



Owlets

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY244757
Inspection date	04 October 2006
Inspector	Anne Schurek / Susan Ennis
Setting Address	Langford Methodist Church, High Street, Langford, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 9RU
Telephone number	0779 0763078
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Registered person	Owlets 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?

Owlet's Pre-School was registered in 1986 and relocated to its current premises in October 2002. It is a committee run group and operates from a main hall in the Methodist Church building, situated in the heart of the village of Langford. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 until 11:45 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 38 children from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 19 receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area which includes surrounding villages and towns. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six staff. Four of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The remaining staff member remains unqualified although has experience in working with young children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. They are learning good health and personal hygiene practices through following practical daily routines, such as washing their hands before snack time. Their understanding of the relevance of these practices is developed through discussions with staff and the use of resources, for example, discussing why fruit and vegetables need to be washed before use and then the children using them in a role play situation. Children are encouraged to wipe their own noses as boxes of tissues are accessibly placed on low level tables and then disposed of in the bin.

Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are clearly documented and staff ensure that these are respected at all times, for example, staff maintain a folder detailing children's individual dietary requirements in relation to allergies. Their growth and development are promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of healthy eating and offer children a variety of nutritious foods at snack time, including fresh fruit and salad items, sandwiches and cheese. Children's knowledge of different food types and where food comes from is developed through topic work such as growing a salad garden, eating these and discussing why they are healthy foods.

Children participate in a wide variety of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Good use is made of the outdoor play area, where children enjoy using the balls and basket ball hoops, prams and bikes. They also practise and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities. For example, children participating in painting with water and chalks on the floor and fence developing their co-ordination skills. Children demonstrate good control and skill in smaller physical movements, for example, they competently choose and manipulate smaller pieces when involved in playing with play dough using rolling pins and cutters and when using hammers to bang tacks into cork boards. They demonstrate a good level of independence in their personal care, for example, visiting the bathroom independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where there are colourful posters and displays of their work. Their safety is effectively promoted by staff carrying out daily safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. This helps to ensure that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently in all areas of the setting, for example door slammers and stairgates are fitted to door openings and radiators fitted with covers. The daily implementation of practical policies and procedures ensures that staff are

aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety in all areas, for example, there is a clear procedure to follow in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Children are developing their understanding about keeping themselves safe. They are given clear explanations by staff to help them appreciate the relevance of safety rules, for example, they understand why it is important not to run inside and how to carry chairs safely which promotes their understanding of staying safe.

Children use toys and resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. The maintenance of equipment is detailed in the selecting play equipment and toys policy. Staff follow these, checking items to ensure that they are clean and safe.

Some staff members have attended additional training and have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. However, not all staff have relevant knowledge of current procedures to enable them to follow up and report any concerns. Also the settings procedures are not up-to-date in line with the required government booklet. Consequently children's welfare is not fully protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They enjoy their time at the playgroup and enthusiastically participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. They are confident in their relationships with each other and with staff. Their personal development and self-confidence are consistently promoted because staff treat all children as individuals, interacting and offering appropriate support. Staff always remember to sit at the children's level joining in enthusiastically with their play and conversations, showing their genuine interest and further enhancing children's confidence and self-esteem. An example of this is a staff member joining in with story telling sitting comfortably with the children in the book corner, discussing the story and allowing the children to talk about their views and ideas.

Children's interest is maintained and their natural curiosity encouraged because staff change the activities and play resources frequently, ensuring that there is always something new to try and children are purposefully occupied. Children confidently make choices about their play and activities throughout the session. Staff pay attention to getting to know the children and make good use of open questions and discussions to encourage them to think further and extend their knowledge. Children are able to participate in all activities because staff continuously adapt these to suit individuals, working with children to make sure that their learning is promoted and they benefit as much as possible. For example, when children participate in a painting activity staff adapt the environment to enable a child who is unsure to observe without pressure and expectation to join in.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a very good understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and use appropriate teaching methods. Children spend their

time purposefully because staff are skilled in monitoring them throughout the session, allowing them to develop their own ideas but quickly noticing when they need encouragement and direction. Children are able to access a range of resources because staff members constantly through out the session vary activities and resources to provide continual stimulation and interest. Children's progress in all areas is well-balanced as staff use appropriate planning and assessment methods and are skilled and experienced in assessing individual children. However, written assessments are not dated and therefore do not clearly show the progress made by children.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities. These include regular opportunities to engage in role play scenarios, the exploration of natural substances such as corn flour and cooking, the use of books and stories and a wide assortment of crafts and construction. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a variety of themed topics, providing opportunities for them to look more closely at subjects such as 'growing', where they grow cress, look at homes, planting pansies and growing a vegetable garden. Children interact well with others, confidently initiating conversations and using language to explain their thoughts and negotiate plans and activities. An example of this is a group of children role playing in the fruit and vegetable shop, discussing what they had bought and how much it cost, passing each other pieces and proudly showing each other their baskets of produce.

