



Little Acers Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340875
Inspection date	08 March 2007
Inspector	Janice Clark
Setting Address	Bowsland Green Primary School, Ellicks Close, Bradley Stoke, BRISTOL, BS32 0ES
Telephone number	01454 866766
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Registered person	LA Childcare Ltd
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acers is one of three groups run by L.A. Childcare Limited. It opened in 2006 and operates from a classroom in Bowsland Green Primary School, Bradley Stoke, South Gloucestershire. It is situated in a residential area. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The group is open each weekday from 09:00 to 15:00 during term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting offers care for children between two years and five years. There are currently 40 children on roll. Of these, 36 children receive funding for nursery education. The group currently supports a number of children with English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff who work with the children including the manager. Of these, four members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards this. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a bright, colourful, clean and well maintained environment. They enjoy the benefits of a routine that offers an appropriate balance of rest and play. The staff implement good hygiene practice in the setting and children are becoming increasingly independent in their self-care skills. They understand the reasons behind washing their hands and routinely do this before eating, after going to the toilet and messy play. This is reinforced through health topics and cooking activities. Therefore, children learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. This helps to reduce the risk of cross-infection.

Children enjoy the benefits of healthy eating. They eat snacks of fresh fruit that are brought from home. Children share the fruit and they choose between water and milk to drink. They fetch their drinks independently and pour the water into tumblers. Older children are very helpful towards the younger children by helping them to push the straws into their milk cartons. Drinks are available throughout the session on request. Children who stay for lunch either bring a packed lunch from home or choose a school meal. The school meals are varied, healthy and nutritious. For example, children enjoy roast dinners, pasta, salmon salad and old favourites such as, fish fingers as well as a variety of vegetarian options. The staff work well with parents regarding children's dietary and religious needs and they offer them advice as to the nutritional contents of the packed lunches. Staff sit with the children in small groups as they eat their snacks and meals. They talk about what they have been doing in the group and about their home lives. This helps children to understand other peoples lifestyles and assists in promoting good social skills.

Children enjoy the benefits of plenty of fresh air and exercise. They use the garden as an extension to the play room and children flourish as they carry out everyday activities in the fresh air. They play imaginatively as they practise a range of physical skills in a large adventure boat. Children climb, swing and balance as they wobble over a bridge. Soft surfacing ensures that children are able to carry out these activities in safety. The use of the large hall in the school further contributes the children's good health as they have access to a wide range of large physical equipment, for example, balancing equipment, a parachute, quoits, tunnel and balls. They learn that exercise is a way to good health through finding out about how their bodies work. They listen to their heart beats before and after exercise and enjoy cool down sessions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in safety in a secure indoor and outdoor environment. Effective procedures are in place to keep them safe as they arrive and leave the setting. There is sufficient room for

children to move around freely and unrestricted. Toys and resources are bright, colourful, safe and hygienic for children to use. Most resources are easily accessible to children and therefore they are able to make independent choices in their play.

The staff have recognised and minimized most risks to children. For example, electrical sockets are not accessible to children, radiators are covered and all fire safety equipment is in place. There is a well thought out evacuation plan although not all members of staff are familiar with this. Children are encouraged to keep themselves and others safe through looking out for each other during large physical play and music and movement. They move from the play room to other areas in the school and the outdoor play area in an orderly manner. Children are requested not to go out of sight of a grown-up and to ask for help when required. This further increases their awareness of keeping themselves safe.

