



Little Dragons Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	146029
Inspection date	26 January 2007
Inspector	Carol Readman
Setting Address	Village Hall, Ogbourne St. George, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1SU
Telephone number	0785 5026083
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Registered person	Little Dragons Pre-school
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 Dragons Pre-school opened in 1984. It operates from the village hall in Ogbourne St George, near Marlborough in Wiltshire. The pre-school serves the local rural area.

There are currently 20 children, aged between two and five, on the register. This includes 13 funded three-year-olds and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. At present there are no children attending who have special educational needs or speak English as an additional language.

The setting opens five mornings a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 11.45. Children may attend an optional lunchtime session each day from 11.45 until 12.45.

There are four staff working with the children. The two joint leaders have NVQ level 3 early years qualifications. Another member of staff is currently studying to obtain a level 2 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a firm understanding of good hygiene and personal care as they progress through the setting. They learn that they must wash their hands before eating to remove germs and help to keep themselves well. Older children become independent in their self-care skills, taking themselves to the toilet and then remembering to wash their hands. Staff follow good health and hygiene procedures to minimise the spread of infection. For example, they clean the tables and kitchen table top surfaces regularly during the session, in order to prepare and serve food hygienically. However, the floor in the kitchen is not clean and toilet area floor is also dirty. This impacts on children's health. There is a written sickness policy and parents understand that the group does not accept children who are unwell. The setting ensures that there are always suitably qualified staff to manage minor injuries appropriately and there are procedures in place to record accidents.

Healthy snacks and meals encourage children to develop good eating habits. They enjoy a selection of fruit and other healthy options at snack time. Those who stay for lunch eat food supplied by their parents. Mealtimes are happy, social occasions and children have time to eat at their own pace. The staff are aware of the children's individual dietary requirements and ensure these are respected. To avoid children becoming thirsty or dehydrated drinking water is readily available at all times. Children may choose from water or milk at snack time.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities, which contribute to their good health and help them to develop a positive attitude towards exercise. They develop co-ordination and large muscle control as they play games using parachutes, hoops and space hoppers. Planned group, fun sessions ensure that all children take part and enjoy exercising together. For example, children work together holding on around a large parachute trying to shake the ball off the parachute. They race inside together and laugh excitedly as the parachute forms an 'igloo' over them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and their parents receive warm and friendly greetings from staff when they arrive at the setting. The bright and colourful wall displays make the environment feel welcoming and inviting. Children arrive eager to explore the room and start playing. They develop confidence as they move freely around the safe playroom. Staff identify potential hazards, through regular risk assessments and daily checks. They follow good procedures to ensure children keep free from harm. For example, children using space hoppers are reminded not to take them into areas where other children are playing.

There is a good range of furniture to ensure that children can play and eat in comfort. This includes a set of individual cushions so that children can sit comfortably on the floor for registration and story time. Children enjoy playing with a wide range of toys and resources that are appropriate to their ages and stages of development. Staff are vigilant to ensure that these remain in a good, safe and clean condition. They carry out daily checks to ensure that toys are clean and discard any found to be broken.

Staff ensure that the setting is secure and that there are good precautions to protect children from harm. Children cannot leave the setting unsupervised and uninvited visitors may not enter. Very good child to adult ratios help to ensure that children are safe on local outings to the village school or the shop. However, staff do not obtain written permission from parents to take children on such outings. There are good practices in place for fire safety and staff practise fire drills regularly with the children so that children know what to do in an emergency. Staff have sound knowledge of child protection issues. This safeguards children's welfare. Staff are aware of their role in child protection and the nominated person is aware of the routes of referral and local procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter happily and quickly become involved in their play. They enjoy their time in the setting and respond well to the staff's support and encouragement. Children become increasingly confident as they develop strong and secure relationships with warm and caring staff who know the children very well. Children new to the setting respond to the staff's sensitive support and encouragement, which helps them to settle quickly.

Children play well together and enjoy one another's company. They take part in a broad range of activities, which support their development and learning by providing them with a wealth of new experiences. For example, they use polystyrene foam pieces in their pictures to represent the snow that they walked in on their way to the setting. They play with toy dolphins and sharks in the water tray. They enjoy reading together looking at favourite books and dressing up as people from far away lands. Children under three years benefit from the staff's use of the Birth to three matters material, which helps to ensure all their developmental needs are met. Children enjoy their time in a structured setting where all thrive in a supportive and sensitive environment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress, supported by staff that use their in-depth knowledge of the Foundation Stage to provide a varied and broad curriculum that promotes development in all areas of learning. Teaching from different areas of learning is skilfully woven together to enhance learning. For example, maths and counting occurs naturally when reading and in singing rhymes. Staff use topics very successfully to incorporate all areas of learning in a holistic way. While learning about the polar regions, children have opportunities to make sponge paintings of igloos and use a parachute during a physical activity to create an igloo with all inside. They watch how a miniature igloo made from ice cubes melts when placed near a source of heat and learn about polar animals as part of extending their knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff are skilful at providing fun activities.

