



Little Lambs

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY331116
Inspection date	27 November 2006
Inspector	Ann Austen
Setting Address	The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School, Kingsland Gardens, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, NN2 7BH
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Registered person	The Good Shepherd Catholic School Governing Body
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 Lambs Nursery opened in 2006 and operates from a purpose built building within the grounds of The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School. It is situated in the Kingsthorpe area of Northampton. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 15:15 during the school term only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 31 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these 31 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs three members of staff. Two members of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. They benefit from a very clean, warm and comfortable childcare environment. Children learn the importance of good health and hygiene practices through daily routines, and become increasingly independent in their personal care. For example, children know that they wash their hands before snack, after messy play and after using the toilet. This is further enhanced by staff who remind children to put their hand over their mouth when they cough, and ensure that the tables are cleaned with anti bacterial spray before and after snack. This sustains levels of hygiene and helps to prevent the spread of infection. All children are helped to understand the importance of being appropriately dressed when going outdoors when the weather is cold. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have up-to-date first aid knowledge. Procedures are in place in the event of accidents, for the administration of medication and if children are unwell. Children are cared for sensitively in the medical room while waiting to be collected by their parent or carer.

Children have fun and enjoy activities which contribute to their good health. They have daily opportunities to get fresh air, and are able to rest according to their needs in the quiet designated areas within the nursery. Children enthusiastically slide down the slide, climb on the climbing frame and tyres, balance bean bags on their heads, manoeuvre wheeled toys and throw and catch balls. This helps to promote children's confidence, muscle tone and coordination. Children participate in music and movement sessions. They confidently move around the nursery, enjoy circle games and play 'What's the time Mr Wolf'. Children handle tools such as knives to spread the malt loaf, spades to dig in the sand, paint brushes and scissors. They build with construction resources and manipulate dough. This promotes children's hand-to-eye coordination and strengthens small muscles effectively.

Children's good health is promoted by a range of nutritious meals and snacks. Dietary requirements are complied with in partnership with the parents, and menus are produced to give parents information about meal choices, which includes dishes from other cultures. For example, children enjoy curry and rice, spaghetti Bolognese, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, fresh fruit salad and low sugar fruit jelly. Meal times are relaxed, social occasions where children and staff sit together around the table to enjoy their food, each other's company and develop good table manners. Children confidently help themselves to water throughout the session, and are encouraged to do so particularly when the weather is hot or after active play. This ensures that children remain well hydrated and comfortable.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. This is enhanced by photographs of the children and colourful displays of the children's work. For example, Elmer the elephant, the foam robots and the autumn pictures. Children use a good range of safe, good quality furniture, resources and equipment which supports their play and is appropriate for their age

and stage of development. They can access resources independently and sit and lie comfortably to play and join in activities. Children are interested in and want to play with what is available. Staff check equipment and resources regularly to ensure they remain safe.

Risks of accidental injury are minimised during indoor and outdoor activities because staff work hard to identify potential hazards, are effectively deployed and supervise the children well. Appropriate safety equipment is used according to the age and needs of the children attending including socket covers and a safe barrier to prevent children having access to the kitchen. This enables children to explore and take risks. Access to the premises is carefully monitored, and the outdoor play area is secure. However, doors leading to the main school can potentially be opened by the children. This compromises children's safety. Children begin to learn the importance of keeping safe by responding to the guidelines set out by the staff. For example, children learn what to do in the event of a fire by practising the emergency evacuation procedures, and learn to walk sensibly to lunch. Children are taught the risks associated with their activities. They learn to handle tools such as scissors, pencils and paint brushes safely. Children are well protected and their welfare is safeguarded because staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to protect the children in their care. Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and know the appropriate procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and enjoy their time at the nursery. They participate in activities which promote their emotional, social, physical and intellectual capabilities, and confidently select resources to initiate their own learning, building on their natural curiosity as learners. Children are helped to achieve and are confident in their relationships with the staff and their peers. Relationships are warm, caring and friendly. Staff meet children's needs through sensitive and appropriate interactions that promote children's confidence and self-esteem. They encourage them to try new activities in a safe and supportive environment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are working hard to continue to develop their knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. They understand that children learn at different rates and need time to explore and apply their learning. As a result children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. A balance of adult directed and child-initiated activities is maintained and a good daily routine is followed. A new planning system is currently being implemented. Learning intentions are identified, however, plans do not show how activities can be adapted to take into account children's differing ages and abilities, or used to monitor how the inclusion of all children is planned for. Staff ask carefully framed questions to encourage children to think and demonstrate what they know. They are particularly skilled at interacting with the children, responding and listening to their needs and ideas with interest. Staff make assessments of the children's progress. However, information gained from assessments is not sufficiently linked to the stepping stones to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals or effectively used to plan the next stage in children's learning. Behaviour is well managed, staff help children to understand what is expected on

them, to develop self-discipline and consideration for others. Staff provide an inviting environment for children that is organised to help them to become independent.

