



Little Lache Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305163
Inspection date	22 February 2007
Inspector	Ron Goldsmith
Setting Address	Poplar Road, Chester, Cheshire, CH4 8EY
Telephone number	07763 248364
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Registered person	Little Lache Playgroup
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Lache Playgroup operate from a purpose built building in Lache, near Chester. It has been operating since 1972 and serves the Lache community. The children have access to a playgroup room; an activity room; painting area; foyer and toilet facilities. There is also access to an enclosed outdoor play area and nature area. The pre-school opens five days a week during term time only. Sessions are from 09.00 to 12.00. A maximum of 40 children aged from two to five may attend at any one time.

There are currently 31 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The supervisor is the only paid member of staff and is supported by a voluntary committee and staff team. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Adequate routines are followed for children to stay healthy. Children are used to washing their hands after toileting but do not do so as a matter of course before eating snack. Staff support hand washing by giving children separate paper towels to dry hands to prevent the risk of cross-infection. Floors, furniture and equipment are kept clean. There is a separate kitchen where food can be prepared. Emergency arrangements in case of accident and illness are in place to ensure children receive appropriate care. Staff are suitably qualified to administer first aid and have up to date first aid qualifications.

Children enjoy vigorous and energetic play indoors but do not always have the opportunity to enjoy fresh air and outdoor exercise. There is some indoor equipment for them to use for physical games. Light snacks are offered to children which are sufficient for their needs and they enjoy sitting together to eat snack, talking to each other whilst they do so. The provider offers healthy snacks on alternate days, choosing to offer the less healthy option of biscuits on the other days. Water is not made freely available for children to drink when they want to and therefore children are not able to drink when they are thirsty. Children drink water or milk with their snack.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well in the setting because the room is prepared with a variety of equipment and resources which is inviting for them to use. The children's own art work and projects are used to help to create a welcoming atmosphere and a sense of belonging for the children and they proudly show off work they have completed, such as paintings or letters of the alphabet they have worked on. The building, furniture and equipment are in good condition and well maintained. Procedures and policies to maintain children's safety are followed in the setting.

Staff take good precautions over security and safeguarding children, such as escorting them to the toilets in the foyer and ensuring that only appropriately vetted staff have unsupervised access to children. The front door is kept permanently locked with a key nearby. Staff can see who wants to enter the building before opening the door and a bell is used to attract the attention of staff. The setting have a good knowledge of the fire safety and evacuation procedures and practise it frequently but do not record the fire drill sufficiently. Children are helped to take responsibility for their own and other people's safety, such as when staff remind children not to run indoors or to sit on chairs incorrectly because of the risk to themselves and others. In this way children learn to operate within agreed boundaries. A written risk assessment helps staff to identify the condition of toys, resources and equipment enabling them to discard those which are considered dangerous in any way.

Children are safeguarded because staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection issues but training has not been updated recently and the child protection policy is not comprehensive. Appropriate contact details and information about child protection is maintained.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children in the setting participate in and enjoy activities planned for them. Young children enjoy playing with the good range of resources set out for them as they arrive. They explore what they can do with different materials, such as paint and crayons. Some children excitedly show staff what they have completed in the area where they develop their writing skills. They show food they have prepared in the home corner. They creatively build pictures and patterns using coloured beads into different shapes and play imaginatively in the role play area and elsewhere, using telephones to have conversations with family members.

They choose books independently which they share with each other. Staff talk with children as they draw pictures with crayons and help them recall experiences. Children talk about what they want to do next and ask for staff to read them a book. Routines are flexible enough to enable children to make choices, and the balance of free play to staff led activity is good. However not all activities are evaluated and sometimes fail to sustain children's interest. Staff get to know children well and begin to gather information about how they approach different activities.

Children enjoy using the home corner which offers them opportunities to use their imagination and talk about their experiences. They persevere in completing construction pieces and they are praised for their success, which develops their self-esteem. Children take part in craft activities to explore colour and shape and they enthusiastically sing nursery rhymes with accompanying actions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff get to know children well and to understand their individual needs. Children learn to respect each other's similarities and differences and there are good resources for them to use which reflect the diversity of society and to stimulate discussion about this. Staff have the knowledge and experience to adapt activities to ensure that individual children are included. All children are offered the same opportunities and access to resources which are without gender bias. The setting is proactive in ensuring that appropriate action is taken to promote the welfare and development of children with special and additional needs when they are admitted.

Children generally behave well. Young children are learning how to share and take turns as they begin to interact with other children and start to join in small group activities. Although there are some opportunities for children to be more involved in the running of the session, this is not fully exploited in the putting out of equipment or the organisation of snack time. There is no behaviour management policy and the staff response in dealing with unwanted behaviour is not consistent.

There is a satisfactory partnership with parents, who make positive comments about the service and how happy children are to attend. Some information is displayed for parents about how

the service operates and they are given verbal feedback about children's routines and achievements on a daily basis.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The staff team are experienced and several have worked at the setting for a number of years. They work well together as a team and offer a satisfactory level of support for children's welfare and development. All new staff are checked for suitability before having regular access to children. Visitors and helpers are supervised and never left alone with children as a safeguarding measure. Because the number of staff attending is high there is a good adult to child ratio, which helps to meet children's individual needs. However, there is no effective training and development plan for care staff, which means that professional development and improvements that the service can make are limited.

There is sound organisation of staff time. The daily routine and organisation of activities is effective and children have sufficient choices to take responsibility for their own time, or to be creative or enjoy active and vigorous play.

There are written policies and procedures but they are not comprehensive and do not always meet current legislative requirements. For example, the complaints log, child protection policy and the policy for special and additional needs. Staff ensure they understand and carry out policies and procedures to keep children safe. Regulatory records are maintained and those which are shared with parents are appropriately countersigned. Confidential records are kept in a secure place but confidentiality is breached by allowing information about different children to be put on one page in the incident record book.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four recommendations arising from the last childcare inspection. These have all been dealt with satisfactorily to make improvements for children's welfare and learning.

There is a structure and routine for the day which is communicated to staff at the monthly team meeting, which is understood and followed by staff. The committee ensures all new persons are vetted appropriately by informing Ofsted of changes to the committee. Parental permission is now sought for when children need to have medicines administered and the setting have a sick child policy which has been communicated to parents.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

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):

- make fresh water available to children at all times
- ensure the child protection policy complies with current legislation and guidance and staff are aware of and able to implement the policies and procedures
- ensure the organisation of the free play session sustains the children's interest and is purposeful whilst giving opportunity for children to make their own decisions in play
- ensure there is an comprehensive behaviour management policy which is clearly understood and implemented by staff
- ensure all documentation required for the safe and efficient management of the setting meet current legislative requirements and guidance.

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