Children talk freely about their home and community within their play or through group discussion times. Children's language skills are developing well, they show awareness of the listener and confidently negotiate with others whilst playing, for example, when playing with corn flour, spoons are passed between the children with some discussion about sharing; 'here's a spoon, you can have this one'. Children demonstrated name recognition as they selected their own name cards on arrival and at snack time. They are encouraged to write their name or make their own mark on their art work. There are numerous opportunities for children to use pens, crayons and pencils for mark making throughout the session.

Children are developing their understanding of simple mathematics such as counting out change when visiting the local post office and in role play situations. They sort objects according to size and colour, noting the differences in the composition of the groups. They understand and use positional and size language, for example, when involved in physical play with balls and the basket ball net, children confidently recognise concepts such as under, over and on top. Children are gaining an awareness of their own cultures and the wider community through activities and regular access to resources such as dressing-up clothes, books and puzzles, which provide both information and positive images.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals and staff ensure that specific needs are clearly identified and consistently met. Children are kind and considerate to each other. Their behaviour is good throughout the sessions as they competently choose their activities and share their toys and resources with adult support, for example a child is encouraged to let somebody else use the hammer whilst he waited for a cork board. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development is fostered. Children respond well to the positive approach and good staff role models.

Children are offered a wide range of opportunities which promote their understanding of their local community. They increase their awareness of the wider world as they explore celebrations connected with Chinese New Year, Easter and take part in Harvest festival organised by the local community church. Staff provide children with various resources and activities that positively increase children's understanding of the wider community for example, play figures with wheelchairs and callipers and outings to the local shops and to feed the ducks.

Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified and met as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff have a thorough understanding of it, ensuring that it is implemented daily. Staff members have attended additional training and are experienced in identifying needs and in working with parents and other professionals to ensure that children are offered the most appropriate care and support. The effective implementation of individual education plans, sound teaching methods and a clear understanding of inclusion means that children are able to participate meaningfully in all activities and routines.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given initial information about the setting and the six areas of learning. However, limited information is provided for parents about ways in which children learn and their progress in relation to the Foundation Stage. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning and the setting eases the transition between home and the group by involving parents in the sessions. They have the opportunity to share their knowledge with the children. Parents have access to their child's development folder and this is a good record of the child's time at the setting. Parents are kept well informed of the topic's children will be undertaking and planned outings through regular newsletters, informal discussions with staff and the use of notice boards. This positive attitude helps ensure that parents' views are respectfully valued, standards are maintained and appropriate care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Their daily welfare is enhanced by the setting's good organisation and they benefit from the care provided by experienced, qualified staff. There are secure procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. A clear staff induction process, regular staff meetings and appraisals are undertaken to ensure that all staff work consistently. Most documentation is in place. However, some policies have not been updated in line with changes to legislation. Consequently children's welfare is not fully protected.

Children's varying needs are consistently met and they are offered a broad, planned range of activities and a wealth of play opportunities. They are able to move safely and freely between activities, enabling them to feel confident and secure. Attention to detail and good organisation of all areas ensures that children are never left waiting between activities because staff plan ahead, setting up new activities whilst children are involved in group time or outdoor play.

The leadership and management of funded children is good. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the clear understanding that the manager has of her role and responsibilities, ensuring that she is aware of all regulations. The manager acts as a good role model, attending additional training and demonstrating her continued enthusiasm for her work. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting and helps staff to feel valued and motivated. The turnover of staff is very slow providing children and parents with continuity and consistency of care. There is a sound induction process for new staff, providing information and support. This continues through the staff assessment and appraisal system, which ensures that all training needs are identified and staff are able to work appropriately with all children. There are systems in place to ensure the quality of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated.

All sessions are well-planned and children are always given sufficient time and resources to enable them to complete their activities and tasks. Staff pay attention to the planning of future work, ensuring that the needs of individuals are met and the development of all children is promoted, for example through observations and staff meetings.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the provider was asked to develop policies and procedures in relation to daily risk assessments, outings, complaints, fire equipment checked, written complaints procedure, visitors book, effective induction procedure, food safety, written permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and a range of resources to promote positive images. The policies have now been implemented and parents are informed of all issues and procedures, ensuring that the welfare of children is now generally safeguarded.

Resources have been improved that reflect positive images of culture and disability which are accessible to children throughout the session developing their knowledge of the wider community. Fire equipment is checked and records show that these are regularly maintained protecting children's safety whilst attending the group.

At the previous education inspection the setting agreed to develop a programme for knowledge and understanding of the world to enable children to use their imagination in design, constructing, experiment and revisit their learning with programmable toys and increase their awareness of the natural world around them. Children are provided with a wide range of resources, activities and undertake visits within the local community to effectively extend their knowledge and understanding of the world they live in.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that child protection procedure complies with those of the Government booklet and Local Safeguarding Children Board and that all staff know and understand the procedures
- review and update all policies and procedures to include changes in the Addendum to the National Standards for under 8's day care and childminding.

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 assessment and planning methods so that these clearly show the progress made by children
- further develop methods of sharing information with parents about the Foundation Stage and children's progress within the six areas of learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk