



Little Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289871
Inspection date	05 May 2005
Inspector	Anne Munro

Setting Address	Baptist Church Hall, Old Milton Road, New Milton, Hampshire, BH25 6DQ
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Registered person	Sarah Jane Marsh
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Learners Pre-school has been registered since September 2004 to care for up to 26 children under 5 years of age. The preschool operates from New Milton Baptist Church Hall and serves the local area.

There are currently 38 children on roll, including 32 in receipt of nursery funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children who have special needs or for whom English is a second language are supported within the group.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 8:45 until 11:45.

There are six part time members of staff working with the children, including three with early years qualifications. Four members of staff are currently working towards qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher / mentor from the Hampshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is a member of the Preschool Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about good hygiene and are protected from cross infection as staff encourage them to wash their hands, and ensure that equipment and surfaces are kept clean. Sick or injured children are cared for competently by staff with up-to-date first aid qualifications and good understanding of the group's clear policies and procedures. Children learn about a healthy diet as they eat fruit and drink milk at snack time, and sometimes make their own biscuits or sandwiches. They are able to help themselves to water during the session. Their special dietary needs are met as staff work closely with parents to ensure they have secure knowledge of individual needs.

Children develop good spatial awareness as they steer ride-on toys around the outside play area, and join in circle games and action songs with enthusiasm. They use a climbing frame and tunnels to develop balance and physical control. They are able to practise skills with small apparatus such as balls, ropes and beanbags on weekly visits to a playing field nearby. Children enjoy a good range of activities that promote their manipulative skills, including painting, drawing, threading and playing with construction toys and puzzles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move confidently around a safe environment where staff carry out regular checks and have taken steps to minimise risks. They practise emergency evacuation regularly. Children have less opportunity to develop understanding of rules and take responsibility for their own safety. Children have plenty of space to play with a good range of toys and equipment which is well maintained and regularly updated. Children's safety is supported by clear policies, familiar to all staff and shared with parents, and by the staff's good knowledge of child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children come happily into the preschool and settle confidently into familiar routines. They form good trusting relationships with staff, are generally well-behaved and play well alongside other children. They are interested in the wide range of activities on offer, are able to make choices and concentrate well.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children can sit quietly and listen when appropriate but sometimes become restless in large group activities. They become confident in speaking as staff encourage conversation throughout activities, but younger children have less opportunity to be heard. Children are skilful in using pencils and crayons to make marks to communicate meaning, and older children are able to write their names. They count and practise mathematical language throughout the daily routine. They join in songs and musical activities with enthusiasm and show good levels of imagination in their play. Overall children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff are developing a sound knowledge of the foundation stage and plan a good range of activities that promotes children's development in the six areas of learning. Staff use appropriate teaching methods and provide a stimulating environment that encourages children to learn, although children do not make good use of the book corner. Children are encouraged to join in conversation and discussion, and enjoy counting and using number as an integral part of daily activities. Staff keep accurate records of children's progress, so that they have good understanding of individual capabilities. However the organisation and planning of activities does not always ensure progress for children at different stages of development. Children with special educational needs are well supported, as staff liaise closely with parents and other professionals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle well in the preschool and show a sense of belonging. They relate comfortably to the staff and are familiar with routines and expectations. They show increasing independence in their personal care and in making choices. They talk about their homes and families and learn about the local community from visitors to the group. They have access to a range of resources that introduce them to other cultures. Children generally play well alongside others, learning to take turns and to share. They develop in confidence and self-esteem as staff praise their good behaviour and achievements. Children with special needs are included and others learn to respect their needs. Staff foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff provide parents with good information about activities and events, and suggest ways in which learning can be continued at home. Children benefit from the good working relationships which are developed between parents and key workers, ensuring that staff are well-informed about children's needs and abilities. Staff encourage communication, discussing achievements at the beginning and end of sessions and organising regular formal meetings enabling

parents to be involved in the assessment and recording of their children's progress. Parents are invited to contribute skills and resources and provide practical help in accompanying activities away from the premises.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from good levels of supervision as high staffing ratios are maintained. The owner/supervisor has effective recruitment and employment procedures in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitably qualified staff. Induction and appraisal systems ensure that training needs are identified and staff are supported in updating their skills and knowledge with ongoing training.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The supervisor involves all staff members in the planning of activities and produces rotas that ensure that all are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a strong team. The supervisor continues to monitor and evaluate practice and has good understanding of the preschool's strengths and weaknesses. Plans are in hand for ongoing improvements to provision, including further training for staff and the provision of more opportunities for children to explore simple technology. Overall the provision generally meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Clear policies and procedures are in place to protect children's welfare. Staff maintain accurate records and use documentation well to ensure that they have the information they need to meet children's needs. They are conscientious about issues of confidentiality.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

In November 2004 concerns were raised regarding standard 1, relating to alleged comments made by staff members. Ofsted asked the provider to investigate and report back within 10 working days. The provider reported back with the details of how they ensure the suitability of staff and will monitor the staff, offer parents a private area to discuss any concerns and review the matter at each staff meeting. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- consider ways of enabling children to take more responsibility for their own safety, particularly when using large equipment such as the climbing frame.

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):

- review the organisation of sessions to ensure that children spend less time waiting and are able to participate fully in activities aimed at their own level of learning.
- improve the presentation of books to encourage children to handle them properly and enjoy them in comfort.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk