

Little Learners Nursery Centre Ltd.

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400087
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspector	Josephine Ann Northend / Ann Doubleday
Setting Address	Stags Way, Scorton, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL10 6HB
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Registered person	Little Learners Nursery Centre Ltd.
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 satisfactory. 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 Learners Nursery Centre is privately owned, with a centre manager in post who takes responsibility for all childcare issues. It has been registered since June 1998 and is located in purpose built premises in the village of Scorton, between Richmond and Northallerton.

The nursery accommodation consists of five main separate childcare rooms. Children have regular access to an enclosed outdoor play area or an indoor soft play room for physical play activities. The nursery serves children from the local community and is registered for 82 children aged birth to eight years. Care is also provided for children over eight years. A school collection service is offered to and from Bolton on Swale, Middleton Tyas, Brompton on Swale and Michael Sydall Primary Schools.

There are 107 children on roll, who attend for a variety of sessions. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education. There are 17 members of staff working with the children; 14 are qualified and one is working towards a further childcare qualification. Qualified teacher support, advice and training is given by the North Yorkshire local authority.

The setting is open from 07.30 to 18.00 from Monday to Friday all year round and is currently working towards North Yorkshire Quality Assurance Scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene through daily routines. They are encouraged to wash their hands regularly before meals and after using the toilet, and older children know why they need to do so, however pre-school children do not have easy access to soap when washing hands within their child care room. Staff promote good hygiene during nappy change procedures as they wear protective aprons and gloves, and wipe the changing mat after each use.

Systems are in place for addressing children's health needs. For example, many staff hold a relevant first aid qualification and appropriate documentation is used for the recording of accidents and medication. Consent has been requested from parents for seeking medical advice in an emergency. The effective use of a sick children's policy enables the children's health needs to be met.

Children's physical development is supported well, with opportunities to have physical exercise each day. They play outdoors in the enclosed area, weather permitting, using a range of equipment, including, wheeled toys. They also have regular access to an indoor soft play room that is well equipped, providing opportunities for children to climb, balance, ride wheeled toys run around safely. Children can rest or be active according to their individual needs. Babies sleep in cots and older children on mattresses, bedding is changed after each use to prevent the spread of infection.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet through the promotion of generally healthy meals and snacks including fresh fruit and vegetables each day. Activities undertaken promote healthy eating, for example, children begin to learn about where food comes from. Staff are aware of and meet children's individual dietary needs. Drinking water is readily available throughout the session and is accessed freely by the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and comfortable environment where most risks are identified and minimised. However, the home corner partition in the pre-school room is not fully stable and pose a hazard. There is a clear health and safety statement in place and staff give priority to helping children understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are taught not to run and to be careful with knives and why they need to do so. A written risk assessment is completed and appropriate procedures are in place for outings. Emergency evacuation procedures are displayed throughout the nursery and a fire drill is carried out regularly. This means children are safe in the event of an emergency.

The rooms are set up for children's arrival and children have space to move around freely. They are grouped well according to age and ability. The security of the premises is good and there are clear lost and uncollected child policies in place. There is a good range of developmentally appropriate resources, which are well-organised in child-height furniture to encourage

independent access. Domestic style furniture is used well in the care of younger babies, however it is not available for the children aged one to two years. This means their mobility is not fully encouraged.

The welfare of children is protected. Staff have a sound understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and some have completed relevant training. There are clear policies and procedures in place which include the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery. They arrive happy and settle well. They are eager to participate in activities and are making good progress. Close and caring relationships with staff increase the children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children have good relationships with each other and their communication skills are well supported through good adult to child interactions. Staff are sensitive to and meet children's individual needs well.

Children move around their rooms freely. They select their own activities and resources and also take part in adult directed activities. Play opportunities are purposeful and developmentally appropriate and activities are set up well. This creates a good learning environment and results in children being motivated and interested. Staff have attended some 'Birth to three matters' training and are using it to plan and provide a good range of activities. Babies show good interest in books and begin to handle them carefully.

Older children are collected from school. They arrive happy and have their own base room which is set up well for their arrival. Good resources are available to them and provision is made for them to complete their homework. Children are greeted warmly and there is good discussion around their school day. They quickly settle to activities and enjoy their time at the setting.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy their time at the nursery and achieve well because staff use their good knowledge of the Foundation Stage in order to provide good quality nursery education. Staff plan and prepare well an interesting programme of activities across the six areas of learning. Assessment systems are in place and are completed regularly. They link clearly to the Foundation Stage curriculum and show how children are progressing. They are used effectively by the room leader to guide planning and teaching, however, focussed activity sheets do not clearly show this differentiation. The good use of resources, the appropriate grouping of children and the clearly defined activity areas support the learning opportunities offered to children. Staff know the children well and meet their learning needs appropriately. They involve themselves well in children's activities and offer good support and praise to them.

Children are happy and confident. This means they can initiate their own play and learning. They are well-behaved, respond well to staff and use good manners. Children show good interest in their environment and living things, for example, they know where some foods come from. They also learn about the days of the week and features of the weather. Children talk about a recent space project, they know that gravity keeps them on the ground and who the first person was to walk on the moon. Children design and explore well using a variety of materials, such

as sand, water, foam and dough. They talk about their own families and are developing a good understanding of other cultures and beliefs through the use of interesting resources, visitors to the setting and planned activities. A French teacher visits each week and the children know some French words and songs.