This means that children enjoy taking part and are keen to learn. The warm praise they receive makes them confident to answer questions and proud of their achievements. Children use newly gained knowledge to make connections. For example, they know that ice blocks 'melt' when put near a radiator but their sponge painted blocks will 'dry'. Staff use the daily plan timetable to very good effect to allow children time for free play, group activities, quieter times for reading and social snack and lunch times.

Children at the setting have good personal and social skills. They chat happily at snack time and show concern for others. They develop independence skills in learning to dress up and get out plates for snack. However, staff do not make good use of low level storage to encourage children to select resources for themselves. This means that they are not encouraged to think about what they would like to do and so are largely content to play only with what is readily available. This limits independence and thinking skills and does not encourage children to set themselves challenges. The children form friendship groups and play very well together at the setting.

Children develop good communication skills as staff listen carefully to what children say and show interest in the children. This helps younger children persevere in their attempts to be understood. Warm praise and encouragement of this helps children develop confidence and promotes further attempts to use their emerging language skills. Children listen to, and enjoy, stories. They join in and express opinions about favourite stories. Good use is made of the book corner. Staff share books with children, helping them to count and join in the stories. Children have access to mark marking equipment. Some older children can write their name and are able to form letter shapes correctly. Children can recognise their own name and have opportunities to see some familiar words around the setting.

There are good opportunities for children to use their maths skills. Staff help children count in songs and stories. They count fruit in the home corner and use mathematical language such as big and biggest in their play. They understand the concept of volume and are able to say 'There is a lot less water in the water tray today. Yesterday it was nearly full up'. Children learn about the world around them in fun and interesting ways. They enjoy topics and make connections about what they learn. They grasp an understanding that ice melts if put near heat but paint dries. The children at the setting learn to explore objects, finding out about their reflections by looking in mirrors. They enjoy using different materials to make pictures and take part in making the large collages and the friendship quilt displayed around the walls of the playroom. They have well developed imaginations which they use in role play, dressing up and pretending to be fairies. They enjoy music and movement sessions, sharing the instruments between them and swapping after each song.

A wide range of fun based physical activities encourage children to develop an active lifestyle. They line up to take turns jumping into hoops and laugh excitedly as they all try to bounce a ball off the parachute. Children enjoy gluing and sticking, drawing and writing. Opportunities to play with small objects such as toy lorries, dinosaurs and building bricks help to develop control of small muscles and hand-eye coordination. Children at the setting have good spatial and co-ordination skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel happy, valued and included because the staff know them well and have a very good understanding of their individual needs. Staff work together to ensure that all children receive individual treatment suited to their needs. Children join together very well in activities. They arrive confident, expecting to be included and are welcomed by staff and other children. Children are treated as equals and have good opportunities to join in. They learn to view others positively. This helps them develop positive attitudes to all in a diverse society. They celebrate festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Divali, making lamps to celebrate this 'festival of lights'. A good range of books and play materials introduce positive gender, age, disability and culture images to children. They learn about people who help them, such as the police and visit the local school and shop as part of learning about their own community. Staff work closely with parents to help to identify learning difficulties and disabilities so that all have their individual needs met.

Children behave well and play well together. They learn to show consideration of others and respect to one another as they share their toys and take turns. They behave well because they understand the ground rules for behaviour. Skilful observation and sensitive intervention by staff means that children learn appropriate behaviour. For example, when staff observe children taking lots of fruit and then throwing it away the staff offer less fruit the next day and praise the children as they eat the fruit. In this way the children learn appropriate behaviour and their self-esteem and confidence grows. Children receive stickers for being helpful and kind. This encourages them to take part in activities such as setting out plates and cups for snack time and helping with the clearing up after an activity.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents feel they receive good information about the setting, including the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff develop a friendly, working relationship with parents who value the setting and are very happy with the care their children receive. Information detailing activities is displayed on the notice board. This helps parents to see how activities are planned to work towards early learning goals. The setting is managed by a parent committee and staff encourage parents to become involved in their child's learning, inviting them to come to sessions to read stories. Information regarding children's key worker is displayed on the notice board and parents freely exchange information about their child's achievements on a daily basis. Parents receive regular written reports on their child's progress. Parents and staff work together to ensure that children receive continuity of care in a warm and friendly setting.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are encouraged to learn about the world around them. They show wonder, for example, as they learn how water magically changes into ice as it gets colder and melts again when put near a source of warmth. They are given the chance to reflect on what it would be like to live in a house of ice. This helps them understand the feelings of others and about themselves and the way they live. They learn to manage behaviour as they begin to share and tolerate others. For example, when all have different ideas and need to work closely together during making up a play for the puppet theatre. They learn to look after others when they are upset, showing concern when their friend cannot find the puppet they want. Children learn to play well together and form friendship

