

# Early Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	509353
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Elaine Margaret Hayward

<b>Setting Address</b>	Friends Meeting House, 23a Watford Road , Cotteridge, Birmingham, West Midlands, B30 1JB
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<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Lynn Trew
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Early Learners, a private nursery, opened under its current ownership in 1997. It operates from two rooms in a community hall in a suburb of Birmingham. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:00 to 15:00 during term-time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 42 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from a wide catchment area.

The setting employs five members of staff who work with children. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from a local authority mentor teacher.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is protected because staff recognise and reduce any possible risks for infection. Children learn the importance of good hygiene through the well-planned daily routines and by learning from example. They see staff take steps to prevent the spread of infection by keeping the premises, surfaces and equipment clean with any spillages mopped up immediately. Children learn why it is important to wash their hands after toileting and before eating; that runny noses are wiped and tissues are disposed of. Their independence and understanding is encouraged as they clear their own rubbish from lunch and put it into the bin.

There are clear written guidelines displayed for parents including minimum exclusion periods to prevent the spread of infection. Children's welfare is further protected with appropriate records of accidents and medication being maintained. Children benefit from the outdoor facilities and fresh air each day where they enjoy a range of appropriate activities. They love to ride their trikes, push prams, hunt for bugs and have room to run around.

Snack and mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions where the children sit down to enjoy their food and each other's company. Children choose water or diluted squash at a set time in the morning, with a jug of water and beakers available at all times for children to help themselves during the day in order to ensure they do not become dehydrated. Children enjoy appropriate choices at snack time in the morning such as toast, crumpets and breadsticks. Parents provide packed lunches, and children are further encouraged to be independent by opening and packing away their own boxes. Parents currently provide afternoon snacks and have recently been encouraged to provide fruit for the children. The children enjoy trying different fruits and talking about them. However, children do not benefit from a range of healthy fruit snacks on a regular, daily basis, and the setting are looking at their arrangements as how to organise this in order to help promote children's understanding and appreciation of healthy foods.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a warm and welcoming, colourful and stimulating, clean and bright atmosphere, where indoor and outdoor space is organised effectively, and where children can learn, explore and develop safely. There are lovely colourful displays around the room, and children can move freely around the two adjoining rooms as space is well utilised and children can choose independently and safely from a good range of resources.

Risks are clearly identified and minimised, with risk assessments in place and good vigilance by staff, such as with prompt attention to any spillages. Equipment is regularly checked and staff are carefully deployed to ensure children's safety at all times. Children learn about possible dangers and how to keep safe through frequent and effective emergency fire practises. They know to walk and not run in the toilet area as they might slip and hurt themselves. They respond to gentle reminders to be careful at open doors. They know not to throw straw and to take care with sticks as they might get in their eyes. They happily pick up and tidy away toys so that nobody gets hurt.

Staff have all recently attended training and have good understanding of how to protect children. They recognise that this is their first priority. They are vigilant, aware of the signs and

symptoms of possible abuse and know the appropriate procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child.

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

The provision is good.

Children are well-settled, happy and confident. They enjoy their time in the nursery. It is very evident that staff develop warm and caring relationships with the children in their care. Good information about young children's starting points, individual routines, needs and preferences, along with an effective key-worker system provides a continuity of care that ensures children feel secure and nurtured.

Children benefit from staff's knowledge, attitude and enthusiasm. Staff plan and provide activities to help children's development at all stages. Young children benefit from staff's implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Warmth and affection is displayed between children and staff as they cuddle and chat.

A good balance of rest and active times are offered throughout the day, with the daily routine taking account of children's peaks and troughs in stamina. Children are keen to be involved as they make confident choices about their activity and care. They are absorbed in a wide range of activities such as when they pretend to be estate agents with their telephone, keyboard and notepad; as construction engineers with their hard hats and spirit levels, checking that signs and notices are straight; building with construction kits, concentrating hard tightening up the nuts and bolts. They are happy to play on their own and with other children, or involve staff in the 'cooking' and trying of different foods. Staff happily join in with children's play, and then move children's learning and development forward by asking questions and making suggestions, all helping to promote children's sense of belong and trust, developing their confidence and self-esteem.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and of how children learn and progress. Activities are planned to provide a broad, balanced range of activities across the six areas of learning. Individual observations of children inform effective planning to provide stimulating activities to develop and extend children's individual learning and ensure they progress to the next step. As a result, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children have a positive attitude to learning. They are confident and self-assured, showing concentration, excitement and pleasure as they giggle and laugh sitting at the computer making characters on the screen look very funny as they dress him in different clothes. They are confident in their relationships with adults and children and show sensitivity towards others. They play harmoniously together as they build the 'Three Little Pigs' houses. They share and take turns. They are becoming skilled in managing their personal care as they pour their own drinks during the day and in making choices about their play.

