

# Little Gems Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122407
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 April 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jane Lester
<b>Setting Address</b>	Methodist Church, Coulsdon Road, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 5NU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 380723
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<b>Registered person</b>	Hilary Gilbert
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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 satisfactory. 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 Gems Nursery is situated in Caterham, Surrey. It opened in 1989 and operates from a church hall. Children have the use of a large hall, which is partitioned into two areas. Toilets, including disabled provision, are located off the main entrance hall. The group also have use of the kitchen facilities. The pre-school is open daily from 09.15 to 12.00 during term time only. Children can bring a packed lunch for lunch club which operates daily until 12.45.

There are currently 48 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 34 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is registered to begin working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

The setting encourages children to keep themselves healthy. During imaginative play sessions staff introduce the importance of sun protection and dressing appropriately to suit the climate. Visits from dentists and nurses inform children of good practices and teach them how to care for themselves, which further supports their health. Children understand the importance of protecting themselves from infection and can explain why they need to wash their hands before eating and after using the bathroom. Hand washing using liquid soap is satisfactory although the practice of sharing a towel for hand drying increases the risk of cross-contamination.

Children's nutritional needs are met well. All children access drinks throughout the session according to their requirements. Older children benefit from the snack bar which enables them to choose when to take their snack. This promotes their independence and allows them to respond to the needs of their own bodies. A selection of healthy fruit is chopped into small pieces at snack-time and children help themselves to as much as they want, which enables them to fulfil their nutritional needs. The setting protects children with allergies by ensuring different fruits are offered separately. However, the current practice of children using their fingers to select the fruit from shared bowls increases the chances of cross-contamination and could put children with food allergies at risk.

The setting seeks advice from the Area Health Authority to ensure they are informed about recommended exclusion periods of contagious diseases. However, the nursery does not have a sick child policy which is shared with parents. This means that other children are put at increased risk of cross-infection. At least one member of staff with relevant first aid training is on duty during each session to ensure minor accidents can be dealt with efficiently. Documentation for the recording of accidents and medicines is in place and used effectively.

A range of activities offered on a daily basis are successful in developing children's physical development. A section of the hall is sectioned off to enable children to ride bikes and other wheeled vehicles, carefully negotiating obstacles and each other. They develop balancing skills as they move across the balancing beams or stand on the wobbly board. The climbing frame promotes climbing skills and they learn to gain control over their body as they move imaginatively in music sessions. Balls and bean bags are made good use of to develop hand-eye co-ordination and this is extended by digging and planting sessions in the garden area.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe in the nursery as staff make good use of risk assessments to minimise hazards. For example, a table is placed under the kitchen hatch door so children don't bang their heads and two staff are strategically placed at the doors to ensure children can't slip out unnoticed at departure time. The setting does not, however, have a written procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost. This is a regulatory requirement. In addition, the written uncollected child policy does not clearly inform parents or staff of the full procedure to be followed if a parent or carer can not be contacted.

Staff are vigilant and effectively deployed to enable older children to experience increased independence as they go to use the toilet alone. Children are safeguarded in the pre-school as

the front door is locked during the session and identification checked before admittance. Staff are informed of safeguarding issues during their first week of employment and understand the procedure to follow should they be concerned about a child's welfare. The setting has a written statement detailing their responsibilities for the protection of children, although this has not been updated to reflect that it is in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Equipment offered is suitable for the children attending and arranged so that children can move between activities freely and safely. Activities for the session are set out before the children arrive and low units offer them the opportunity to select other resources. Regular fire drills are practised to ensure staff and children are familiar with the evacuation procedure and can assemble promptly in a safe area should an emergency occur. Children learn about safety as staff explain the reasons behind rules. In addition, visits from police and fire officers guide and inform them about safety issues.

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

The provision is good.

Children enter happily and seek out friends when they arrive. They play busily in small groups or confidently explore opportunities alone. Children benefit from being with a consistent group of staff who stay with them throughout their time at the setting. Strong bonds are formed and staff get to know the children very well which ensures they are responsive to their changing needs. Staff are very warm and caring and have a positive and cheerful approach. They interact well with the children, getting down to their level as they support their play and offer reassuring cuddles. They work efficiently together and each member of the team understands their role which means that all children are supported.

