



Little Vikings Children Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY335247
Inspection date	05 January 2007
Inspector	Elaine Douglas
Setting Address	Knights Templar School, Liddymore Road, WATCHET, Somerset, TA23 0EX
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Registered person	Somerset County Council
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Crèche

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 Vikings Nursery School is a Sure Start nursery which has evolved from the previous pre-school on the school site. It re-registered in 2006 and operates from Little Vikings Children's Centre, a purpose-built building in the grounds of Knights Templar First School. It is situated in Watchet, a small coastal town in West Somerset. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There is a separate small covered outside area for children under two years.

There are currently 83 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 44 children receive funding for early education. Children come from Watchet and the surrounding villages. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There is an overall centre manager who has recently been appointed. The centre manager employs 20 members of staff to work directly with the children; which includes a part time foundation stage teacher. Of these, one holds a level 4 qualification, 11 hold a level 3 qualification, four hold a level 2 qualification and five staff are working towards a level 3 early years qualification. Staff are supported by two administrators and a cleaner.

The Children's Centre provides family support and courses, in the form of information, guidance, advice and training. The nursery is also registered to provide a crèche for parents attending training courses within the Children's Centre.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted through good regular opportunities to take part in physical activities. Staff use the Foundation Stage curriculum and the Birth to three matters framework to plan a wide range of activities to promote children's physical development. Children climb confidently on rope ladders and swing from the bars. Older children develop good coordination through their daily 'Brain Gym' exercises. All children have daily opportunities to access resources outside, both during their free-flowing sessions and for planned whole group activities. Children enjoy a good range of nutritional meals and healthy snacks. They are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water and babies are provided with regular drinks.

Children develop good health and hygiene procedures for themselves, through their daily routines. They put on their own coats to go outside, when it is cold. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. They are provided with liquid soap and a choice of paper towels or warm air dryers. Staff skilfully involve children in discussions about hygienic practices. For example, when one child talks about eating sweets, a member of staff asks what they had to do next and engages them in a conversation about dental hygiene.

Children's health is protected through very good nappy changing procedures. Babies sleep on individual bedding, and children play in clean, well ventilated and heated premises. Outdoor shoes are not worn in the area for crawling or non mobile babies. However, this is not consistently managed to prevent cross contamination, as toddlers occasionally enter this area in shoes and staff store their shoes in a corner. Accurate records are kept of any medication required and any accidents which may occur. There is a good supply of first aid equipment and the majority of staff hold a first aid qualification.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are kept safe through highly effective procedures. All parents, staff and visitors to the centre sign in at reception. There is a keypad entry system to the nursery with a viewing panel in the door. Staff provide close supervision, with supervisors checking where children are during the free flow. Excellent risk assessments are used to keep children safe in all areas of

the premises. For example, staff carry out a thorough risk assessment of the under twos outside area prior to them using it.

Children develop extremely positive attitudes to keeping themselves safe. They take part in regular fire drills, and older and more able children watch out for younger children, suggesting that they don't copy what they are doing as it may be too difficult, and therefore dangerous. Babies sleep safely in a separate room and are checked at least every 10 minutes. Excellent equipment keeps children safe while allowing them independence. For example, children are able to move freely between the rooms and the outside, while thick door jammers prevent the doors closing on their fingers.

Children have good space to play both indoors and outside. They are able to access the exciting range of resources safely for themselves, from the low draws and shelves. There is an abundant supply of extremely well maintained toys and resources which are appropriate to the children's ages and stages of development.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by the staffs clear understanding of child protection issues. Comprehensive current documentation is readily available to provide further guidance. Several staff have had child protection training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children under three years benefit from the staff using the Birth to three matters framework, in which most staff have received or are booked onto training. Children access a good range of books and enjoy stories appropriate to their level of understanding. They are confident in their relationships with the staff and enjoy the warm, caring interaction. Children under two years show excitement when selecting musical instruments and experiment with different ways of using them. Staff skilfully ensure all children are involved including the youngest babies. Children aged two to three years have regular opportunities to engage in activities with the preschool children, which enhances their development. They independently select the resources they require and complete activities to their own satisfaction. Staff are developing a very good understanding of ensuring activities meet the needs of all the children's stages of development.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities ensures most children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff plan a wide range of appropriate activities and use the keyworker group-time well, to focus on specific areas of development. However, if a child's keyworker is not present staff are not always sure of that child's ability. Staff provide a stimulating environment and during free flow children are able to choose which activities to take part in throughout the nursery; which motivates them and supports them in becoming independent learners. However, occasionally a child may not settle to any activity so they do not benefit as much as others. There is a new assessment system which clearly shows children's progress. The Staff observe the children during their play and skilfully pick up on their interests, which they effectively use to extend their learning and development. For example, during a physical activity outside,

