carefully to what they have to say. Children have planned opportunities to gain an insight into the cultures and beliefs of others, for example, during Chinese New Year, children complete craft activities, talk about the festival and taste Chinese food. A limited range of resources which reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability are evident throughout the setting.

Children with learning difficulties and or disabilities are well supported. Key staff work closely with parents and external agencies, including speech therapists and inclusion workers, to ensure children with additional needs receive the individual support they require to help them make progress. Detailed written records are maintained and used to regularly review children's progress and planned learning intentions. Systems are in place to support children who speak English as an additional language. Staff work with parents to establish systems of communication, for example, learning key words in the child's first language. Facial expressions and eye contact are continually used.

Children throughout the nursery are generally very well behaved and pre-school children demonstrate a strong sense of right and wrong. Many children spontaneously use good manners, such as saying, 'excuse me', 'please' and 'thank you'. Children from a young age are developing a clear understanding of socially acceptable behaviour, for example, a two year old spontaneously says 'sorry' as he accidentally collides with one of his peers. Good behaviour is routinely praised and children receive stars and stickers in recognition of good behaviour. The setting has an established policy for managing children's behaviour which is shared with staff, however, some minor instances of unwanted behaviour are not always consistently challenged.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Systems to formally share information with parents about their child's progress are not yet developed. Information is exchanged verbally and daily feedback sheets provide some basic information about topics or the number of the month but this is not consistent. Parents do not have sufficient opportunities to contribute to their child's assessment. Parents of younger children receive additional information relating to their child's daily routines, such as, sleep times and feeds. Contracts with parents are informative and include many aspects of the nursery's care, including information relating to discipline, outings, equal opportunities and admissions.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

A clear management structure is in place. Despite several recent management changes, support from both the area and the deputy manager have ensured the setting is satisfactorily managed. Recruitment procedures are strong and ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and

therefore suitable to work with young children. The recently appointed nursery manager is familiar with company policies and procedures. She is committed to further developing the staff team and has devised a relevant training programme to ensure staff access courses, including, first aid, managing behaviour and 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff appraisals and direct observations of practices have enabled the manager to identify areas of strength and weakness within the setting and many changes have been implemented, particularly in respect of pre-school care and education.

Staff deployment is satisfactory in most areas and required staff child ratios are maintained throughout the nursery. However, in contrast to other areas, the practice of deploying senior staff to oversee the operation of individual rooms is not effective in the baby room. Poor organisation impacts significantly on the quality of care the youngest babies receive and the key worker system in this area is not effectively implemented.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager has a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and clear systems are in place to ensure the delivery of nursery education is effective. As a result, the learning environment has been restructured. Routine observations and discussions are used to monitor the quality of teaching and the progress children are making towards the early learning goals.

Attention to documentation is satisfactory. All policies and procedures have been agreed as part of the national day care providers scheme. Records relating to children's attendance, accidents, parental consents and medication are satisfactorily maintained. Information regarding the nursery's operation is well organised, known by staff and accessible to parents.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the manager agreed to further develop the system for recording what children under three years can do; to help staff plan for future learning and to provide more formal opportunities for parents to comment on their child's progress. Whilst it is reported that following the inspection measures to meet both recommendations were implemented, subsequent management changes and the introduction of new systems have resulted in many changes. Consequently, there are currently insufficient opportunities for parents to comment on their child's progress and the system for recording what children under three years can do is inconsistent. Further recommendations have been made.

### **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 any 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 satisfactory. 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 the deployment of staff, the organisation of resources and the implementation of the key worker system to meet the needs of babies more effectively
- improve liaison with parents to ensure that all children's records contain information which enables appropriate care to be given, particularly during the settling in period
- improve the system for observing and recording what children under three years can do and use these observations to plan the next steps for children's play, learning and development.

#### 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):

- provide greater opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning and to share what they know about their child
- improve the system for updating the Foundation Stage profile to ensure children's progress is clearly reflected.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)