Staff make effective use of detailed observations which record children's achievements. These are used to identify and plan experiences which offer an appropriate amount of stimulation and challenge and help each child make good progress. Staff use activities which draw on children's experiences to extend their learning. They arrange chairs to simulate a bus and children hand out tickets and join in imaginatively when deciding where the bus will take them. They sing 'The wheels on the bus' and discuss what clothing they should wear for the trip. A blanket laid on the ground becomes a place for a picnic and children spontaneously dash off to collect food from the role-play corner. Some children carefully pour water into the tea pot and hand round real drinks to their friends.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn. Long term plans cover the six areas of learning and short term and daily plans ensure all aspects are included. Children's development records contain observations of their achievements clearly linked to the stepping stones, resulting in clarity about the next steps for individual children's learning. Planning is flexible to incorporate children's interests and ideas and learning objectives are clearly identified. Activities are generally evaluated and are differentiated to ensure all children make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children play companionably together and concentrate well on their chosen play. They attend to their own personal hygiene, pour themselves drinks and help staff to tidy resources away. They relate well to staff and other adults and show curiosity and interest in new activities. Their behaviour is generally good and staff encourage them to share and be kind to each other.

Children communicate confidently and clearly and are encouraged to talk about their experiences as staff listen and respond well. Story time is a lovely interactive session as staff skilfully involve children in the story. Children demonstrate good predictive skills and listen well. Most children can recognise their own written name and hold pencils correctly as they accurately form the letters of their name.

More able children link sounds to letters as they write menus and take orders in the role play café. They recreate scenes from their experiences and demonstrate developing calculating skills as they work out how many plates they will need. Children count well and recognise numbers as part of their everyday routine and focused activities. For example, children select the correct cards for the calendar date and point to the number that represents their age. More able children are able to indicate how old they will be on their next birthday.

Children enjoy the range of resources and activities made available. They have daily access to craft materials and show good control as they use scissors, glue and glitter. However, opportunities for them to choose when to freely express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings are limited by the organisation of the daily routine and the room. For example, funded children do not usually have access to the role play area until after snack time and limited space and resources are available for spontaneous craft activities. In addition, some construction materials are set up on small tables rather than on carpeted areas and numbers of pieces restricted which means children are unable to explore these on a large scale.

Children show curiosity as they investigate items on the discovery table. They explore their reflection and hold cuddly toys up to the concave mirror, fascinated by the altered image. They experiment with magnets, turning them around to discover if they still stick together. Coconut shells, pebbles and shells enable children to experience different textures and this is extended by outside activities when children make rubbings of natural and man-made materials.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are met well through clear documentation, regular staff who attend to their care and effective communication with parents. Information is gathered before admission and shared with staff to ensure the correct level of care is offered for each child. A flexible settling-in system ensures children are comfortable before being left for a whole session. Parents report that their children are happy at the pre-school and feel they can raise any concerns. However, the complaints procedure does not reflect all regulatory requirements and has not been updated with the regulator's correct address and telephone number.

An inclusive service is offered and differences acknowledged and valued. Parents and members of the support services are welcomed into the setting and introduce children to the rich variations of the community and other cultures. A wide range of resources and the celebration of a variety of festivals portray positive images of diversity. Suitable arrangements are in place for children who speak English as an additional language or those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff know the children well and are alert to delays in their development. They liaise effectively with support teams and parents to ensure children are well supported in the setting.

