



## Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	203710
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 February 2007
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<b>Registered person</b>	Just Learning Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Just Learning Nursery at Notley Green near Braintree is part of a national chain of nurseries owned by Just Learning Limited. The nursery opened in 2000 and operates from purpose-built premises. A maximum of 100 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 18.30 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 154 children aged from birth to under 8 years on roll. Of these, 57 receive funding for early education. Children come from both the local and wider catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 24 staff, of these 15, including the manager hold appropriate qualifications. There are four staff who are working towards a qualification or higher qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA).

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from cross-infection effectively because staff follow good health and hygiene procedures. Daily checklists and written reminders strategically positioned throughout the nursery ensure that all staff and students carry out health and hygiene routines to a good standard. For example, staff are meticulous in ensuring nappy changing procedures are followed and nappy changing areas are kept very clean. Protective disposable aprons, hats and gloves are used when serving food and children learn that this keeps the germs away from their food.

Children are learning about their own personal care and hygiene through effective daily routines and first hand experiences. For example, even the youngest children know that noses have to be wiped and tissues disposed of in bins. Children use anti-bacterial hand wash before they eat and after using the toilets. Visual reminders in the toilet areas encourage children to wash their hands independently and older children know that this is to wash the germs away. Children's good dental hygiene is fostered because they brush their teeth after lunch.

Children enjoy a varied and healthy diet which promotes their good health which is acknowledged by an outside agency by the presentation of a 'Gold Star Good Food' award. Children eagerly try a range of fresh fruit and vegetables at snack and meal times. They are encouraged to try new foods through changes to the menu and through food tasting and cooking activities in their base rooms. Children learn about foods that are good for them through daily fun activities such as singing "peel, peel banana", looking at books and posters of healthy foods and playing with play food in the role play areas. They cover topics under the 'healthy child' area of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to promote their understanding of healthy eating such as choosing their own fillings for sandwiches they make.

Children have good opportunities to enjoy physical play both inside and outside. Children benefit from daily fresh air when they use the well resourced outdoor area. They develop their skills and co-ordination as they climb in, over and through the wooden train, ride bikes and scooters. They bend and stretch as they play in the sand tray and reach up to look at the mirrors arranged on the fences.

Inside the multi-purpose area is used well, particularly in inclement weather, to enable children to enjoy physical exercise. They have opportunities to wiggle and crawl through tunnels, tents and hoops and balance on beams and climb over and around obstacle courses to develop their skills, co-ordination and strength. Children enjoy planned topics such as, dancing and movement to keep them supple.

All the required documentation is in place to promote the children's good health and well-being. For example, allergies and medical conditions are recorded and displayed for staff to ensure children's individual needs are met.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The premises are extremely bright and attractive. A wealth of well-presented displays of children's artwork, pictures and posters create an interesting environment for children. Baby rooms are made cosy and comfortable for the very youngest children by use of soft flooring and cosy cushions. Space is used well to enable children to take part in a range of activities in their own base rooms as well as other areas in the nursery. The outdoor area is a very useful resource and enables children to engage in a wide range of experiences to promote their all round development. For example, they make music with the metal spoons and pans hanging from the fence, they tend fragrant plants in the garden area and investigate the sand in the large sand pits. The children's safety is promoted because equipment, furniture and resources are all maintained in very good order.

Children's safety is promoted because there are good risk assessments in place to ensure their environment is kept safe and secure. Additional precautions have been considered for example, an emergency evacuation cot to ensure prompt and easy evacuation of non-mobile children and finger guards fitted to doors prevents small fingers becoming trapped in closing doors. Staff are vigilant in identifying changes in the setting and the potential risks they may pose. For example, following high winds damage to external fencing and a fire door an immediate assessment is made and good measures taken to ensure children's safety is maintained. Staff are well informed about health and safety issues through frequent staff meetings and the wealth of information made readily accessible to them in their own rooms. For example, procedures for the Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) and emergency first aid procedures.

Children practice emergency evacuation procedures regularly so that they know what they must do in any such emergency. Children begin to learn how to keep themselves from an early age through well-practised daily routines. For example, younger children learn to hold hands and walk as they go outside and to put their fingers to their ears when the fire bell goes to show that they are listening to the staff for what to do next. Older children learn how to use simple tools such as scissors correctly so that they do not hurt themselves or others. Children know about the safety 'rules' of using the outdoor equipment because staff reinforce this daily with them. They learn about road safety when they go for occasional walks outside the nursery to local parks.

