



## Little Ashes Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	140859
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Patricia Joan Latham
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Village Hall, Horsepond, Rotten Row, Great Brickhill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 9BA
<b>Telephone number</b>	07855 215154
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Little Ashes Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Ashes Pre-School has been registered since 1995 and operates from the village hall in Great Brickhill, Milton Keynes. It is managed by a voluntary committee. The group is open Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 12.00 with a lunch club each day from 12.00 to 12.30.

There are currently 41 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 33 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding area.

The group employs nine members of staff including the manager who is teacher trained. Four of the other staff have, or are working towards, relevant qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is maintained and risk to cross infection is minimised. Staff keep all areas, that children use, clean, and exclude children with contagious illnesses. They encourage children to follow good personal hygiene and explain clearly to them about germs and how to keep themselves healthy. The staff have effective procedures in place to deal with medical emergencies and there is always someone present with appropriate first aid training.

Children receive nutritious food for their snacks, and have access to drinks of water whenever they wish. Staff encourage parents to pack lunch boxes with healthy food options for those children attending the lunch club and all children take part in topics to do with healthy eating. Staff ensure that children who may have a food allergy have their individual dietary needs met.

Staff provide opportunities for children to have daily outdoor exercise to promote their physical well-being. Children have the use of a nearby play area where there is equipment which enables them to practise climbing, balancing and running. Children regularly go for walks along the nearby trim trail and also use the large playing field to the rear of the premises to take part in a range of outdoor physical activities.

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

The provision is good.

Staff supervise children closely, and carry out daily safety procedures to ensure the premises are kept secure and safe for children to use. The room used is large and bright. Staff present activities well, and display colourful posters and examples of children's work wherever possible to make the environment welcoming for children. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe. Staff remind them not to run indoors, and children know how to behave appropriately when outside, holding hands as they walk and looking out carefully for cars. Staff plan activities to raise children's awareness of safety rules, linking in fire evacuation practise to make their learning meaningful.

Children's welfare is safeguarded through the group's clear child protection policies. Staff have knowledge of the procedures to follow should they have concerns regarding children's care, and ensure that all adults supervising children are suitably cleared to do so.

Children have access to a wide range of good quality resources to aid their learning and support their play. These are checked and cleaned regularly to ensure they remain safe for children to use. Staff provide a large variety of imaginary role plays, toys, a wide selection of books, resources that enable children to build and construct and equipment that supports children's education in all areas.

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

The provision is good.

All children receive a very good standard of care. There are designated key workers for each child who take responsibility for planning specific activities for focused learning and for liaising with parents. The key worker for under threes has attended training on the Birth to Three's framework and plans activities based around this. All staff are sympathetic to the needs of the children and offer good support to all. When they first begin, children are given a 'buddy', an older child who will befriend them and help them to settle. Children display eagerness to do the activities offered and are confident in approaching staff and asking for help when needed. Staff form a close relationship with the children and enthusiastically involve themselves in children's play. The majority of the activities are offered through free play and linked into interesting themes. Staff are particularly skilful in introducing learning through these activities so that children are acquiring and practising skills as they play.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage stepping stones and plan the curriculum to cover all areas of learning. Activities are linked into themes and staff use time and resources wisely. For example, whilst covering 'Buildings' children discuss their own homes comparing them with houses around the world, and they look at what life was like in medieval castles, turning the role play area into a castle, creating their own knights shields and discussing what food would be eaten at banquets. Staff question children effectively to encourage them to extend their learning and offer a good balance of small and large group activities. Key workers make regular observations of children's progress and record these against relevant Foundation Stage stepping stones. It is sometimes difficult to identify if a child's progress is appropriate as not all records contain the child's date of birth. However, staff know children well, and overall, ensure children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Children are progressing well in the area of communications, language and literacy. Most can recognise their name easily and the more able children can write it clearly, staff encouraging them to do this on any work they produce. Children make good use of the writing table, and resources available in the role play corner, to practise skills. For instance, writing a list of people to attend the castle banquet. Children enjoy books and listen attentively to stories. Their language skills are good and they use a wide range of descriptive language. Staff encourage children to extend their vocabulary, introducing words such as turret and drawbridge as they play. Staff re-enforce the link between the sound and shape of letters constantly and children are becoming skilful at recognising this.

Children are confident about counting and recognising numbers. Staff encourage them to practise this, and basic calculation, throughout a range of activities. Children understand basic measurement, measuring their own height, and the sunflowers they grew in summer. They use threading resources to re-create pattern and can name and recognise basic shapes. Staff encourage children to use mathematical language as they play, children telling them the shields were heavy and the dragon small.

