



Little Scholars Nursery - Shadoxhurst

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127341
Inspection date	09 January 2007
Inspector	Clare Stone
Setting Address	Shadoxhurst Village Hall, Shadoxhurst, Ashford, Kent, TN26 1HW
Telephone number	07821 143249
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Registered person	Little Scholars
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?

Little Scholars Nursery opened in 1997. The nursery and its companion nursery at High Halden is managed by a parent committee, which is a registered charity. It delegates the responsibility for the day-to-day running of the group to the two managers. It operates from the village hall in Shadoxhurst, a village between Ashford and Bethersden. It serves the local rural area and some children also attend from the Park Farm area in Ashford.

There are currently 22 children from two to four years on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions and times.

The group opens five days a week during school term-times. Sessions are from 09:00-15:30 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and from 09:00-12:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

There are five staff working with the children and also additional lunch-time cover. Three staff have early years qualifications to NVQ 3 and three staff are training. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children enjoy a variety of physical activities both indoors and outside. They spend regular periods out in the fresh air, where they are able to run around and learn how to balance and ride on bikes. Children are encouraged to use their imagination in their play and are starting to understand how their bodies work. They also know to rest when they get out of breath or feel tired.

Most food is prepared by parents and the setting has appropriate facilities to store food correctly. The children are able to get themselves drinks of water when they want to. This helps promote independence and self help skills. If children have special dietary requirements these are taken account of in food preparation and menu choice. Children have snacks throughout the day and the children are encouraged to form healthy eating habits.

The setting has a policy to help prevent the spread of infection. Children are cared for and are able to play in a clean and hygienic environment. This includes the hall being cleaned on a regular basis. Again, stopping the spread of germs. Staff are encouraged to follow good hygiene practices and all children wash their hands regularly without being reminded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The setting's environment is child-friendly, there are plenty of posters and examples of children's work. This gives children a sense of belonging. Staff set out a good variety of toys and equipment for each session from which children can self select. This encourages children to follow their own interests. Soft seating in the book area attracts the children, and encourages the use of books. Children used this area independently or with adult supervision.

Children's safety is paramount. Fire safety is practised and the efficiency of the evacuation procedure shows this is working well. Daily risk assessments carried out help to keep children safe, and hazards in the nursery are identified and eliminated, further protecting children. Children are well protected when they are taken on outings, for example, the staff ratio is increased and the staff visit the venue before taking children to check it is appropriate.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures and issues, which means that children are protected from abuse. They work effectively with other professionals and parents to keep children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They arrive happily, and quickly choose an activity from the wide range provided. Staff are kind and caring in their interactions towards the children, chatting easily and using praise regularly to build self-esteem and confidence. Therefore, children are secure and at ease within the setting. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework in order to plan and provide developmentally appropriate activities for children under three years old. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and teach children to respect each other and their environment.

Nursery Education.

Children receive opportunities to use a range of tools and materials that promote their small muscle skills, such as different sized paintbrushes and pens. Most activities are spontaneous and follow children's interests allowing them to become engrossed. There is a role play area where children can engage in pretend play. The theme of restaurants was popular and children discussed healthy eating and played mummies and daddys.

Children speak confidently to their peers and adults. During register the staff and children use sign language, enabling all children to join in and feel part of the setting. They listen well to stories and join in if it is familiar to them. Children can count well but do not understand simple addition and subtraction. However, they have an understanding of space and shape. Children investigate using their senses. They play games and use a laptop with good mouse control. During the visit children found a snail and were encouraged to be kind to it and keep it somewhere safe. They also found food and talked about how they should treat all animals with respect.

The quality of Teaching and Learning is good.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, and how children learn. The curriculum is carefully planned to promote children's progress towards the early learning goals. The plans show that all six areas of learning are covered, and they clearly show the learning intention of activities. Observations of the children are used to identify what children can do and from these observations staff identify their next steps. These are then incorporated into the weekly planning. Although, staff provide a stimulating environment to cover all area's of learning they do not evaluate their deployment on a regular basis. This means that there are some area that are not being used to their full potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff know the children well and respect children's individuality. Children have the opportunity to learn about themselves and the world around them through planned activities. Children have access to a wide range of multi cultural toys and activities which help children understand the wider community. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Children are well behaved, polite and responsive to expectations of staff.

Younger children are supported by staff in sharing, taking turns and showing concern for one another. Although the setting does not have many children with learning difficulties the staff have a good knowledge on how to advise and assist in this area. They are aware of Individual educational plans and staff have the correct training to support the children in their care.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff take time to talk to parents and to pass on general information about their child. Parents are kept fully informed of their child's learning and development because of the assessment records and observations kept by staff. This includes information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three matters framework. Children benefit from a two way sharing of all information between parents and practitioners to enhance their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Space indoors and out is well organised to ensure children gain fully from all activities. Children are well grouped and the key worker system ensures appropriate support and care throughout the session. Good staffing ratios are maintained and staff work directly with the children at all times.

Staff work well as a team and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating well-balanced programme. The clear aims for the provision reflect a commitment to improving the quality of care and education. There are regular appraisals that identify training needs and staff are encouraged to enrol on relevant courses. This supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available.

All mandatory records are in place which helps ensure the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. However, some of the policies and procedures are not up to date with current legislation. This means parents and staff are not fully aware of changes in childcare practices.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Consider ways to improve the choice and storage of toys and equipment. Children now have a good choice of resources allowing them to become independent learners.
- 2) Ensure the child protection policy includes the procedures to follow where there are allegations against members of staff. This is now in the policy and staff aware of the change.
- 3) Improve the condition of the toilet floors. The toilets floors are clean and well maintained.

The improvements help promote positive outcomes for children.

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.

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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):

- ensure all policies and procedures are regularly updated and maintained.

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):

- consider evaluating staff deployment so that all activities are effectively monitored.

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