groups, that they move among freely. They chat happily with neighbours during snack and lunch times. The staff provide good opportunities to encourage children to learn about other cultures in topic work and through stories. Children enjoy learning about other cultures. They read books together, such as Handa's surprise. This is linked successfully into trying different foods from other countries to broaden their experience of other lands and people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised to care for children. Staff work extremely well together to produce high quality care for children. There is good support from a parent committee who work very well with staff to ensure that the setting has a comprehensive set of policies that are up to date and relevant to the working practice of the setting. There is a robust system in place to employ suitable staff and a clearly documented induction procedure. All the necessary regulatory documentation is in place with only one parental permission lacking. The required record keeping systems, policies and procedures are in place and used effectively to promote the health, safety and welfare of the children. Staff ensure that all are free to play in a warm and caring environment where all participate fully.

The provision is successful at making sure that the outcomes for children are positive. The childcare practice is very effective and the setting has a strong commitment for improvement and strives towards providing the best possible care and education. The familiar routine and well-organised space helps children to feel secure and at ease. This increases their confidence and children initiate and extend their own play, making their own creations at the craft table and working together to make up plays in the puppet theatre.

The leadership and management is good. Good working relationships between staff and committee means that their joint efforts enhance the development of the children. As a result, children thrive at the setting. There is a good focus on education with long, medium and weekly plans in place to bring about good outcomes and progress towards early learning goals for children. The staff and committee share a vision of striving to improve the care they offer. They have been successful in securing a grant to improve the outdoor area and are working together to improve storage for craft materials. The supervisors encourage and support staff training. Annual appraisals help staff identify and build on their strengths. There are very good relationships between staff, children and parents with a true commitment to provide high quality care in a warm, friendly supportive environment. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to devise a procedure to follow in the event of a child becoming lost. There is now a written procedure in place and staff know what to do should this happen. This improves safety measures at the setting.

There is now a well documented induction procedure for new staff to follow when they join the provision. This was in response to a recommendation at the last inspection. The new

induction programme helps staff to understand more about the setting, its policies and safe procedures to follow. This helps to enhance the care given to children.

Staff were asked to record children's special dietary requirements and ensure this was shared with all staff. Children's dietary requirements are recorded on their admission forms and a list of any special requirements is kept in the kitchen for staff to check when preparing food. This improves children's health and welfare as it greatly reduces the chance of children receiving inappropriate food or drink.

The setting was asked to review their risk assessment and identify actions to be taken to minimise identified risks. The setting conducts a thorough written risk assessment and is proactive in ensuring that all risks are identified and appropriate steps taken to minimise them. This improves children's safety.

During the nursery education inspection there were recommendations that the setting improved the planning of the preschool curriculum. Staff now complete long, medium and weekly plans making good use of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to ensure that children enjoy activities that help them work towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. This enhances children's development and learning.

The setting was asked to provide opportunities for children to use information and communication technology. There is now planning to show that children are encouraged to use and share the computer and there is an area of the playroom dedicated to its use. However, the computer has developed a fault and the children are currently unable to use it. The computer is being repaired and staff will continue to promote its use upon its return.

Staff were asked to encourage children to share and ensure that older children play with a purpose. Staff now take every opportunity to encourage children to share. For example, sharing musical instruments and puppets. Good planning to involve every child in activities ensures that all children are engaged in purposeful activities throughout the session. This enhances children's behaviour and helps them learn to respect and care for others.

Staff were asked to extend the use of mathematical vocabulary in the daily activities to discuss and compare numbers. There is a now strong emphasis on number skills and counting at the setting. Staff help the children count and compare, using maths sheets and compare bears. Children use maths vocabulary in their play, counting out fruit in the home corner and comparing who has most blocks or fruit on their plate at snack time. This improves children's learning and maths skills.

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:

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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 routines to ensure that kitchen and toilet floors are maintained in good, clean condition
- obtain written parental permission to take children on outings.

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):

- increase children's opportunities to select resources independently.

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