



Shalfleet 'Little Explorers'

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119754
Inspection date	21 March 2007
Inspector	Doreen Forsyth
Setting Address	Station Road, Ningwood, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 4NN
Telephone number	01983 761730
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Registered person	Shalfleet 'Little Explorers'
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Shalfleet Little Explorers opened in 1996. The setting operates from a purpose built unit at Shalfleet Church of England maintained Primary School, Ningwood, on the Isle of Wight. The setting is organised by a management committee. The out of school provision also uses the school hall. There are enclosed outdoor areas for outside play.

Little Explorers is registered to care for up to 63 children under the age of eight, over all. Of these 33 children may be under the age of five, and no more than six of these may be under the age of one, at any one time. The setting welcomes children that have learning difficulties or disabilities.

The setting is open all year round from 08:00 until 17:00 providing before and after school and holiday care, as well as term-time pre-school morning and afternoon sessions or full day care.

Currently there are 66 children on roll in the under threes room, the pre-school and out of school club, of these, 24 are in receipt of government funding for nursery education.

There are seven members of staff working with the children, of these, six have relevant early years qualifications at least level 2 or above, two at degree level. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Throughout the setting children are well protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because all the practitioners follow appropriate health and hygiene routines and practices. All staff have current first aid training, there are good procedures in place to record any allergies or special dietary needs if necessary. The setting has a suitable sickness policy which is shared with parents in the newsletter and policy pack. All required records are in place regarding accidents, medications and parental permissions.

Children begin to learn good health and hygiene practices, they are encouraged to wash their hands when necessary, such as before eating or after using the toilet. In the under threes room very good nappy changing procedures are adhered to. Staff use good strategies to prevent the risk of cross infection, such as using disposable gloves when helping children to wipe their noses.

Children are well nourished, they learn about the importance of healthy eating. The attached school is promoting a healthy eating policy which the setting has also adopted. Children in the breakfast club are provided with a well balanced breakfast before they go to school. In the pre-school room children have fresh fruit for their morning snack; they are offered milk or water to drink. In the baby room staff carefully serve food to the children provided by parents. Staff have had food hygiene training and achieved the Island's '5 star' award. Children can always access drinking water, staff regularly offer drinks to younger children.

In the under threes room, children rest and sleep according to their own routines and needs. The setting provides cots or pushchairs for sleeping, if babies share cots they have their own clean sheets and blankets. Older children use the comfortable book corner if they need a quiet, restful time.

All children that use Little Explorers have very good opportunities to take part in regular physical activities. Children attending the out of school provision use the school playgrounds and adventure play equipment under appropriate adult supervision. Pre-school children play in their own enclosed play area but also use the school resources and play areas. Babies and toddlers have their own garden to play in with rocking and push-a-long toys, or they are taken for walks. Each day the staff ensure children play in the fresh air and have many good opportunities to develop their physical skills. Pre-school children have space to learn to use balls, bikes and other wheeled toys with increasing confidence and control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming, warm, attractive and child-centred environment. The mobile classrooms and play areas used are appropriately maintained, staff regularly risk assess the premises. Staff have identified and minimised any potential hazards, for example, a locked gate and fencing prevents children's access to the school pond. They ensure all the equipment used is safe and fit for the purpose, such as the high chairs in the under threes room which are regularly washed and disinfected. Posters, displays of children's work, photos and information for parents decorate the walls. The setting is very secure, there is a buzzer system for entry and good procedures in place to ensure children are collected by the appropriate adults.

Children have access to a wide range of well maintained and age appropriate toys and resources for both indoor and outside play. These are easily accessible to all children, they are well stored and labelled. Children's independence is promoted as they can freely choose what they wish to play with throughout the setting.

Children are well safeguarded because they are cared for by practitioners that are well trained and understand their role in child protection, and who are able to put the appropriate procedures in place if necessary. However, parents are not given information about the setting's child protection responsibilities in their information pack.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All the children at Little Explorers are happy, settled and comfortable in their surroundings. The constant staff are very familiar to the children, staff know the children their siblings and families very well, they are very interested in what the children do and say. School-aged children can attend the setting before and after school and during school holidays. They enjoy playing outside or using suitable play equipment such as the computer, dressing up resources, craft and construction toys. In school holidays children enjoy outings and trips to suitable attractions both on the Island and on the mainland. Pre-school aged children are relaxed in the setting and enjoy close contact with the school, they use school facilities and have regular visits into the reception class before they move into the school.

Babies and toddlers are very well cared for. They are supported by experienced and well qualified staff. Children are encouraged to explore their surroundings and to take part in a good range of activities that are planned to help them learn and develop. These are based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which practitioners present confidently and well. Children play with materials that help to develop all their senses, such as a shiny 'space blanket', musical instruments, gloop and treasure baskets. Staff monitor and record the young children's progress and achievements, these observations are shared with parents.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children in the pre-school room are usually well engaged and interested in the many appropriate activities they have provided for them. The room is set out into learning areas or stations, which promote some of the different areas of learning. Most

of the staff working with the pre-school children have a suitable understanding of the early learning goals and how to help children move towards these. However, there are some weaknesses in the planning used which means that not all aspects of the early learning goals are equally well promoted which results in gaps in the children's learning. The daily planning does not show what children are expected to learn from the adult led activities the staff present.

The children's keyworkers are not recording and assessing the children's progress sufficiently against the early learning goals to be able to identify any potential weaknesses in the children's learning or to plan for children's individual steps in their learning. They do not find out where children are in their learning from parents when they start out onto the Foundation Stage making it difficult to build on what children already know. However, if children move into the pre-school room from the under threes room, good records of their progress are available to be taken with them.