Children are safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to protect the children they care for. Staff maintain regular informal communication with parents and carers which develops strong partnerships between all those involved in keeping children safe.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at nursery and benefit from the attention and support of enthusiastic staff.

Children's confidence and self-esteem is promoted well in their daily play and learning and they develop good relationships with their peers and the warm and caring staff. Children are given lots of praise and encouragement for the things they do which fosters a positive attitude to new challenges and learning. The younger children delight in the repetition and reinforcement of favourite games such as peek-a-boo in the mirror. Older children become more adventurous and independent and make choices and decisions about what they do. For example, children are able to get their own toys and equipment from the low level storage units so they can direct their own games and play. Children enjoy visiting the snack bars and accessing their food and drinks when they choose and benefit from developing other skills such as hand-eye co-ordination as they spoon out their raisins and pour their own drinks.

Children develop their natural curiosity as learners very well as they explore water and sand and splash around in the muddy puddles outside. They enjoy a very good range of planned sensory and explorative activities. For example, they use their hands to delve into trays of cold baked beans and talk about how this feels and what they see. Children excitedly investigate a tray of wet seaweed and tell visitors that the smell reminds them of the seaside. Children in some rooms have good access to an interesting range of natural items and objects to stimulate their senses in their everyday play. For example, they delight in exploring and comparing the texture of rough pan scourers to soft and silky fabrics and notice how different glittery things float around in bottles of coloured water. However, in other rooms this investigative play is more restricted to adult planned activities and set times. While across the nursery there is an appropriate range of equipment to be shared, some rooms are less well resourced in particular areas of play which inhibits the children's play and learning on a daily basis. For example, one room has few imaginative role play materials to stock the home corner while another has limited construction toys.

Children are developing their language skills well through everyday interaction with the staff. Staff ask questions such as, "what is this" and let the children know they understand what they are trying to say. Children share books and enjoy simple songs and nursery rhymes which further promotes their language development. Children's early mathematical thinking is promoted as they count how many cups they see in front of them and learn to recognise shape as they play with puzzles. Children use their imaginations when they play with small world toys and in the home corner. Their creativity is fostered through activities such as art and crafts and listening, making and moving to music.

Staff make regular and constructive observations of what the children can do so that they can make informed plans for the children's next steps. They plan a wide range of activities and experiences for the children to help their ongoing progress and to enable children to enjoy their time at the nursery. They use the 'Birth to three matters' well and are increasing in confidence in the use of this guidance framework to help them support young children's development.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Overall, staff have sufficient understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn through play. Activities to promote the children's independence and decision making skills are organised well by members of staff. Children are supported appropriately in their play and learning, particularly in small group work. Staff are interested in what the children say and do, taking time to listen and respond positively to any suggestions or ideas. Children are confident in their relationships with each other and staff, they move freely around the classroom and outside area making independent choices about the games they play.

Children's achievements are linked to the stepping stones. Systems for recording their progress are in place. Regular assessments enable staff to plan children's development. However, the identification of children's next steps for learning based on observations of what they know and can do are not clearly identified to support continued progress. Planning systems are in place and implemented in practice and differentiation is adequate. However, the evaluation of completed activities to assess and plan future challenge for children is limited. Information about the older children's daily achievements within the nursery is shared with parents and carers.

Children enjoy what they do and the majority are able to sustain interest in a range of activities which promotes their understanding and learning. Overall, children concentrate well at activities. Their self-esteem and confidence increases as they share stories from home and proudly seek out others to show them their finished creations. They form positive relationships with each other and members of staff, as they make room at activities and learn to care for each other. Opportunities for children's to take responsibility for negotiating turn taking or sharing resources fairly is satisfactory.

Children become increasingly independent when dealing with their own physical needs. For example, they organise how many cups are needed at snack time and know where to put their belongings such as coats and bags. They take the initiative to be self-sufficient in their learning because they have access to a range of equipment and resources stored at their level. Children are confident communicators seeking out adults to share their ideas and suggest different activities they are interested in exploring. They are developing their understanding of letters and the printed word using books independently. Children use writing for a purpose in role play as they take message and make shopping lists. However, opportunities for the more able children to use the simple phonics skills they have acquired and develop their emergent writing skills are limited. Children share stories with each other, holding books appropriately and turning the pages, they use the pictures as clues to the story line as they re-tell their favourite stories to their friends.

Children make sense of the world around them as they explore and investigate information technology, such as, computers. They expertly negotiate programmes and use the mouse with great skill. Children investigate battery operated toys with competence and increasing understanding. They learn about the changing seasons of the year and what the weather is

doing. They make observations about the world around them, noticing when they go outside to play that the “strong winds” have blown the fence down.