The staff take steps to safeguard children's welfare. They have current first aid certificates and keep a well stocked first aid kit. The appropriate documentation is in place to record accidents. They have not yet administered medication to children however, they are fully aware of the procedure to follow should the occasion arise. The staff obtain appropriate permissions from parents for example, to seek emergency aid or advice. The staff have a sound understanding of child protection in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and eager to come to the setting and most leave their parents with ease. The caring staff team treat children that are new with sensitivity. Children grow in confidence in a well-resourced, open plan room. Younger children enjoy the benefits of playing with the older children and they are very supportive towards the younger age group. For example, an older child was very concerned about a younger child who was settling in. She sat with him in the book corner and they enjoyed looking at books together. The staff team are introducing the Birth to Three Matters framework into the setting and this has been very successful. Children are able to choose from a wide range of resources that offer a broad range of activities. For example, children explore and investigate objects, such as fir cones, corks, shells and sparkling stones. They use a magnifying glass to look at the differences in the sizes, textures and patterns of the shells. One child held the shell to her ear and said, 'I can hear the sea'. Children enjoy exploring different textures. They make patterns and shapes in shaving foam, scoop 'gloop' up with their hands and watch it turn to powder as they rub their hands together. They use their fingers to mix different colours of paint to make new colours, such as purple.

However, at times the floor space becomes cluttered and as a result, children have less room to move around. Some children do not make the most of the broad range of activities available to them as they spend a long time at one activity and therefore do not benefit from variety in their play. Children enjoy listening to stories such as, 'Shout Daisy, Shout'. They look at the bright colourful pictures and the staff make the story interesting by altering the tone of their voice, involving the children through asking questions and encouraging the children to make duck sounds.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones and as a result, children enjoy a range of interesting, fun activities and experiences. Staff are enthusiastic in their delivery of the curriculum. They offer clear instructions, interact well with the children, listen to them and question them appropriately. Consequently, children are motivated to learn and concentrate well when working in small groups, at story times and during self-initiated play. Plans are detailed and informative especially for regular daily activities, for instance, snack times, circle times and physical play. Specific activity plans for small groups, offer staff clear instructions as to the outcome of the activity. Many activities cover more than one area of learning and are particularly beneficial to children who do not speak English. For example, staff help children to understand stories such as, 'The Three Bears' through offering varied and interesting activities relating to the story. For example, children made and enjoyed eating porridge, they played with different sized bears to help to grasp the concept of small, medium and large. They painted bears with different shades of brown and acted out the story. The planning informs staff of how to support younger children but does not clearly indicate how to differentiate activities to accommodate older and more able children. Therefore, some activities lack sufficient challenge. Staff regularly observe children's learning. These are both written and photographic observations that are transferred to children's learning diaries. Staff have worked very hard to establish this system. However, it is still in its early stages and they have not yet used the observations to fully establish what the children should do next or to recognise gaps in the curriculum. As a result, children do not make regular progress in some areas of their learning.

Children begin to recognise their names, the sound of letters and familiar words in an environment full of print. They practise writing skills and are starting to learn to write their names. Children enjoy looking at books and use puppets to communicate with their friends. Staff ask lots of open-ended questions and as a result, children are using language to think things through. However, children do not often use writing for a purpose in their play.

Children recognise numbers and learn to count during circle time. They practice simple number rhymes, such as '10 in a bed' and '5 sticky lollypops'. Staff reinforce maths language, for example, during cooking activities and comparing sizes. They learn about shapes and create patterns during art and craft activities. However, children have few opportunities for counting and problem solving in every day routines and activities.

Children become aware of technology through programmable toys, learning basic computer skills and using a popcorn maker. They dress-up, play with dolls and enjoy a range of imaginative experiences for instance, when the home corner is changed into a fruit and vegetable shop, a library and a toy shop. Children enjoy creative activities, such as cutting, painting, sticking and cooking and these help children to develop fine motor skills. However, children do not regularly have opportunities to use their creative skills imaginatively due to pre-conceived end products. As a result, children do not experience sufficient challenges in this area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff provide a warm, welcoming setting and they enjoy positive relationships with parents and children. The group cares for a number of children who have English as an additional language.