Children are confident, well motivated and keen to learn. Their independence is well fostered, for example, they put on their own coats for outside play and successfully manage their own toileting needs. Children enjoy pouring their own drinks at snack time. They have very good relationships with the adults and other children in the setting and are learning well to be kind and considerate to others. They play well together and can share and take turns.

Children are confident speakers, staff listen intently to the children and encourage them to express their thoughts in words. Most children can recognise their own names and the names of others. They are beginning to link sounds to words and have good opportunities to write and make marks. They enjoy books and stories especially on a one to one basis or in small groups. Some children find it more difficult to listen well in large group situations. Children count and use mathematical language in their daily routines, they enjoy 'counting the children in' when singing. They confidently sing number rhymes and counting back from five to zero. Children have opportunities to solve simple problems when using the good construction resources or completing puzzles.

Children are learning well about themselves and their environment through their topic work. They recently planted beans and are observing them grow. They build and construct skilfully using junk and recycling resources and a variety of tools. Children confidently use the computer to support their learning. The children visited a local farm and have now 'adopted' a calf, all the children in the setting are interested in its progress. Children enjoy imaginative and role play, especially dressing up. They frequently explore different materials such as playdough, sand and water, but their opportunities to explore colour and paint are more limited. Children's physical development is well promoted. They play outside whenever possible, they use a parachute and take part in action rhymes. Children use a good range of tools such as scissors, glue sticks, pencils and spades in the sand which helps to develop their small muscle control.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are highly valued and welcomed at Little Explorers, including children that have learning difficulties or disabilities. A well trained Special Needs Co-ordinator (Senco) is in the setting, she ensures the individual needs of all children are met whenever possible. She works

very closely with parents, outside professional agencies and the children's keyworkers. Sometimes children with disabilities join the setting for holiday club care. Staff know the children very well and always endeavour to work closely with parents to meet children's individual needs.

Children begin to learn to value diversity and to respect others through the resources they use, through discussion and through their daily activities. They use some resources such as books, small world toys and role play equipment that reflect diversity. Children learn about and celebrate different festivals and special events, such as Diwali, Chinese New Year and Christmas.

Children are well supported and are encouraged to behave well. Their achievements and suitable behaviour are valued and rewarded with praise; especially when the children are kind and considerate to others. They are often reminded of the setting's golden rules and how it feels when people are kind and helpful. In the pre-school room the children understand the rule and routines of the setting and can co-operate and work together such as when tidying up. Staff are skilled at helping children if they do not behave appropriately. There is a suitable behaviour policy in place. Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the close partnership the setting builds with parents. Parents are able to spend as much time as they wish in the setting to settle in their children, particularly in the under threes room. Parents are very involved in the setting, they serve on the management committee, and help out whenever necessary. There is lots of information displayed for parents but they do not have easy access to all the setting's policies and procedures or to the complaints procedures. They receive a suitable parent's information pack which is currently being updated. Each session staff complete an information sheet for the parents of under threes telling them about the child's day. In the pre-school room staff complete a very interesting home link book for parents which include photos of the children's activities.

In the pre-school room there is an attractive photo display for parents showing them what the children do and how this links to the Foundation Stage of learning. There is also information about the curriculum in the parents' pack. Parents and staff talk informally about the children's progress and achievements, the observation records are always available for parents to see. However, there are no planned opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress or to share what they know about their children's learning. Parents receive a very good monthly newsletter, which often includes ideas of how parents can be involved in their children's learning at home

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Little explorers is suitably organised, all the adults in the setting have a clear sense of purpose and are committed to continuous improvement. Children's safety and well-being is supported as all staff are appropriately vetted, there are robust vetting, induction and employment procedures in place. The administration officer ensures that all the required policies, procedures and records are well kept, this includes suitable records of staff, visitor and children's attendance. Children benefit from a very well qualified and experienced workforce, staff are encouraged to attend appropriate training and develop their skills. The adult/child ratios are carefully

maintained ensuring children receive good support and attention, staff are well deployed. The keyworker system is working well especially in the under threes room. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The setting has recently been through a turbulent time, with a number of staff and committee changes. They are now building a strong and supportive staff team with the support of an interim committee and the school head. The manager is newly appointed but has already identified the strengths of the setting and areas that require improvement. She is working closely with the school and with outside agencies to ensure her management of the nursery education will contribute to the children's progress. The setting is successfully using parents' comments from a questionnaire, the self evaluation form and a written action plan to monitor and evaluate the provision they offer.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was given recommendations concerning the improvement of some policies and procedures, including ensuring all staff and committee are suitably vetted. The setting now has appropriate procedures in place to ensure all adults in Little Explorers that have regular contact with the children are suitable to do so. All the required policies and procedures that support children's well-being, health and safety are in place and well kept.

At the last nursery education inspection the pre-school was set key issues for improvement regarding evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, staff deployment, the daily planning, the promotion of children's learning in reading and mathematics, and some information given to parents. The pre-school has put good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the nursery education. Staff are well deployed, children learn in suitable group sizes and take part in some large group activities. Some issues regarding the planning require further action and will carry forward as a recommendation from this inspection. Children are learning appropriately in mathematics and communication, language and literacy largely through the skill of the staff that work with three and four-year-olds. Parents receive good information about children's activities and have some opportunities to be involved in their children's learning at home.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 to Ofsted.

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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):

- ensure parents have good access to all policies and procedures, especially the setting's complaints procedures.

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 with parents where children are in their learning when they first set out onto the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, so that staff can plan to build on what children already know
- base planning firmly on the different aspects of the early learning goals to ensure all areas of learning are well promoted and ensure that there is a clear learning intention for all planned adult-led activities
- ensure that children's progress and learning is well observed and recorded, and these observations are used to inform planning so that children are helped to move on in their learning on an individual basis.

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