



Little Stars Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337877
Inspection date	18 January 2007
Inspector	Alison Jane Williams
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Registered person	Joanne Carole Mengham
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 Stars Pre-school is a privately owned group and has been a registered provision since 2006. The pre-school serves families living in Portsmouth and the surrounding areas. It is situated in the Scoutlands Hall in the Farlington area of the city and has an enclosed garden for outside play. A maximum of 30 children may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 23 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll, of these 10 children receive funding for nursery education. The group is open Monday to Friday 09.00 - 15:00, term time only and children can attend for a variety of sessions. The group are able to offer appropriate support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language. The pre-school employs five staff, including the manager all of whom hold relevant early years qualifications to NVQ level 3.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to understand the importance of healthy eating through daily discussions, as staff talk about which types of food are good for them, as they sit together at the snack table. Children are provided with a range of healthy snacks, such as raisins, breadsticks, crackers and fresh fruit. Children's special dietary or religious requirements, allergies and parents wishes are fully discussed and recorded in detail, ensuring their individual needs are met and respected at all times. A snack bar system is in operation and children's independence is promoted as they pour their own milk or water from the jugs provided and spread butter onto their crackers.

Staff implement hygiene procedures effectively to ensure the pre-school is a very clean and healthy environment for children. For example, they wear disposable gloves for nappy changing and keep tables and kitchen surfaces clean using disinfectant. Children are well protected and receive immediate treatment in the event of an accident because the majority of staff are qualified in first aid and a well stocked first aid box is in place. Staff are fully aware of the systems to record all accidents and the administration of medication, helping to keep children healthy. Parents consistently sign to say they acknowledge an accident, ensuring they are kept well informed. Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene through consistent daily routines. Anti-bacterial liquid and individual paper towels are provided to help prevent the spread of infection and children are encouraged to wash their hands independently before eating and after toileting and messy play.

Children under three enjoy taking part in creative and messy activities and use play dough cutters and paint brushes with confidence. They are becoming competent learners and use tools independently. Children have daily opportunities for exercise and physical activity. They access the garden to reap the benefit of fresh air and to play with balls and hoopla and use the hall to enjoy games such as 'Honey Bear' and 'What's The Time Mr Wolf?'

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a wide and varied selection of toys, resources and play equipment which are suitable for their needs, clean and well maintained. They can access toys and resources easily and safely and are able to make their own choices of activities. Children are made aware of dangers through general conversation and staff use a traffic light system. For example, children know a red sign means stop and do not touch, an orange sign means ask a teacher and a green sign means you can play with it but, you must pack it away when you have finished. Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, children know they have to find a safe place to cross and to stop, look and listen before they cross the road as they develop their awareness of road safety using prompts such as road safety signs and a zebra crossing to role play crossing the road. Children benefit from a very safe and secure environment. All staff are fully aware of their individual roles and responsibilities towards the safety of children and the premises. They carry out daily checks on the premises and outside play area and detailed written

risk assessments are in place covering all aspects of the provision, ensuring all areas accessed by children are safe.

Children are well protected because staff have a good understanding of child protection and the procedures to follow if concerns are identified, keeping the children safe. Clear policies and procedures are in place and shared with parents to ensure they are aware of the setting's responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are extremely happy and thoroughly enjoy attending the group. They settle quickly as they are greeted at the door by staff on their arrival. Children are assisted as necessary and continually praised and encouraged, helping them to develop confidence and learn new skills. Staff's interactions with children are kind and sensitive, recognising that younger children may need additional support and are not always confident to fully participate in all aspects of the session. Staff have a clear understanding of how children develop and provide an interesting and stimulating environment in which children play and learn. The pre-school uses the Birth to three matters framework effectively to observe younger children's progress and plan specific activities, ensuring the needs of children under three are being fully met.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The pre-school manager and deputy both have an excellent knowledge of the foundation stage and early learning goals and they use their knowledge and experience to support and guide the rest of the team. They work together effectively to plan the curriculum. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because the activities provided are linked to the stepping stones and are planned to extend individual children's learning and development. Staff are fully aware of the purpose of each activity and deliver them with clear objectives in mind. However, a system to assess children's initial starting points, and to involve parents in this assessment has not yet been introduced, which means it is not always easy to identify how much progress individual children have made since attending the setting.

Staff get to know the children extremely well, enabling them to plan activities which are aimed at their level of understanding, providing sufficient challenges and stimulation to hold their interest and ensure they make good progress. Children benefit from the good support and supervision, enabling them to ask questions to learn more. Their learning is extended through discussion and practical activities. Staff make good use of open-ended questions and support children in decision making, enabling them to develop good levels of self-confidence and independence.

Children move around the setting freely and confidently from one play area to another. They participate fully in the wide range of activities provided and they are keen and eager to learn. They confidently suggest ideas and speak in group situations, explaining what they would like to do next. Children are able to concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate. They listen well and are able to follow simple instructions with ease.

