



Layer Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203940
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Lynn Amelia Hartigan
Setting Address	Queen Elizabeth Hall, New Cut, Layer-de-la-Haye, Colchester, Essex, CO2 0JU
Telephone number	01206 734348
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Registered person	Layer Pre-School
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?

Layer Pre-School opened in 1972. It operates from a large hall, within the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Layer-de-la-Haye. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas.

There are currently 47 children from 2 to under 5 on roll. This includes 28 funded 3 and 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special educational needs and children with English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 on Monday to Thursday. Children are able to stay for a lunch club until 12.30. The afternoon sessions start at 12.30 until 15.00. Some children stay all day. Sessions on a Friday are from 09.00 until 11.30 or 12.30 if staying for lunch.

There are seven staff who work with the children. All the staff have recognised early years qualifications at NVQ level 2 and 3. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy as they are encouraged and praised when using the bathroom, most of whom can manage this independently. They are encouraged to wash their hands before snacks, lunch club and after using the toilet. A prompt poster is displayed within the bathroom to assist them. Children are further protected from illness as the staff promote well documented policies regarding illness, medication and accidents. In addition most staff are fully trained in first aid. A satisfactory daily risk assessment and cleaning programme helps minimise accidents and cross-infection.

Children are offered a choice of healthy snacks and drinks, as the group now promote a healthy snack policy. This may include several choices of fruit such as banana and pineapple, cut up vegetables or rice cakes. Children enjoy drinks such as milk or water. Parents are provided with a weekly snack menu. Drinking water is available throughout the session and children are able to pour their drinks with confidence and accuracy. Some children stay for lunch club. Staff encourage children to think about what food is good for their bodies. Planned activities such as hospitals, looking at different food, exercise and holidays encourage children to think about and be aware of the affects of weather, appropriate clothing, a healthy lifestyle and a good diet have on their bodies.

Children move around indoors carefully as the room is set out well. There are many opportunities to support the children's physical development such as; dressing up, play dough and cutting activities. Children use the tools such as rolling pins and cutters with care and are skilful when cutting. They can independently dress themselves e.g. when changing into the doctors outfit or when changing for physical education.

Although there is no outdoor play area currently available, the children have some opportunities for outdoor play and fresh air as the staff use the local park regularly and have access to the school playground where children enjoy the opportunity to play with a large parachute. Walks around the village are also planned. Large physical play activities such as a trampoline and balancing bars are also provided within the hall, however, better planning and good deployment of staff at these activities would ensure the children's individual needs are supported and sufficiently challenged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a bright, attractive hall that is clean and well maintained. Children's art work, photographs and posters create a welcoming environment. These are displayed on the room dividers at child height and on notice boards around the hall. The large hall is divided

into cosy defined areas such as the imaginative play area, creative and book corners, the children appear happy and comfortable within their environment. They happily leave their parents after registering themselves and settle well to their chosen activity. Children's safety is considered as a priority by staff who carry out risks assessments and regular fire drills with the children. Good management of the entrance door by staff and a security chain system ensures children cannot leave the premises unseen.

Children are able to choose from a good range of toys and play equipment that has been set out for them. All toys and resources are well maintained and of good quality. Some resources are easily accessible, however, children's requests for toys or equipment is acknowledged and catered for.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection. All required procedures and documents are in place to promote this. Completion of training ensures staff are up to date with current practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are busy, play happily and are enthusiastic as the sessions are varied and help them have fun and make progress in their development. They have formed warm relationships with the staff who interact well with the children and are intuitive of their needs. New children are well supported and receive one to one attention, the staff ensure their favourite toys are available. For example, new children who enjoy dressing up as princesses are provided with the appropriate resources.

Most activities are theme based and the children are enjoying the Christmas theme, making snowmen and Christmas biscuits. Practising for their Christmas show. They proudly show you their collage snowmen and sing enthusiastically in their Christmas performance. Children are encouraged to initiate their own play, supported by adults, such as, exploring colour and texture while mixing paints. They have great fun filling the paint pots until they are brimming and squelching the paints with their hands.

Dressing up is a popular activity and children are able to dress themselves. They enjoy using the doctors and nurses outfits and medical kits to assist them in their imaginary play. Younger children are managed well as staff have received some training on how to support and develop the under threes. Activities such as large play bricks on a floor mat and playing with porridge oats are popular. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is being successfully implemented and planned for within the curriculum.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Children are busy and have fun. They ask lots of questions and concentrate well on tasks with support and guidance from the staff. An effective key worker system is in place and staff observe children well and record their progress within their individual development records. This assists them when planning the next stage of the children's learning.

Children are involved in a range of activities that supports all areas of learning. Children are able to recognise their names at self registration. Most children are beginning to write their names on their work and others make good attempts. Lots of opportunities are available for children to mark make as clip boards, paper and pencils are accessible throughout the hall and is incorporated into all the activities, for example, children enjoy writing prescriptions in the hospital corner. The staff ensure that posters and labels around the hall encourages children to understand that text has a meaning. The provision of a cosy, well stocked and organised book corner enables children to use the books in a comfortable environment.

Good resources and activities such as; dressing up clothes, home corner, beauty salon and hospital are available. Construction kits and planned creative activities such as music sessions are available daily. These support and develop the children's creativity and imagination. Children's learning with regard to different cultures and the world around them is developing. Acknowledgement of different cultural festivals and traditional days are included within the plans and celebrated, this promotes the children's respect for others.

Children are able to explore and problem solve as good imaginative toys such as a garage, train set, and dolls house are available. Children are competent when using the computer, supported by a member of the staff and have good eye and hand co-ordination and use the mouse well. Children enjoy using the programmable toys, such as play computers, calculators, karaoke machine and tape recorders.

Children are progressing well in their mathematical development as they have many opportunities to problem solve, compare and weigh. Staff provide a varied selection of resources and activities that support the children appropriately, for example, weighing ingredients during a cooking activity. During circle time they sing simple number songs learning concepts such as taking one away and adding on. They do simple addition using days on the weather chart. Parents comment enthusiastically on their children's mathematical progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for as the staff commits time in getting to know them and their family backgrounds. They positively encourage parents to share information so that they can best meet and support the children's individual needs. The introduction of a parent liaison staff member is working very well. Detailed and well written equal opportunities and special needs policies are in place and are regularly reviewed, these support and ensure the inclusion of all children. Children who require additional help are supported well and make good progress.

Children's knowledge and understanding of a wider world is encouraged mainly through work around planned themes. There are some good resources available to the children that reflect diversity such as; a selection of books, small world figures, posters, play food and musical instruments. Children enjoy activities that are planned when acknowledging traditional days and celebrations such as; Mothers day, Holi, Christmas and Independence day. Children who have English as an additional language are supported well.

Children feel valued and respected as all staff are calm and are good role models. For example, a minor dispute involving two children in the hospital corner is dealt with appropriately and sensitively. Staff get down to the children's level, investigate what has happened and speak calmly and positively to them.

A good behaviour management policy is in place for parents and good communication with the parents ensures there is a consistent approach to managing behaviour and promotes children's well being. Children appear confident and reassured.

Emphasis is put in welcoming the parents into the setting. This promotes a good working relationship. Useful exchange of information ensures the staff are informed to develop and support the children's needs. This is achieved successfully as the pre-school have a sound operational plan and policies in place that supports their good practice. However, the complaints procedure needs updating to ensure parents are fully informed of the process. A good settling in process works well and the parents and children's needs are considered on an individual basis.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Children benefit from an emphasis on partnerships with parents. Parents are kept informed of events and dates by way of newsletters and notices displayed on the parents notice board within the entrance hall and main play room. They are invited and welcomed into the pre-school by friendly, approachable staff and annual open days are arranged. New parents are welcomed and are encouraged to stay and settle their children. The introduction of a parent liaison member of staff is working very effectively.

Informal chats each day between parents and the staff allow for the exchange of useful information to help children's progress and development. Development records are confidentially stored and available to parents at all times. Information regarding the stepping stones, Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' framework for parents is accessible and some links with home and the pre-school regarding supporting the children's learning is already established. Parents speak very positively regarding their children's care and learning at the pre-school.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by dedicated and qualified staff. They feel secure and settled through the use of appropriate staffing ratios and the environment is organised and welcoming so that they feel comfortable and settled. To ensure the well-being of children is not compromised, effective recruitment and induction policy and procedures should be more detailed and regularly reviewed.

Children's safety, enjoyment, health and achievements are supported by the policies and procedures within the operational plan. Most documents are in place to ensure the smooth

running of the pre-school, these are maintained and promote the children's welfare, care and learning. The pre-school staff and committee members work effectively together.

The leadership and management is good.

Children benefit from a team who work well together. Through ongoing staff development and training the children are achieving well. The supervisors delegate some responsibilities and the staff feel valued. There is an induction programme available but needs reviewing and an appraisal system in place, which positively encourages staff training.

Children benefit as the supervisor and her team are enthusiastic and forward thinking, they are able to identify the pre-schools strengths and weakness and some plans are in place that will further develop the pre-school, such as developing an outdoor play area, exclusively for pre-school use. The supervisor and her deputy's hands on approach ensures they are fully aware and informed of what is happening throughout all the sessions, however, better deployment of staff at some activities would further support the children in their learning. Links with outside agencies and professionals such as the area special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and links with the primary school ensure an inclusive environment is promoted.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure policies and procedures were reviewed or in place, with regard to fire procedures, child protection, special needs and complaints. These have been reviewed and are in place, however, the complaints procedure needs updating. As a result the children's individual needs are supported and their well being safeguarded. In addition the provider was asked to ensure drinking water was easily accessible. That a provision for relaxing was available and that planning of activities ensured children were able to make a choice. A cosy, quiet book area is now available to the children and good planning of the session ensures children are able to choose activities to suit their needs.

The provider agreed to ensure children's learning with regard to, information technology, music, different cultures and language and literacy were effectively supported. Improvement regarding communication to parents and their children's learning, planning and learning intentions and the staffs knowledge regarding the Foundation Stage. Effective planning ensures children are supported well in all areas of learning. Good links with staff and parents and the provision of newsletters and information displayed ensures parents are now fully informed with regard to their children's learning. Completion of several training courses by staff has improved their knowledge and understanding regarding the Foundation Stage and are able to provide good opportunities for children to learn.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been two complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaints related to National Standards 11; Behaviour Management and 14; Documentation. Concerns were raised with regard to the recording of significant incidents and that Ofsted were not informed, as required.

Ofsted were satisfied with the providers response to the actions and 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.

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):

- update the written statement for parents which provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint. Ensure a robust recruitment policy, procedure and induction programme 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):

- ensure planning supports children so that they are sufficiently challenged regarding physical play
- ensure staff are deployed effectively to ensure children's needs are supported.

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