Children's knowledge of the world around them is growing. They take part in activities which encourage them to examine and investigate. They watch ice as it melts and changes shape, and

examine objects collected on a nature walk. Children can design and create; building bridges from recycled material and creating a map to find the castle. They have an understanding of information technology, using the computer to produce, and print, their drawings. Staff plan activities which raise children's awareness of cultural differences. Children discuss their own home life and take part in their own cultural festivals, such as Harvest festival. As well as, they discuss Divali with a visitor, who helps them make Divali lamps and Rangoli cards.

Children take part in a wide range of creative activities. They have the opportunity to experience differing mediums and enthusiastically take part in pretend play. They enjoy painting and recreating their ideas using collage materials and other drawing materials. Staff plan activities that include music and dance; children making pea-shakers to use and practising the waltz when doing the story of Cinderella. Children take part in other planned physical activities which enable them to develop co ordination of body movements. They can use both small and large equipment skilfully, carefully cutting paper with scissors and dividing the play dough with a knife. Children have access to resources, such as bikes, climbing and balancing equipment, which enables them to develop large muscle control and an understanding of space around them. They also have a growing understanding of how their bodies grow and keep healthy by taking part in activities where they discuss healthy eating and see how they have grown and developed from babyhood.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. They play and work together well, co operating to make a bridge out of large boxes and equipment. They concentrate and persevere at activities and show a high degree of pride in their work. All are becoming competent learners, are developing their personal independence and show an eagerness to extend their knowledge.

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing a high self esteem and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Staff give lots of praise when children achieve and value their views, listening carefully when children talk to them. Staff act as good role models and plan activities which raise children's awareness of the feelings of others. Children are taught to play well together, to be polite to all and to respect other's views. They take part in planned activities which celebrate their own culture and that of others, such as performing a nativity play and also learning about Ramadan. This helps children to respect the differing cultures reflected in our diverse society. Children are gaining an understanding of group rules, such as helping each other to clear away toys and listening attentively when others are talking.

Staff have clear procedures in place to support children who have a disability or learning difficulty. There is a designated special needs co-ordinator who is able to liaise with parents, and other professionals, to ensure children receive the level of care and support that is required.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They are provided with detailed information about the care and education offered to their children and kept informed about their child's progress. There is a board completed at the end of each session which tells parents about the activities children have been doing during the day and newsletters inform them about future activities

and events. The manager and key worker staff are always available to discuss any issues parents may have and there are copies of all policies and procedures available in the reception area. However, the information available to parents about how they may make a complaint to Ofsted do not contain current contact details.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The care and education children receive is well organised. The committee provide good support to staff and enable them to undertake relevant training to extend their knowledge. There is a rigorous appointment system in place and new staff undertake a thorough induction programme which makes them aware of all policies and procedures. Staff work very well together as a team and there are clear roles and responsibilities delegated. They attend regular meetings to discuss their practice; ensuring children are kept healthy, safe and receive good care.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are good. Staff plan carefully to ensure children are offered a full range of activities which cover all areas, and aspects, of learning. All staff are involved with planning the curriculum; key workers providing focussed activities throughout the week which have clear learning aims. Some of these are evaluated to identify if the aims have been achieved; however, some are not. This makes it difficult to judge, overall, if all of the activities have been effective, or to identify if there are any weakness which need to be addressed in future planning. Staff deploy themselves effectively to support children as they take part in activities throughout the session. This enables children's learning to be re-enforced and extended, ensuring children's learning opportunities are maximised.

Little Ashes Pre-School meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Staff have made good progress since the last inspection and have addressed all recommendations that were made. They have revised their procedure for recording accidents, which are now recorded in full and are countersigned by parents. They have also introduced a written procedure to follow in the event of a child becoming lost whilst in their care.

Under nursery education they were asked to ensure a balanced programme was offered to children with appropriate activities and resources provided. This was especially in relation to children's creative development and their understanding of differing cultures and customs. Staff have developed their planning to ensure these aspects of learning are now covered and have extend resources to support these activities. Additional resources, such as multi-cultural puzzles, differing skin tone crayons and bi lingual books have been purchased to support children's learning about other cultures. A creative writing table, with appropriate resources, is available each day to the children, as well as a variety of planned creative activities. Staff link planning into the Foundation Stage stepping stones and regularly evaluate the educational provision.

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

Since the last inspection 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.

### **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 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 complaints policy contains up to date contact details for Ofsted.

#### **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 evaluation of focussed activities and the recording of children's achievements against the Foundation Stage stepping stones; ensure children's date of birth is included so that ongoing progress can be clearly identified.

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)