The staff work well with the parents to ensure that the children's individual needs are being met. Labelled displays of children's work, as well as their photographs, assist in promoting a positive self-image and a sense of belonging. The staff clearly label resources with words and pictures and this ensures that activities are accessible to all. They use pictures of symbols to help children to understand routines. Children greet each other individually through singing a 'morning song' and this helps them to learn each others names and make new friends. Children become aware of the wider world through exploring festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. There are many resources that represent positive images of diversity in the setting to help children appreciate the similarities and differences of others. For example, children listen to stories, look at books, and play with dolls, play people and dressing-up clothes that reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. Children learn about their local community through strong links with the school. They join in with the children in the reception class to listen to stories, they eat their lunch with the older children in the hall and use many of the school facilities.

Children establish good relationships with their peers. They learn to share, take turns and work co-operatively together. For example, they happily shared pots of paint during an art activity, they took turns to stir ingredients during a cooking activity and they eagerly helped each other to tidy up toys and resources. Positive behaviour is encouraged through praise. For instance, children are praised for hanging up their aprons, helping to tidy-up toys and for assisting younger children with their drinks. Staff use appropriate strategies to manage unacceptable behaviour. As a result, behaviour in the setting is good. The staff have a positive attitude towards working with children and their families who have learning difficulties and or disabilities. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parents receive comprehensive information when they first start and this includes some policies and procedures. Further information is available to them in the setting. This leads to good communication and understanding. Parents are encouraged to settle children slowly into the group and they are given guidelines as to how to plan a successful transition period. The staff use this opportunity to find out about children's individual needs and to build good relationships with parents. They are very sensitive towards the needs of the parents and their children during this time. Children become familiar with the surroundings and the group's routines. As a result, children are happy and confident to come to the group. Staff and parents share information daily regarding children's care and development and children's learning diaries are shared both informally and formally. This assists in promoting continuity between the home and the setting.

Partnership with parents of children in receipt of Nursery Education is satisfactory. Parents receive some information about the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones when they first start at the group and other information is available to them in the setting. However, it is not easily accessible to parents and therefore, they do not receive sufficient guidance to enable them to become fully involved in their children's learning and to help them to extend their learning into the home. Staff do not obtain sufficient information from parents about their children's learning before they enter the nursery to assist them to build on what they already know.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

A dedicated and enthusiastic staff team work well to promote children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. There is an appropriate recruitment procedure in place to ensure that the people who care for the children are suitable to do so. All policies, procedures and records are in place to promote children's good health and well-being. However, the programme for induction is not effective as not all staff are familiar with some of the procedures regarding children's safety and welfare. The staff organise space well in the setting to offer children a broad range of activities. However, at times during free play, the floor space becomes cluttered with toys and resources. During this time, some children do not take full advantage of the broad range of activities that are on offer. There is a key worker system in place and staff know the children well. An effective staff rota system provides children with stability and ensures that there is sufficient staff on duty at all times to provide them with plenty of adult attention. Documents are stored securely and confidentially and staff share them appropriately with parents. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. Staff meet regularly to plan activities and discuss children's progress. This, as well as the enthusiasm of the staff team and their knowledge of the Foundation Stage, contributes to children enjoying interesting and fun activities that contribute to their learning. Staff are keen to extend their knowledge of childcare through further training and development and this is reflected in their practice. They are committed to further improving their practice and are seeking ways to do this. For example, they are receiving support from the local authority. However, they have not yet established an effective system to monitor and evaluate the programme for education and therefore, they have failed to identify gaps in the curriculum. As a result, this hinders children's progress and attainment in some areas of learning.

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.

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 satisfactory.

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):

- organise resources and children's time so that all children gain the maximum benefit from the activities that are available to them
- ensure that all staff complete induction training which includes health and safety as well as child protection policies and procedures in their first week of employment

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):

- evaluate and maintain the children's assessment and development records to ensure that they are used to inform the planning of children's future learning opportunities
- develop and implement a system to assess the strengths and weaknesses in the education provision to ensure gaps are highlighted and actioned.
- increase opportunities for parents to gain an understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how they can become actively involved with their learning

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