Children are confident communicators. They approach and speak to others and hold a conversation for extended periods of time. They talk about what they are doing and share their thoughts and ideas. Children are developing a sense of time, as they recall what they have done at home. They are developing some writing skills and hold pencils correctly as they begin to form recognisable marks and letters. However, they have limited opportunities to use mark making in other activity areas. They are becoming aware of the initial letter sounds in words, particularly the initial letter of names. Children have access to books, although, the area is not very inviting and therefore is not always used independently.

Children use a computer very well. They control the mouse and complete simple programs confidently. They are developing their understanding of number; they count reliably to ten, recognise numerals and can match a number of objects to a numeral. Children recognise and name many shapes confidently, for example, they know a triangle has three sides that can be of different lengths. They are using size language appropriately in play and use simple calculations and problem solving within every day routines, for example, they count how many cups they need at snack time.

Children are developing a good sense of space as they manoeuvre tricycles around obstacles. They show good control as they handle tools and equipment. Children develop good levels of hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness, for example, they complete small piece jigsaws and cut well with scissors. Children have many opportunities for large physical exercise in order to develop their large motor skills. For example, they crawl through tunnels, hop on one foot, climb stairs well and use the ball pool confidently. They move around and dance to music during their weekly dance lessons.

Children are developing some self-care skills. For example, they pour their own drinks and wash their own hands. However, this is not always fully extended into everyday routines, for example, setting the table or serving their own lunch. They are developing knowledge of health and bodily awareness as they understand why they need to wash their hands before eating.

Children recognise and can name many colours and begin to differentiate between light and dark colours. They access and use a range of creative resources and use their imagination well in role play. For example, the children build a house with four bedrooms and use bricks, cement and compost. Children use a range of resources to design and construct with a purpose in mind. They give meaning to their pictures and use their senses well, for example, as they explore shaving foam. Children join in and enjoy familiar songs; they move rhythmically to music and have regular access to musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed and staff ensure resources are readily available. There is clear equal opportunities policy in place and planned activities are undertaken that positively represent the local and wider community. A good range of resources are available, reflecting other cultures and races. This helps increase children's awareness of diversity and develop a positive attitude to others. The staff know the children well and meet their individual needs. This encourages a

sense of security and belonging. There is a clear special needs statement in place and there is an identified special needs co-ordinator who has received relevant training. Staff work with parents in order to support children who speak other languages. Children with disabilities are integrated appropriately and all children are included in activities.

Children are well-behaved and use good manners. They receive good support from staff who provide a positive role model. Their understanding of right and wrong is increased through the good example set and clear explanations they receive from staff. This means children's spiritual moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the two-way sharing of information. Parents are happy with the setting and have developed good relationships with staff. Parents' of younger children receive a daily written log of their child's day. All parents receive a prospectus, regular newsletters, some information about the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' programme. Further information is displayed around the setting for their attention. Parents have easy access to the settings policies and procedures. They receive regular verbal feedback on their child's developmental progress and can access their child's records at anytime. However, there are no formal open evenings and written reports are only completed as the children move on from the setting. Parents are encouraged to continue their child's learning at home, as they receive information about the topic and activities within the newsletters.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children, which contributes to them being happy and settled. Children move around confidently and independently. They initiate their own play and learning well as they move freely between the activity areas. Adult to child ratios are met effectively. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and use their time appropriately. There are clear and robust staff recruitment and vetting procedures in place. This ensures children's welfare is safeguarded.

Required documents are well-organised, readily available and stored confidentially. Daily attendance registers clearly show times of staff and children's attendance. There is a detailed complaints policy in place, which is made available to parents. The comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place are shared well with staff and parents to appropriately promote the welfare, care and learning of the children. A regulation has not been met as Ofsted have not been informed of a serious accident, although, the other procedures in place mean that children remain safe.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Many of the staff have early years qualifications and the management promotes staff attendance at relevant training. The knowledge gained by staff is used to further support children's care and welfare. The manager is a good role model; staff appraisals are undertaken annually and peer observation allows the management to observe staff practice. This means they are aware of and addresses the main strengths and weakness of the provision and are pro-active in continuously seeking ways to improve. Staff work well as a team and key staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn. Consequently, children's progress towards the early learning goals is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to develop documentation to ensure that Ofsted details are included in the complaints policy. The complaints policy has been updated and now clearly shows Ofsted details. It is made available to parents and means they are fully aware of who to contact in the event of a concern.

In relation to education the provider was asked to make better use of assessments so that older children are well challenged in mathematics and literacy during planned activities and in daily routines. Develop a more systematic approach to monitoring teaching and learning and make the learning objective clearer in self-chosen activities.

The provider now uses assessments to inform planning, however, differentiation is not clearly shown on the focussed activity sheets. Children now receive good challenge in mathematics, for example, as they confidently use simple calculating, however, literacy is not yet fully developed within reading and writing.

In order to develop a systematic approach to monitoring teaching and learning and to make the learning objective clearer in self-chosen activities, staff have completed Foundation Stage training and worked with the teacher advisor from the local authority. Clear learning intentions are now outlined within planning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 1, Suitable Person. The concerns were originally shared with another agency. A childcare inspector from Ofsted Early Years then visited the provision on 6 December 2006. An action was raised against National Standard 2, Organisation and was satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains 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.

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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 Ofsted are informed of significant events including serious accidents to children
- provide some domestic style furniture in the room for children aged one to two years to assist children in developing mobility and continue normal life experiences.

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):

- further develop opportunities for children to use mark making within other activity areas and further develop the book area to encourage children to use the books independently
- further develop more formal ways of sharing information with parents about their child's developmental progress.

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