Children are friendly, interested and motivated to learn. They sit quietly during group time, listen to staff and follow instructions. Children develop good levels of concentration, seek out others to share experiences, and are very proud of their achievements. Children form good relationships with staff, and their peers actively seeking out others to share experiences. They are developing their personal independence. For example, children spread butter onto the malt loaf, pour their own drinks, help to tidy away the resources and independently put on their coats for outdoor play. Children speak confidently. They express their thoughts and feelings during activities and group discussions, and are beginning to use language to imagine and recreate roles and ideas as they play. For example, as they bake cakes in the home corner and discuss what vehicles are required to construct the road way. Children look at books for enjoyment, and listen to stories and poems with increasing attention and recall. They enthusiastically repeat familiar phrases as they go on a 'bear hunt'. Children are beginning to distinguish one sound from another as they listen to poems, however, opportunities to link letters to sounds are not consistently reinforced by the staff throughout the session. Children make marks as they draw and paint, and older children are beginning to trace over their name and form recognisable letters.

Children are encouraged to count, and older children are beginning to count to ten and beyond and recognise numbers with growing confidence. They are beginning to use language to describe size, shape and position. However, older, more able children have insufficient opportunities to develop their understanding of calculation and problem solving. Children learn about capacity as they see which bucket holds the most water, and use tape measures to measure the height of the towers in 'Bobs building yard'. Children begin to explore the wider world. They visit the schools 'secret garden' and search for butterflies, bugs and spiders. Children observe pond life and listen to the sounds of the wind in the trees. They observe the changes in the seasons, and collect autumn leaves to make collage pictures. Children learn about floating and sinking as they experiment with items in the water tray. They make model houses out of bricks, straw and twigs, and then leave them outside overnight to observe what effect the weather has had on the materials used.

Children have good opportunities to develop their imaginations and creativity. They explore a variety of textures and materials and investigate what happens when they mix colours together. For example, children feel the texture of the corn flour, play in the sand and manipulate dough. Older children differentiate colours with growing confidence. Children sing a repertoire of songs and actions rhymes and use musical instruments to make different sounds. For example, children enthusiastically sing 'wind the bobbin up' and 'ten little fingers'. Children use their imaginations during role play, they play in the home corner, construct in 'Bob the builder's building yard', book a holiday at the travel agents, and use the tyres to make a jeep to go on a jungle safari. They enjoy rein acting stories, such as 'there was a princess long ago' and use a variety of finger puppets in the puppet theatre.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are warmly welcomed into the nursery. They are valued and respected as individuals, and clear routines to the day help young children feel settled and secure. Children are confident in their relationship with the staff who praise, reassurance and encourage the children. This promotes children's confidence and self-esteem. Children have opportunities to learn about themselves and are beginning to appropriate diversity through planned activities that reflect the community and the wider world. For example, children develop their knowledge of the Catholic faith, attend the adjoining school assemblies, and celebrate festivals such as Diwali and Christmas. However, resources which help children appreciate cultural differences and the needs of people with disabilities are limited. Children who speak English as an additional language integrate with growing confidence because staff adapt activities to ensure that all children can participate to promote their welfare and development. Children behave well and respond to the staff's appropriate behaviour management strategies that take into account their age and stage of development. Staff provide good role models for children by being calm and polite. They help children to learn self-control, to respect furniture and resources, to share and take turns. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's care, welfare and development are met because relationships with parents are caring and professional. This ensures that parental wishes are respected and the individual needs of the children are met. Parents receive information about the setting, and systems are in place to exchange information. Staff are continuing to develop systems to inform parents about policies, routines and activities and how these help children learn. Parents speak positively about the nursery.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive written information about the Curriculum for the foundation stage in the school prospectus. They are informed of their child's achievements and progress through daily discussion and open evenings. However, parents are not encouraged to share what they know about their child when they enter the foundation stage, to build on what they already know, or provided with further opportunities to contribute to the assessment process, to help plan the next stage in their children's learning. Effective settling in procedures are in place, however, parents are not provided with information to encourage them to continue some play and learning activities at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's are happy, comfortable and settling in the caring, and well organised nursery. Indoor and outdoor space is organised effectively to maximise play opportunities for children. Children spend their time purposely, are confident to initiate their own play, and can easily access resources. They receive a good level of adult support and encouragement throughout the session. Children's welfare, care and learning is promoted by a good range of policies and procedures, and staff are continuing to develop the operational plan to provide additional information to parents. The staff ratio is maintained according to the needs of the children, and the key worker system is continuing to be developed. Clear systems are in place for

recruitment and staff induction which ensures that all staff are suitable to work with children, have the appropriate skills and are clear of their roles and responsibilities. However, a named deputy is not in place. Records are stored securely and confidentiality is maintained.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. Management and staff have a clear vision for the nursery, and provide good levels of care to enhance children's experiences, well-being, and learning. They work well together as a team, are positive and enthusiastic. Daily discussions ensure that all staff are fully informed, included and valued. Staff are committed to continual improvement and development through attending training to continue to improve the quality of care and education for children. Staff discuss their practice at regular team meetings, and are continuing to develop systems to reflect, monitor and improve the quality of the provision. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 by 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 the inner doors to the school are secure, that children are not able to leave unsupervised
- continue to develop the range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice
- ensure that a named deputy is in place.

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 staff knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, and the planning system to ensure that there is sufficient detail to enable staff to adapt the activities to promote the learning of all children.
- continue to develop the system of observation and assessment to ensure that information gained is sufficiently linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals, and that information gained is used to plan the next stage in children's learning.
- develop systems to encourage parents to share information about what their child can do when they enter the foundation stage, and during the ongoing assessment process, and provide information to parents to help children consolidate their learning at home.

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