Children are beginning to use number language in their play. They talk about how many places they will set in their role play house or how many cups they need at snack time. Opportunities for them to build on their calculation skills are encouraged through number rhymes and songs or matching and counting games. They develop an understanding of positional language as they play with small world equipment such as the dolls house, describing what goes ‘up’ stairs, ‘under’ the bed or ‘in’ the cupboard. Children enjoy a range of physical activities which help them to develop both confidence and skill. For example, they use wheeled toys showing good spatial awareness and coordination as they pedal forwards then backwards carefully avoiding other children or obstacles. Children develop their fine motor skills as they use single handed tools and utensils with increasing competence. They are beginning to learn about the importance of physical exercise and how it can help them to stay fit and healthy.

Children express their individual creativity through a satisfactory range of activities. For example, they freely paint and create pictures which are displayed around their classroom. Children enjoy experimenting with different textures as they squeeze and knead play-dough or explore flour and water mixed together to create a ‘gloopy’ mixture. They develop role play games as they become ‘flying fairies’ or ‘super heroes’ saving the world. However, planned role play scenarios lack purpose and provide limited stimulation which impacts on children’s overall motivation to extend and develop their games based on real and imagined experiences.

Staff work closely as a team, praising and encouraging children which helps to develop their confidence and support independent learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a strong sense of belonging to the nursery and are secure and settled. Children belong to a named room and all have their own individual drawers or bags where they can keep their own possessions which helps them feel part of a group as well as being respected as individuals. They see a vast array of photographs of themselves around the nursery which helps them identify with being part of the nursery community. Children see their art work, named and displayed on the walls around them which shows them that staff value their efforts.

Appropriate systems are in place to support children who have additional needs. A named member of staff co-ordinates this system to ensure information is shared between staff, parents and carers and where necessary outside agencies. Practical steps such as a pictorial ‘time line’ and ‘now and then’ charts help all children understand expectations and the nursery routine. Children begin to learn about our similarities and differences through planned and spontaneous activities and events. Children celebrate a range of traditional and world festivals such as Chinese New Year. Children see positive images and play with some toys and resources which reflect the wider society around them. However, this range is limited and inhibits staff making best use of every day play and experiences to help children further understand that they are part of a wide and diverse society.

The children's behaviour is managed in a positive and age appropriate manner with lots of praise and encouragement to promote the children's self-esteem. For example, the younger children are rewarded with claps and smiles when they manage a few steps, try to put their shoes on and sing and dance along to their favourite rhymes. Smiley face charts on the walls of some of the rooms show what the younger children can do which helps them feel good about themselves and fosters their self-confidence. As the children develop they begin to learn right from wrong and are beginning to understand about the consequences of their actions and the decision they take. The children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There are good systems in place to promote positive relationships with parents and carers. There is an informative prospectus about the nursery and policies and procedures are readily available. In addition useful information in displays and leaflets are easily accessible on other child care issues. For example, signs of childhood meningitis and a healthy eating pyramid. At initial meetings staff work with parents and carers to gather information about their child and their routines to enable consistency of care. Daily diaries are kept for under two-year-olds so that parents and carers are aware of their child's day at nursery. Regular newsletters are sent home including staff changes and up and coming events.

Partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is satisfactory. Parents and carers have access to the planning displayed in the classrooms. Verbal feedback is shared with parents and carers daily and this is supported by the use of whiteboards which provide short written overviews of the various activities their children have participated in during the day. Some information about the Foundation Stage curriculum is displayed on the walls and included in the nursery's prospectus. However, opportunities for parents and carers to discuss and learn about the Foundation Stage curriculum offered to their children are limited. Assessment records are kept on site and the majority of parents are made aware of them. However, there are no formal systems in place to provide parents and carers with opportunities to share observations or comments about their children's achievements at home enabling them to participate fully in their child's formative years.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children are protected and their welfare is promoted because there are good systems in place to ensure adults working with children are suitable to do so. Recruitment and induction procedures are robust and ensure that all staff are aware of working practices in the nursery. The system for staff appraisal is currently being re-implemented in the nursery to ensure all staff have their professional needs identified and their future development planned for. All staff are included in the overall nursery 'action' plan which fosters good working relationships and their inclusion in the ongoing development of the nursery.