Staff help children to learn right from wrong through gentle guidance and consistently applied rules. Children are polite and courteous. They line up well, put their hands up to speak in group situations and say 'excuse me' when they ask for help. Staff gently enforce nursery rules and give positive instructions when possible. For example, children are asked to keep their mats on

the table rather than being told not to wave them about. Incidents are dealt with sensitively and fairly, taking into account the maturity of the child. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given good information about the care and activities offered by means of the prospectus, as well as newsletters which are issued each term. Parents are welcomed into the setting to share their experiences and to support activities. For example, parents bring in pets and bathe their babies in the nursery to help children explore care issues. Daily conversations between staff and parents ensure information is regularly exchanged and updated to support each child's welfare. Parents receive written information about the Birth to three matters and Foundation Stage curriculum. Children are encouraged to select reading books to share with their parents at home. Parents are offered two opportunities each year to look at and discuss their child's progress records. In addition, they are invited to attend a formal consultation with the supervisor on a yearly basis and receive a written report detailing their child's progress in each area of learning before they leave to start school.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are deployed effectively to ensure children are well supported. The room is divided into two areas which means that suitable activities can be offered to children of different ages. However, the organisation of resources limits opportunities for children to exercise choices about their free play. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are protected. Some of the staff have been in the setting for a number of years which provides children with continuity of care and a wealth of experience, although the setting fails to meet the requirements for training qualifications. Newly-recruited staff receive effective induction training in their first week which ensures they have a sound awareness of expected practice. Most policies and procedures which promote the welfare and care of children are in place and adhered to in practice, although some require updating and there are no lost or sick child procedures. The supervisor works closely with the manager and the staff to continually assess and improve the daily provision.

Leadership and management are good. The provider has clear expectations of her staff which are shared with them prior to appointment. The manager's vision of 'providing a happy and fun environment where children feel secure and have a lovely time while they're learning' is well supported by a close team of staff. Staff performance is monitored and feedback shared to ensure they continue to offer good quality care and educational provision. The provider takes overall responsibility for planning the nursery education curriculum and involves staff in short term plans which means everyone shares responsibility for children's learning. They are offered training and support so they feel confident in their roles. Staff are enthusiastic and a number of them are keen to pursue their own development and this is actively encouraged. The setting is effective in identifying areas of weakness and proactive in seeking advice and support from the local authority. This has a positive impact on the care, learning and play provided. The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

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

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to ensure good hygiene practices regarding hand washing and that procedures for the safe and secure storage of medication were put in place. They were asked to review the procedures for gathering children's personal details so

staff were fully aware of family background, language spoken at home and cultural and religious beliefs. In addition, they were to continue to work towards achieving the requirements regarding staff training and qualifications.

Medication is now stored safely out of reach of children and hand washing procedures have improved as children now use sinks instead of sharing a bowl of water. However, hygiene could be further improved by the use of disposable or individual towels and this is raised as a recommendation at this inspection. Children's personal details are gathered during initial visits as well as on the admittance form and this is shared with staff during staff meetings. The setting has continued to work towards achieving training requirements as they have employed another suitably trained member of staff and the deputy has registered to begin training in September. In addition, new staff are now recruited on the basis that they will complete relevant training. However, as the number of trained staff still fails to fulfil the criteria for National Standard 2 this has been raised again as a recommendation.

At the last education inspection, the nursery was asked to develop staff knowledge and understanding of ways to promote, consolidate and extend children's learning about numbers, counting and early calculation in real life situations throughout the session; to ensure that all activities for physical development were organised to meet the needs of children of different ages and abilities. They were also asked to compile children's records of attainment systematically to maintain a clear, up-to-date picture of children's progress in relation to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and to make parents fully aware that they could access children's records of attainment and progress by request at any time.

Children now develop and practice mathematical skills in real life situations throughout the session. Observations of children are thorough and clearly identify children's progress in relation to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Parents are aware they can access their child's progress records at any time and are given two formal opportunities each year to do so. Children are offered a broad range of physical activities and appropriate support and challenge is offered.

### **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 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 satisfactory. 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):

- review procedures regarding hand drying and fruit selection to reduce risks of cross-contamination
- construct a sick child policy which is shared with parents
- devise an appropriate action plan which identifies how at least half of all childcare staff will obtain suitable Early Years qualifications
- construct procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost and revise and update policies and procedures paying particular attention to the uncollected child policy, complaints and child protection procedures

### **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):

- review organisation of space to enable play and learning opportunities to be maximised and ensure there are sufficient good quality resources for children to freely explore creative activities.

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)