Children's speaking and listening skills are developing well as they talk confidently to the staff and their peers about themselves and their families. Their understanding of letters, sounds and numbers is extended in group discussions about the day and weather, as staff make good use of these opportunities to encourage them to identify and recognise numerals and words. Children enjoy listening to stories but they can not access books freely and easily. The book area is un-inviting as all the books are stored a box, so children are unable to see what is available, limiting their opportunities to handle books.

Children say and use numbers all the time during their play. they count everyday objects with confidence and enjoy singing many number rhymes. Staff are very good at encouraging the children to count and make the most of incidental opportunities. Children develop a good understanding of time because staff use sand timers to help indicate how long a period of five minutes is, alerting them to the fact that they have this much time left to play. They are extremely familiar and confident with the daily routine and talk about today, yesterday and tomorrow in discussions and group times. Children have opportunities to access a range of everyday technology and they use programmable toys with confidence as they direct them around a course. However, children do not have access to a computer to enhance their learning, which impacts on their development in this area.

Children competently use a range of tools, such as knives, cutters and scissors and have ample opportunities to explore media and materials during art and craft activities. Children use their imaginations well during role play. They develop their own ideas and negotiate roles with each other as they dress up and pretend to be firemen and ambulance drivers. Children participate enthusiastically in group activities, such as songs and action rhymes and story sessions and enjoy exploring sound and rhythm using a range of different musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued as individuals and information is obtained through discussion and registration procedures to ensure staff are aware of their individual needs and requirements. Staff have a clear understanding of equal opportunities and implement the policies and procedures appropriately. However, children have few opportunities to learn about the diversity of our culture through planned activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are limited. Children's independence and confidence are promoted and they are encouraged to self select toys and equipment, help to pack away and to put on their own coats. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The special needs co-ordinator has attended relevant training and has a clear understanding of her role and responsibilities. Systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language. Children's behaviour is generally good and staff deal with any issues that do arise calmly and consistently. Children learn to share and take turns and they co-operate and play together well. They know exactly what is expected of them as there are clear rules and boundaries in place. Children are developing a sense of right and wrong and understand the need for group rules.

Children benefit from the positive relationships staff establish and maintain with their parents. Parents receive essential information about the provision when their child enrolls in the setting. They are given a parent/carer information pack which contains useful information about the setting and are asked to complete a detailed application form. Staff go through the paperwork and discuss relevant information during a home visit. A detailed policies/procedures file is available for parents to view and parents are kept informed through a regular newsletter and the notice board. Relationships between staff and parents are friendly and informal. Staff take time to get to know each family and they share information about their children's needs when they drop them off and collect them.

The partnership with parents of children who are in receipt of funding for nursery education is satisfactory. Staff and parents discuss what children have done in the session. Parents are kept informed about topics and themes through a newsletter and curriculum planning displayed on the notice board. Special books are used to record individual children's development, these are well illustrated with observations, photographs and examples of their work. Parents are encouraged to view the books at any time and to make comments in them. Parents receive limited information about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning, which impacts on their understanding of how their child learns and develops through play. Parents are invited to share information about what their child enjoys when they start pre-school, although are not invited to contribute to the initial or ongoing assessment of their child. Opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress towards the early learning goals, to identify the next steps in their development and to be actively encouraged to support their child's learning in the home are not yet in place, which impacts on parent's ability to fully contribute to their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are safe and well cared for. Staff are actively involved and supported in identifying their own training and developmental needs and attending relevant courses and workshops, helping them to develop their skills and provide enhanced opportunities for children. Comprehensive staff induction and written job descriptions clearly define their roles and responsibilities and ensure that procedures are followed to protect the children. Staff work together well as a team and are fully committed to continuous improvement. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and well maintained. Children are fully occupied and engaged with the many play and learning opportunities provided for them during their time at the pre-school and they benefit from well organised daily routines. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management is good.

The pre-school manager has a wealth of experience and knowledge. She has a clear vision for the setting and is fully committed to improving the quality of care and nursery education for all children. She plays an active role in the pre-school, supporting, encouraging and motivating the staff team. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, ensuring every member of the team knows exactly what is expected of them. Staff are enthusiastic, motivated. They take

full advantage of available training opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding and ensure their practice is kept up to date. Children benefit greatly because staff are keen to ensure many learning opportunities are available to them, enabling children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. The implementation of a successful key worker system, helps children to develop self assurance and sense of belonging to the setting. Staff work together to provide a broad range of activities within a relaxed, well organised, child centred environment.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- further develop the range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

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):

- develop a system for making an initial assessment of children's starting points and include opportunities for parents to contribute to the initial and ongoing assessment of their child and increase opportunities for parents to be informed about their child's next steps for development and how they can support learning in the home

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