children notice a worm and staff incorporate this into many activities, such as making playdough worms, putting the worm into the soil tray and discussing its habitat, and singing songs about worms. Consequently children are engrossed in their learning and remain at activities until they have completed them to their own satisfaction. Staff ask very good open-ended questions to encourage children to think out their answers, such as 'What do you think will happen if we do that?' Staff have a very good understanding of the learning intention of activities and how to use them to promote all areas of development.

Children are well behaved and very independent. They take care of their own environment and are developing a good awareness of routines and expectations. For example, they know that the sound of the tambourine means they have to tidy up soon. Children are confident speakers and engage in conversations with staff and each other throughout their activities. Children independently make symmetrical patterns, such as on a butterfly and with the help of staff work out which side to put more pasta into to make the scales balance. Children experiment with magnets and say that the Lego is not magnetic, and experiment with transporting water, such as by funnel, tube or bowls. They use magnifying glasses to look closely at things, for example when staff point out the pattern the cornflour has made on their skin. They construct on a large and small scale, for example building a ramp with tyres and wooden blocks. Children use a range of tools, such as rollers, scissors, brushes, hammers and screwdrivers, selecting the appropriate tool for themselves. Children have access to a good range of role play resources, and art and craft materials which effectively supports their creativity. Children's art work is attractively displayed which develops their self esteem and encourages them to take part.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident, settled and well-behaved, due to the staff building good relationships with them and valuing their contributions. Staff provide good role models; they deal with minor behavioural incidents in an appropriate calm manner, which encourages children to be kind and sensitive to each other.

Children learn about people's differences through playing with a very good range of resources. The older and more able children develop an awareness of peoples cultures through celebrating festivals. The group uses Somerset Total Communication, to ensure all children are included. Staff work with parents to ensure babies individual needs and routines are met, to care for them according to their parents wishes. Parents receive good information, both verbally and in writing to protect their child's welfare. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for, through effective support. The SENCO works closely with outside agencies and parents, to support staff in providing an appropriate environment and activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and how it is implemented. Parents evenings are used to share information, which is then made available to those unable to attend. Policies and procedures are available every day. Regular newsletters provide additional information and activities are displayed on the notice board. Parents receive good information on the structure of the

Children's Centre and the other facilities available. They are able to access their child's development records at any time and have good opportunities to talk to staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and welfare is very effectively supported through the good deployment of staff. They are cared for by experienced, qualified staff, who receive a good introduction program and regular supervision to ensure they are clear of their roles and responsibilities, and to identify any training needs. Good registration systems and well organised documentation protects children's welfare. The operational plan is effectively used as a working document to support staff and managers in their roles.

Children are able to attend the nursery while their parents attend the centres facilities, such as parenting skills classes, yoga and lone parent groups. Good communication between the centre manager and the nursery manager strengthens links between the nursery and the additional services. Local health services are also starting to use the facilities to provide additional services. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The Foundation Stage Advisory Teacher has implemented very good systems to ensure staff are valued and their contributions recognised, this promotes dedicated, enthusiastic staff who continually look at their practice to ensure high quality education. The managers work well together recognising individual strengths. Good links with the school supports children's learning. Staff are well supported and supervised during changes and have opportunities to discuss their ideas and concerns. Activities are regularly evaluated and used effectively for future planning. The new assessment system is being monitored and managers have identified the need to record evidence of children's next stage of development.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take 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.

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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 the no shoe policy in the baby area is consistently applied to help prevent cross contamination

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 monitor and review the new assessment system to enable staff to successfully identify and support children's next stages of development, in conjunction with parents

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