



St Antonys Leweston Prep School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY308762
Inspection date	31 January 2007
Inspector	Bridget Copson
Setting Address	Leweston, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 6EN
Telephone number	01963 210790
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Registered person	St. Antony's Leweston Prep 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?

Leweston Nursery and Crèche was registered in 2006, having been established since 1996. The setting operates from within St Antony's Leweston Preparatory School, Sherborne, Dorset. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.15 to 16:15 and the crèche from 16:15 to 17:40, during term time only. Children have use of rooms within the school and the extensive grounds.

There are currently 14 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties.

The nursery and crèche is run by a board of school governors who employ four permanent staff, most of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. They are supported by teaching staff from within the school who deliver additional classes to the children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a clean and hygienic environment within which staff have effective systems in place to prevent cross-infection. For example, the premises is cleaned daily and toys and equipment are cleaned at least once a term. However, a few of the more popular small-world toys have not been cleaned well to further promote good hygiene. Staff also wear disposable gloves to manage any accidents in the toilet. Children actively manage their personal hygiene well through learning about the spreading of germs and practising thorough hand washing routines.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles through eating some healthy choices at break, as well as nutritious and well-balanced lunches which are freshly cooked, according to the school healthy eating policy. For example, children enjoy chicken or vegetable Rosti followed by a hot pudding. They can also choose from a wide selection of fresh fruits. All individual dietary needs are provided for. Children have access to their own water bottles throughout the day, which they drink from to ensure they do not get thirsty and to promote their health. Children's physical development is promoted well; through daily activities organised within different environments, such as the play rooms, outdoor play area, school hall, music room and swimming pool in the town. Younger children's needs are met with consideration by staff who ensure all the activities are safe and suitable for their stage of development. This ensures all children experience fresh air and exercise every day to promote good health and fitness.

Children's health is further promoted through documentation held and the links with the Matrons in the school medical centre. Staff keep all information relating to children attending the crèche in a portable folder to ensure their needs are met. All staff hold appropriate first aid certificates. A first aid kit is kept on the premises to support them in caring for children appropriately in the event of an accident.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from well-maintained premises which are organised to meet their needs effectively and safely. For example, the two play rooms in the nursery provide defined areas of play and learning; with toilets close by to allow children privacy and independence. They also use some of the school rooms for additional activities. One of the playrooms is also used to provide a peaceful environment for children's rest time after lunch. Children attending the crèche also have use of the reception classroom and multi-purpose room to play according to their interests and relax.

Children are kept safe and secure through the good safety measures in place throughout all areas of the provision. For example, a locked main entrance with security pad, socket covers, safety gates to restrict access to stores and well-secured garden boundaries. Staff have robust systems in place to ensure high standards of safety are maintained at all times. These include annual risk assessments, external agencies checking large outdoor equipment, risk assessments

for all outings and support from the school caretakers. In addition, health and safety is a permanent agenda item on the weekly meetings to ensure staff remain aware and follow up all issues efficiently.

Children learn about keeping safe through good practical activities and staff guidance. For example, using craft tools safely and effectively, practising the fire evacuation procedure and learning road safety and safe crossing within the grounds. Children of all ages access play provision freely and safely from within the two play rooms and within the additional school rooms. All toys and resources are well-maintained and age appropriate. This all ensures children can play safely and independently within secure boundaries.

In both the nursery and crèche, children's welfare is safeguarded efficiently by staff who keep accurate records and supervise children closely, without impinging on their personal independence. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection issues and procedures to support them in safeguarding children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of activities and play provision to support all areas of their learning and development. Younger children benefit from the same activities and experiences as those in receipt of nursery education funding, with activities linked to changing themes. Staff skilfully adapt most activities to ensure children benefit from appropriate challenges, according to their stage of development. For example, children attend a well-planned French lesson in which the teacher keeps activities lively and brief with lots of movement, song and creativity to ensure the younger children benefit. However, their learning is planned and assessed within the Foundation Stage curriculum; as a result, not all challenges are appropriate for a few children who become disinterested on occasions.

Children arrive happy and excited and are supported well by staff who help them settle in. They communicate their thoughts and feelings confidently. They demonstrate good independence through finding things for themselves, adapting to changes throughout the day and learning self-care skills. New children quickly develop a good sense of well-being and belonging to support them in all areas of their development.

Children attending the crèche arrive from school and are provided with refreshments. They choose activities for themselves within the flexible session which allows them to relax and unwind after a structured nursery or school day. For example, children can read in the library, join in or invent craft activities in the multi-purpose room and use the role play resources, puzzles, games and constructional sets in reception classroom. They play and relax according to their interests and interact with staff for support and ideas.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. They use the curriculum plans and good communication with the manager to ensure they are clear what they intend children to learn from activities. The manager develops weekly plans and daily lesson plans which show how activities, linked to changing themes, will be used to promote different areas of learning. For example, The theme this term is 'Homes' with 'Harry's Home' as the supporting book for the week. Throughout the week children make box houses which they decorate, they make different animal habitats and learn related mathematical concepts, such as positional language. They also discuss activities you might do in rooms in your home and explore materials to find out who might live there, such as sand from the desert.

Staff apply effective teaching methods to capture children's interest, such as instigating lots of questioning and discussion and listening well to their responses. They encourage children to share their knowledge and experiences to promote communication and confidence. They place great emphasis on encouraging children to develop at their own pace. To support this, they use work books to monitor their mark making, mathematics, reading, sounds and communication skills, according to their stage of development. Staff use observations of children, examples of their work and progress seen in their work books to assess their development. However, this system is not consistent for all children and does not show how their next steps are planned to ensure they are developing to their full potential in all areas.

Children are enthusiastic and motivated learners. They focus well on things that interest them and offer realistic challenges, such as mathematical problem solving activities. They are forming early friendships with peers, whom they hug as a welcome and comfort if unhappy. Children behave very well and are learning the importance of positive attitudes and what is right and wrong. For example, they demonstrate polite manners, will correct others appropriately and are learning to treat others with kindness and respect. Most children are confident and articulate communicators who talk freely about home, what they are doing and will answer questions and offer solutions to problems. They learn new words regularly to extend their vocabulary which staff re-visit to re-enforce. Children are developing a very good early literacy skills. For example, younger children enjoy rhyming songs and letters of the week. Staff then skilfully extend these activities to promote reading skills through phonics and the construction of words. Some older children use their developing skills to attempt to read more complex words and books as part of the school reading scheme. Children enjoy books and are learning how stories are constructed. They choose favourite books everyday with enthusiasm. Staff use home reading books as a tool to promote their enjoyment and monitor their early reading skills. Children mark make for many different purposes; their early writing skills are promoted well by staff through early pencil control activities. When ready, they learn to write correctly formed letters and words.

Children are developing a good understanding of numbers and an interest in solving practical problems. They count aloud, and are learning to recognise numerals. Some children can correctly name the numeral before and after a specific number and can sequence numbers correctly. They use inventive activities and good quality resources to provide problems for children to solve; such as, making a slide to move up and down a number line in the shape of a block of flats. They use this to determine position and number sequence. Children use the school environment to explore objects and living things throughout the year, such as plants and mini beasts. They explore growth and living things through planting seeds and watching the life cycle of tadpoles. Children are developing a very good understanding of time and place. For

example, they discuss and recall past and present events at home and nursery, they use news books each week to support this. They learn about people within the local community by discussing God's world and meeting visitors to the school; such as, fire-fighters and guide dog trainers. They also learn about caring for their environment through re-cycling projects and supporting causes with fundraising activities.