There have been considerable changes to the management team since the last inspection. This new team support their staff effectively through monitoring their working practice and regular staff meetings and workshops. For example, an evening workshop helps staff understand why changes to standard nursery forms have been made and gives them the opportunity to discuss wider issues surrounding situations in the nursery such as accidents and incidents. Staff demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional development through training.



Staff to adult ratios are met and deployment of staff promotes the children's learning and development overall. Organisation of time is generally effective and staff work hard to meet the individual children's needs. However, some nursery routines impact on the time available for children to engage in purposeful play. For example, two-year-olds have to sit at a group activity for a long period of time while they wait for snack and one to two-year-olds all have to wait until all children are awake before they can go and play outside.

There is an extensive operational plan which clearly outlines the aims of the nursery and how these will be achieved to promote the children's safety, care and learning. The written policies and procedures underpin the working practices in the nursery. All the required documentation is well-maintained to ensure the efficient day-to-day management of the provision and to promote the children's well-being.

Leadership and management of the nursery funded children is satisfactory. The area manager has worked hard with both existing and newly appointed members of staff to develop positive practice with regards to nursery education. Regular staff and planning meetings are in place to discuss the funded education programme. Managers have clear development plans in place and action is taken to ensure any areas identified for improvement are addressed effectively. Staff are currently receiving in-house training to support their knowledge and understanding about planning and assessment within the Foundation Stage to support their practice. All these measures ensure children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the nursery were asked to review the use of the outside play area so that children have more opportunities for play and learning in the outdoor environment. As previously outlined in this report the garden is a useful well-equipped resource and is used regularly in all but the worst of weathers to promote children's learning. Due to the design of the building not all of the children's base rooms have immediate access to the outside play area to allow free flow between inside and outside. However, staff ensure full time children do go outside at least twice a day. This enables children to benefit from fresh air each day to stimulate their minds and bodies and allows play activities on a larger scale than is possible indoors.

At the last inspection the nursery were also asked to provide some domestic style furniture in the under two-year-olds rooms and make more toys accessible for these younger children so they have more choice. Rooms for the non-mobile children now have adult-sized chairs to enable staff to sit comfortably while bottle feeding babies and which also enables young children to have sturdy furniture to pull themselves up on as they would in their own homes. Reorganisation of the younger children's rooms and improved storage facilities enable children to select toys from low level units for themselves which promotes their independence and decision making skills. Access to a wider range of equipment and resources in each of the base rooms remains an area for further improvement to provide children with even greater choice in what they do.

Since the last nursery education inspection managers and staff have worked together to improve the provision for funded children. Assessment systems have been developed and members of staff now regularly obtain clear informative observations about their key worker children in relation to the six early learning goals. This information is now being used to help staff plan the curriculum based on what children know and can do. However, this requires further development to ensure children's next steps for learning are clearly identified and used to support continued progress towards in all six areas of learning, this has been taken forward at this inspection. Weekly planning is now in place and provides clear information regarding learning intentions. Staff are also evaluating focused activities to support future learning. Evaluations require further development to ensure they are meaningful to support future progress and this has been taken forward at this inspection. Children now have easy access to child height draws and cupboards which contain mark making equipment in the role play area and other areas of their classroom. This ensures they can use writing for a purpose as they play to build skills for later learning. Staff have developed opportunities for children to increase their thinking and listening skills as they use open ended questions to encourage children to offer their own thoughts and ideas during registration and circle time discussions.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take action in order to meet the National Standards.

In November 2004 concerns were raised relating to National Standards 2: Organisation, 8 :Food and drink 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. An unannounced visit was conducted and one action was raised in relation to Standard 8. This was to ensure staff were fully aware of the importance of checking information regarding allergies and food preferences and acting on them. A satisfactory response to the action was received from the provider. The provider remained 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:

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 satisfactory.

### **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):

- continue to develop the range of resources, including a wider range of natural play materials and resources which reflect diversity across all rooms in the nursery
- improve the organisation of time to ensure children do not have to wait for long periods of time for the next change in the nursery routine.

### **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 current records of assessment to clearly identify children's next steps for learning; ensure subsequent evaluation of activities is relevant to inform future planning and enable children to make progress in all six areas of learning
- develop the provision of role play scenarios to provide stimulating opportunities for children to explore and develop their imagination base on real and imagined experiences
- further develop opportunities in communication, language and literacy enabling more able children to write captions on their creations or simple stories using the phonic knowledge they have acquired
- develop opportunities for parents and carers to learn about the Foundation Stage curriculum and to participate in their children's assessment records by making comments and sharing information about their children's achievements 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)