



Little Fishes Soft - Play Skool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY240501
Inspection date	22 November 2006
Inspector	Linda Dawe
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Registered person	Elizabeth Laura Ashford
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Fishes Soft-PlaySkool opened in July 2002 and has offered full day-care since September 2002. It is privately owned and there are currently six full-time and two part-time staff working in the nursery. All permanent staff have child care qualifications or are working towards them. The nursery also offers places to childcare students from local colleges.

Children attending the nursery generally come from the town of Braunton and surrounding rural areas. The nursery is open from 07:30 to 17:30 on weekdays, for 50 weeks a year. Funded nursery education sessions are available in the mornings and afternoons for three and four-year olds. There are currently 55 children on roll aged between seven-months and four-years old. Of these, there are 10 four-year olds and five three-year olds receiving funded nursery education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children take part in a wide range of activities that contribute to their good health. Three and four-year-old have free flow access to the outdoor play area where they can run and jump, which develops their large muscles. Younger children are also taken outside on a daily basis, weather permitting. In addition all children have opportunity to rest or sleep according to their individual needs. Children are encouraged to take care of their own health by washing their hands regularly and being reminded to put their hands over their mouths when they cough.

Healthy eating is promoted with children enjoying a range of healthy snacks, prepared for them by nursery staff. Children's dietary needs, either their preferences or allergy information is gained at the time of placement and clearly displayed to make sure that staff meet these fully. All children can freely access drinks at any time ensuring they are kept hydrated throughout the day. Babies bottles are heated appropriately and baby-feed time is a positive experience with babies being nursed by staff on the sofa, whilst having their bottles.

Documentation is in place to support children's health, for example, medication slips and accident records are completed accurately. There are sufficient qualified first aider's on site and a first aid box is taken on outings to use if required.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

High regard is paid to fire safety to ensure children can be evacuated quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. The drill is practised fortnightly and a 'fire board' containing a list of the number of people in the building at any one time is stringently maintained. The front door is kept locked to ensure that no unauthorised persons can enter the premises, further keeping children safe.

Children benefit from the good use that staff make of the available space, particularly the use of the small outdoor area. Sleeping babies are regularly checked to make sure they are safe. Unfortunately a toilet has been removed from the nursery meaning there are currently limited toilet facilities for children and adults. However, this was as a result of a misunderstanding and the owner has agreed to re-install the toilet.

Lots of examples of children's work are displayed making a colourful and welcoming environment for both children and adults alike. There is a satisfactory range of resources, particularly in the pre-school room. However, staff ensure that these are effectively used to support children's learning.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as a result of staff being clear of their role and responsibilities regarding any incidences of non-accidental injury. The child protection policy has been updated and is now clear and comprehensive and parents are given a copy when their child first attends the nursery.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children attending Little Fishes Soft-Play Skool are happy, settled and well cared for. They enjoy a wide range of activities that are planned for them by a knowledgeable and friendly staff team. Staff working with the under-three's use the Birth to three matters framework effectively. This results in young children being enabled to make progress in all areas of their development. Clear routines provide a safe and secure environment for children although staff can be flexible to meet children's individual needs. For example, younger children can spend time visiting their friends in the pre-school room. Key workers work closely with parents to establish and maintain babies sleeping and feeding routines to ensure that they feel settled and secure.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are enthusiastic learners who keenly take part in the activities offered to them. They are confident and self-assured, able to choose activities for themselves. Staff are able to offer children support in their learning as and when needed, also knowing when to stand back and let the children develop their own learning and independence.

Children naturally count and calculate, for example, working out how many cups are needed for snack time, talking about shapes as they nibble cucumber pieces to make crescents. The nursery is rich in print, enabling children to realise that print carries meaning and most children can recognise their own names. Children are given lots of encouragement to complete their chosen tasks and they are also encouraged to try new things, such as loading the computer programme and working out for themselves what to do.