Children show confidence in speaking in both large and small groups. They talk freely and expressively about what they have done. They listen as a child pretends to be 'teacher' and call out their names at registration, responding to her. Children enthusiastically join in with stories such as 'The Gruffalo'. They learn to value and respect books as they help themselves in the library corner. They see their name in print around the room and confidently pick out their

name cards at registration or stick their name on the board to show their turn on the computer. They are linking sounds to letters. Many children clearly know not only the sounds and letters of their own names, but of others as well. There are good opportunities for children to practise and make marks in a variety of ways, including during free and imaginative play, with many older children starting to write their names.

Children show positive attitudes to numbers. Mathematical language is threaded through activities quite naturally by staff, such as when counting the legs on the play-dough spiders, and counting the number of children in the morning, with children responding when asked how many more children they are waiting to arrive. Children use shapes, size, space, measure and match through a wide range of activities such as when they play with puzzles, make pictures, or place an activity card on the board at the beginning of the session.

Children explore freely as they use their senses when they play with a variety of materials such as sand, water, dough and straw. They have opportunities to observe, question and explore their natural curiosity as they look at and record seasonal changes on a weather board. They learn to care about living things as they enthusiastically hunt for bugs and grow plants from seeds, watching them grow. Children build freely and construct with a variety of resources. They become familiar with everyday technology by using tape recorders and a computer available at all times. Children gain a good sense of time and place through their daily routines and are gaining awareness about themselves and others.

Children learn to move confidently and imaginatively, showing a sense of personal space during action song sessions. They are beginning to show a good awareness of what happens to their bodies when they are active and are learning to recognise the importance of staying healthy through getting fresh air. They love to run around and ride their trikes. However, children have limited opportunities to develop and practise their large muscle skills by infrequent challenge, or use of large equipment on which to climb, crawl or balance. Frequent use of small equipment, such as brushes, pads, rollers, scissors, squeezing tubes and construction helps children develop good hand and finger control.

Children's creative development is well promoted. Children express themselves freely through paint, drawing music and role play. The various role play areas are changed frequently to stimulate children's imagination and are loved and well used by the children. They can for example, be seen as knights, construction workers, cooks, estate agents or as carers for 'their babies'.

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

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern and are valued and respected as individuals. Staff help children feel good about themselves and promote their self-esteem by providing positive support, praise and encouragement. Children are shown that they are valued and are cuddled and comforted, with their individual needs met. They enjoy a wide range of activities and resources which promote their understanding of the wider world through everyday activities and projects, such as making their own passports. Good procedures and effective strategies are in place in order to identify and support any children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Staff are good role models, working as a team. As a result, children behave well as they understand the environment created by staff that encourages children to respect boundaries

and to learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children play harmoniously together. They share and take turns, responding positively to the clear guidelines and expectations set by staff, understanding the rule of only two at the computer at any one time. They are becoming aware of the needs of others as they comfort a new child who is unsure, offering him toys. They say please and thank you. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are encouraged to share information through discussions on a daily basis and speak highly of the setting. They receive good information about their children's progress through daily discussions, written annual reports, and parents' evenings which are held twice a year. There are notice boards giving useful information. The setting provides good clear guidelines for parents about the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The good partnership with parents and exchanges of information ensures continuity between home and nursery which enables children to settle well.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the setting ensures that children are happy and settled, with their needs well met. There are good recruitment and induction procedures to ensure that children are well protected and to ensure that staff settle quickly and understand the vision of the nursery. Good staff deployment, space, time and resources promote children's safety, enjoyment and well-being. High levels of qualified staff and the commitment to on-going training and development, along with good staff deployment means that children are cared for by staff with up to date knowledge of developments in early years. Staff understand their roles and work well as a team.

Good documentation, policies and records ensure that children's health, safety and well-being are always carefully considered. The setting was awarded the 'Growing Together' silver award in July 2006, and are now working towards their gold.

The leadership and management of funded children is good. There is strong enthusiasm and commitment to improvement and staff training in order to ensure there is a good level of individual attention to support and extend children's development and learning. Effective steps are taken to evaluate and improve the services that are offered. There are on-going observations to observe and assess practice, with regular meetings and evaluations, looking for ways to move the setting forward so that children are developing positive attitudes and making good progress towards the early learning goals.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to ensure that the complaints procedure included the address and telephone number of Ofsted. A full complaints procedure with this is in place, with details clearly displayed on the notice board. As a result, children's safety and well-being are now safeguarded.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider was asked to provide written information regarding the Foundation Stage and how it would be implemented. Also, the provider agreed

to ensure that plans included differentiation for more or less able children. There is now comprehensive written information about the Foundation Stage, and how it is implemented is displayed in the setting. This clearly includes how daily activities relate to the areas of learning. Parents' evenings, along with written reports for children clarify children's progression in their learning. There is ongoing staff training which has resulted in increased staff understanding of the Foundation Stage; also, observations of children are undertaken to ensure that children progress to the next step. These implementations are in place to ensure that children's individual learning is met.

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

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- continue to develop the arrangements for providing healthy and nutritious snacks for children

#### **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):

- expand the range, challenge and frequency of children's opportunities to extend and practise their physical skills.

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)