Children move with co-ordination and control within the many physical activities they enjoy; such as, action songs in music, using the physical play equipment and in music and movement. They also benefit from weekly swimming lessons. Children use different one handed tools with materials to cut, stick, model, dig, scoop, funnel, hammer and eat with to develop motor skills. Children use different media and materials to explore colour and texture; such as wet and dry sand, clay and mixing coloured paints. They demonstrate a great enjoyment of music and join in singing with enthusiasm when they learn English and French songs. They explore sound, volume and rhythm using different musical instruments. They benefit from music lessons each week within the school. Children use their imaginations well in creative activities, with small-world sets and construction. They also role play in different environments, such as a hospital after discussing 'people who help us when we are sick'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all included equally in every aspect of the provision and their individuality is promoted well. Staff have effective systems in place to meet their individual needs and to ensure each child is encouraged to develop at his or her own pace. For example, seeking children's starting points from parents to use in early assessments, documentation relating to care and medical needs and work books to monitor progress. They also work closely as a small and consistent team, offering close interaction in small groups or one to one. As a result, staff know children's personalities and needs well. Children benefit from good quality resources which reflect positive images of diversity. The staff have close links with the school special educational needs co-ordinator. She is well-qualified and acts as a liaison between staff, parents and external professionals to ensure consistency of care and learning.

Children behave very well and are developing a good understanding of what is expected of them. For example, they share well, take turns and speak politely to one another. They also learn about helping others through the support younger children receive from those in reception. Children's positive behaviour is promoted well by staff through good listening skills, encouragement and praise, the 'smiley face' sticker scheme and all staff offering a calm and consistent manner. Children are developing a good sense of belonging and know where to find their own pegs, water bottles, work folders, drawer and labelled overall. They also see a positive reflection of themselves as an individual through their art work, models and photographs displayed and taking turns as the 'leader' for a day. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are cared for consistently and according to parents' wishes through the very good working relationships established. To support this, parents meet the team, visit the premises and are provided with a comprehensive hand book detailing information relating to all aspects of care and education. Parents are kept well-informed through notice boards, details of daily

events on the entrance door, weekly 'Le Weston Gazette' newsletters, two-way home reading books and good daily communication. Children attending the crèche benefit from a consistent team of staff to ensure consistency of care, support for children and good communication with parents. The school's open door policy also promotes good working relationships and encourages parents to get involved.

Partnership with parents is good.

Parents are actively encouraged to get involved in their child's learning through the good systems in place. For example, the detailed hand book advises parents of the curriculum, termly themes and how to support their child with reading, writing, mathematics, pencil grip and letter formation. Parents are also invited to provide details of what their child can do and their interests. They are invited to attend two consultation meetings a year and receive two reports each year regarding their child's stage of development and achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by an enthusiastic team of staff; some of whom attend additional training courses to update their knowledge and skills and to support them in meeting children's needs. In addition, teaching staff from within the main school deliver sessions to extend children's experiences. The setting has robust systems in place to ensure all staff are, and continue to be, suitable to care for children. New staff undergo a detailed induction programme to ensure they are well-prepared for their role. The school has an established appraisal system in place, which has not yet been applied to all staff within the nursery and crèche to promote their professional development.

Staff are deployed well and make effective use of their time. Through efficient team work, well-planned activities, close support and smoothly run sessions, children are kept active, stimulated and involved. Staff have systems in place to monitor the quality of care in most areas. The school office keeps well-organised and up to date documentation relating to children and the provision. Records are kept secure to maintain confidentiality whilst allowing staff to access information easily when required.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good.

Staff have good systems in place to monitor the quality of nursery education and its strengths and weaknesses. For example, meetings throughout the week involving all staff in which minutes are kept for reference and annual Foundation Stage development plans which are reviewed regularly. In addition, staff evaluate planning each half term and keep notes on activities each day. However, systems do not ensure children's assessments are used to their full potential.

The setting shows an on-going commitment to improvement. For example, staff have established close links with the local authority whose support and guidance is valued and the manager has started to form links with other local settings to observe practice. Children also benefit from

the close interaction with the school in which they share sessions with reception and make use of the rooms and resources. They also enjoy sessions with teaching staff whom they greet with great warmth and enthusiasm. This all provides children with a smooth and consistent transition through school.

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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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):

- improve the learning opportunities and assessments for younger children, such as, through implementing the Birth to three matters framework
- develop the school's systems of appraising staff development to improve the quality of children's care and learning further

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 further, the assessments of children's progress to encourage them to develop to their full potential in all areas.

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