



Little Buds Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251681
Inspection date	01 March 2007
Inspector	Caroline Wright
Setting Address	Brickfields Avenue, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 7RX
Telephone number	01638 665219
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Registered person	Little Buds Pre School
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 Buds Pre-school is run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It opened in 1990 as Studlands Playgroup and changed to its current name in 2002. It operates from a community centre on the outskirts of Newmarket. A maximum of 48 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:00 until 12:00; 13:00 until 16:00 with an optional lunch club from 12:00 until 13:00 during term times only. All children share access to a public playground which is secure and fully enclosed.

There are currently 39 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 30 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff; three of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about personal hygiene through regular routines such as washing their hands before eating, and they know that washing your hands 'stops germs'. Staff act as good role models, wiping down surfaces before serving snack and after children have eaten to help children to stay healthy. Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences. They are able to run around and exert themselves in the outdoor play area, so that they learn the importance of regular fresh air and exercise. They develop new physical skills such as running, pushing, pulling and climbing using the outdoor equipment. They are aware of changes that occur in their bodies due to physical exertion and comment 'I'm hot' when they have been running around or taking part in music and movement activities. However, opportunities for children to develop new physical skills at adult led activities, such as snack time or craft activities, are limited.

In addition, children learn about healthy eating during discussion with staff at snack time. The healthy eating policy encourages parents to provide fresh fruit or other healthy options for their children to eat at the lunch club; children are able to help themselves to a drink of water when they want one. In addition, children learn about healthy eating through meaningful activities such as growing radishes or carrots; cooking bread for snack and making fruit smoothies to drink.

The needs of children are well met by adults who have a sound understanding of their developmental needs. They are able to take a rest in the comfortable book corner when they want to. If the children become unwell or have an accident whilst they are in the care of the pre-school, up to date records are in place to make sure that good care is given.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move around safely under the constant supervision of the pre-school staff. Children learn how to keep themselves safe, waiting for their turn to come down the slide so that they do not bump into each other. Staff remind children to take care when they use scissors and to sit properly on chairs so that they do not fall: this helps children to learn to keep themselves safe in the future. Gates prevent children from accessing areas that are not safe, such as the entrance area, without adult supervision. In addition, the garden gate and entrance area are both alarmed to alert staff if children leave the premises or if members of the public enter the building without permission. Children learn about staying safe outside the setting, talking with police officers and 'Mr. McGruff' about personal safety and 'stranger danger'.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a sound understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The daily risk assessment of the premises, which adults carry out before each session begins, addresses any potential hazard to children's safety. A wide range of written policies and appropriate procedures are in place, including regular fire drills, to help children know what to do in the case of an emergency evacuation of the premises. Children are able to select resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, and these are checked regularly by the nursery staff to ensure they are in good condition and are safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and enjoy their time at the setting. All children engage eagerly in the range of interesting activities that are provided, such as playing with ice or sawdust to learn about change, texture and everyday materials. Children's experiences are enhanced by the skilful interaction of the qualified members of staff who use their knowledge and understanding of how children learn to plan activities that meet children's overall developmental needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children use their imagination in a wide range of situations such as the role play 'vets' or making birds nests using dough, twigs and moss. Children use number names in their play and count groups of items reliably. They communicate effectively and use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas and talk about what they know. They use language effectively to respond to their sensory experiences, telling adults that finger paint feels, 'sticky...cold...nice'. Children talk with understanding about what they do at home and children notice patterns and changes in the natural environment when they discuss the day and weather at circle time each morning.

Children look at books alone and with adults in the well resourced book corner; they turn pages from front to back carefully and listen with interest to stories. The effective use of story sacks by staff engages children in the story and helps children to develop an enjoyment of books and to learn early reading skills. Children enjoy singing songs at circle time, moving their bodies to the rhythm and joining in with finger rhymes. Staff provide children with opportunities to use writing for a purpose and use numbers and calculations in everyday activities. Children write appointments using pencils and paper provided in the role play vets and they use number names as they press the buttons on the telephone and cash register. However, some activities lack challenge for children, for example, staff provide templates for children to use in art and craft and they do not ask children to write their name on their artwork unless they know they can do it already; adults prepare snack for children to pass around the table. Consequently, opportunities for children to develop new skills and extend their learning are missed. This compromises learning.