Very good use is made of the local community to provide children with an understanding of the world around them. They enjoy visits from the fire and rescue service, police and Royal Naval personnel. They also have opportunity to visit the police station and local library. Children's imagination is developed as they role play, making a bus out of a line of chairs, 'buying' tickets and thinking of the places they would like to visit.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very caring towards each other and staff provide good role models. There are obvious good relationships between staff, parents and children alike. Children offer to help and support each other and play very well together. They are confident and self-assured with a clear understanding of the routines within the nursery. Children's independence is encouraged, for example, when they are asked to choose their own character for the nursery nativity play. Achievements are praised, which boosts children's positive self esteem and these can range from having a sticker for not crying when mummy leaves, to writing their name for the first time. Good manners are encouraged, children sit patiently at snack time waiting until all their

play mates have got their snack before starting to eat. Throughout the nursery, as a result of being busy and occupied, children's behaviour is good.

Walks around the local area provide children with a sense of social responsibility. They learn the importance of putting rubbish in bins and about recycling waste such as bottles and papers. As a result children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The premises are level and accessible to all. Effective assessments identify any child who may not be reaching their milestones so that staff can raise any concerns with the child's parents. Children play with a selection of resources that promote positive images of modern Britain. They learn about other cultures by looking at festivals such as Chinese New Year.

Partnership with parents is good. Well-attended parents evenings provide parents with an opportunity to discuss their child's development and achievements with staff. This is followed up by parents being asked to give written feedback about the information they receive. Their opinions are further sought as there is a comments box in the hallway that parents can use in confidence. Regular newsletters keeps parents involved in events happening in the nursery. Detailed information is gained from parents at initial registration and consent forms are in place to ensure children receive appropriate individual care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery is run by a committed staff team who have the opportunity provided to them by the management team to update their skills and knowledge through a regular appraisal system and training schedule. Children under three benefit from the staff's enthusiastic embrace of the Birth to three matters framework. Children receive good support and care as a result of effective staff deployment and the fact that minimum staffing ratios are often exceeded.

Required documentation is kept neatly, clear and accurate and underpins the good practice. There has been a recent change in management and as yet, knowledge of the requirements of the National Standards, some nursery procedures and processes are not sufficient. This has resulted in delays in completing staff vettings and self-evaluations. However, there are procedures in place to make sure that un-vetted staff may not be left alone with children at any time.

Leadership and management is good. Staff set clear learning objectives for children and ensure that these are met through effective assessments. Staff regularly evaluate their practice and seek advice and support from other professionals, such as the foundation stage advisory teachers. The current planning and assessment tools are in the process of being developed but it is not yet clear from the current system that all children are being sufficiently challenged. Staff are aware that this remains an area for improvement. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their previous inspection the nursery were set a number of actions and recommendations, relating to Standards: 14 - Documentation, 11 - Behaviour, 2 - Organisation and 1 - Suitable person.

As a result of these actions and recommendations the nursery has improved the care of children by revising their behaviour management policy and by ensuring that staff are aware of how to handle children's behaviour appropriately. Staff are now effectively deployed throughout the nursery to make sure they have adequate supervision and support. There is now a clear child protection policy and the manager is responsible for ensuring that it works in practice. Policies are clearly written and available to parents, both in hard copy from the nursery and via the nursery's website.

At their previous nursery education inspection, the nursery were given a number of key issues around staff's lack of knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum. They were also asked to develop an effective assessment and planning system to make sure children's next steps of learning are planned for. There is now a competent practitioner leading the nursery education sessions and the assessment and planning tools are being developed. This has had a positive impact on children's learning and achievements.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 1 2004, Ofsted received one complaint National Standards 1 - Suitable person and 11 - Behaviour, which related to staff's inappropriate management of children's behaviour. Following consultations with other agencies two Ofsted Child Care Inspectors visited on 8 December 2004. No evidence was found of any breach of the National Standard 11 - Behaviour.

However, areas of the nursery's operation required improvement. Actions were raised in relation to National Standards 1 - Suitable person and 2 - Organisation to "ensure staff caring for babies have received training in this area" and to "provide an action plan with time scales demonstrating how and when staff qualifications will be met." Recommendations were also made in relation to National Standards 2 - Organisation, 11 - Behaviour and 14 - Documentation to ensure that staff are deployed effectively, have a good understanding of behaviour management and child protection and they receive support in these areas. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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.

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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 all staff are suitably vetted in a timely fashion
- ensure there are sufficient toilets available for children and staff

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 plan, monitor and evaluate the delivery of the nursery education curriculum to ensure that each child makes progress in their learning

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