All of the staff working with children have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and clear curriculum plans enable them to know how activities contribute to children's progress. They plan a suitable range of activities over a period of time so that children access a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities. Key-workers monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals and use the stepping stones to track development. However, they do not effectively use parents' observations of what children do at home to inform assessment records. This impacts on their ability to plan activities that offer appropriate challenge or to enable children to build on what they already know and can do.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet key-workers and each other upon arrival at the pre-school. They share experiences at circle time discussions and adults encourage children to respect each other's needs and to use conventions such as 'please' and 'thank-you'. Children work together co-operatively during group activities; they know that 'we have to take turns' at table top games. Adults help children to learn what is expected of them by clearly explaining to children what they want them to do in a way that they can understand. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered: they learn about the world they live in and they play with small world figures, look at books and take part in a wide range of cultural and religious celebrations to help them develop positive attitudes towards diversity. They talk about their families and what they do at home to learn about each other's family culture.

Children choose what activities they want to take part in and move around the indoor environment freely. However, the organisation of snack time does not promote independence. There is a good system to support children with learning difficulties and/or disability, as well as for those children who have English as an additional language, so that staff can identify their needs and offer them appropriate support to help them make good progress.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers receive lots of useful information about pre-school activities so that they can support their child's learning at home. The key-worker system enables parents to share information informally on a daily basis. A written report, with key-workers' observations of children's achievements, enables parents to be well informed about their children's progress. However, parents' written comments in children's reports are not added to the child's assessment records. This affects learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All areas of the pre-school environment are extremely attractive and provide plenty of space for children to move around safely and independently. The management of the pre-school uses effective recruitment procedures, which ensure that enough of the staff have experience and the necessary qualifications to carry out their role. All staff are rigorously vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The induction procedure and comprehensive operational

plan, with up to date information for staff, makes sure that all members of the team are secure in their knowledge of procedures for child protection and maintaining children's overall safety.

All of the legally required documents, which contribute to children's health, safety and well-being, including a comprehensive procedure to record complaints or concerns, are in place and regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The pre-school staff are well supported by their line managers, who ensure that everyone knows about the Foundation Stage and how the activities they provide for children contribute to children's learning. However, monitoring of staff during the session is not effective. Some staff do not spend enough of their time working alongside the children or supporting their thinking. One of the recommendations from the previous inspection have not been completed fully. This affects learning.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school agreed to update the child protection statement to show a procedure to be followed in the event of allegations being made against a member of staff or volunteer and ensure the complaints procedure reflects the change in the regulator. The provider has implemented a new procedure for safeguarding children which is in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and includes a procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer. In addition, the complaints procedure has been improved to enable parents to contact Ofsted if they have any cause for concern about the provision. This has improved children's overall welfare and safety.

Since the last inspection of early education the pre-school has developed the system for planning the curriculum and assessing children's progress. They clearly identify how activities will be adapted to suit the needs of less able children and key-workers identify the next steps for children's individual progress. In addition, staff have received training in the Foundation Stage and now understand how the activities they provide contribute to children's progress towards the early learning goals. However, staff still do not use parents comments about what children achieve at home nor do they use children's 'next step' plans to inform curriculum planning. As a result some activities still lack challenge for older or more able children. This recommendation will be carried forward from this inspection for further improvement.

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 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):

- set up a system to monitor day to day practice in the provision to ensure that all staff use their time well, working and interacting with children effectively, to extend children's thinking and promote learning through the activities provided (this also applies to nursery education).

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):

- ensure that all activities, including adult led activities such as snack time and art and craft, provide adequate challenge and effective learning opportunities for all children
- continue to develop planning and assessing children's progress; use parents observations to help identify what children enjoy and use this information to plan activities that build on everything that children can do.

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