



## Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 511231  
**Inspection date** 27 June 2005  
**Inspector** Alison Weaver

**Setting Address** West St Leonards County Primary School, Harley Shute Road,  
St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN38 8BX  
**Telephone number** 01424 465669  
**E-mail**  
**Registered person** West St Leonards Early Years Centre  
**Type of inspection** Integrated  
**Type of care** 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 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?

West St Leonards Early Years Centre is a sessional group that is run by a management committee and has charitable status. It is set within West St Leonards County Primary School and has been operating since 1998. It operates from a self contained part of the school building next to a reception class. The group has two play rooms, a toilet area, and an office. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. The morning

sessions are from 09.15 until 11.45 and afternoon sessions from 12.45 until 15.15. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 61 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 49 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs nine staff. Five of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through the effective reinforcement of everyday routines. They easily access the toilets and hand basins, which promotes their independence. The procedures carried out consistently by staff ensure high levels of cleanliness and help prevent the spread of infection.

Children learn about the importance of healthy eating through planned topics and snack times. Children bring in an item of fruit or a healthy alternative for everyone to share. Staff monitor the snacks provided to ensure that children's individual dietary needs are met.

Staff provide a broad range of activities, which effectively promote children's health, both emotionally and physically. Children enjoy regular opportunities where they gain and develop physical skills such as running, jumping, and balancing. They show good co-ordination, moving confidently and safely. They have fun exploring different ways of moving using their bodies, for example as they use ribbons. Their fine motor skills develop very well as they use a wide variety of tools and equipment. Children take turns in preparing the fruit for the other children, using knives and peelers safely with appropriate adult guidance.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a safe and generally well-organised environment. The building is well maintained and the outdoor area is checked daily to ensure that it is safe for use. Staff regularly assess risks and overall have a good awareness of how to keep children safe. A few safety concerns still need to be addressed, relating to the office and the oxygen tanks. Staff do not carry out formal written risk assessments to fully ensure that all potential hazards for children are checked and minimised. Staff give children clear explanations on a variety of safety issues, such as walks, so that

children learn to keep themselves safe.

Children enjoy playing with a wide range of very good quality equipment that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. The equipment is in good condition and attractive to children. Staff clearly explain to children how to use the equipment safely so they do not hurt others and they learn to respect property. Some of the storage used allows children to have independence in choosing toys and equipment without adult help. Children utilise the book area well but it lacks soft furnishings to make it a more homely area.

The provision has all the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. For example, all staff have a satisfactory knowledge of child protection procedures and know how to act if they have a concern.

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

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle quickly. They enjoy their time in the setting and are interested in the numerous activities available. Children choose from a good range of stimulating toys and resources. They have opportunities to take part in quiet and active games. They are well motivated, concentrating on self-chosen activities. Overall children enjoy group activities and join in enthusiastically.

The children achieve well because staff are experienced and have a sound knowledge of early years childcare, which they effectively put into practice. Children relate well to staff and to each other. They confidently approach staff for support showing that they build good trusting relationships. Staff talk to children about what they are doing and respond to their interests. Staff know the children well and use varying strategies to support individuals to enable them to make progress.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards all the early learning goals due to the staff's sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Staff interact very effectively with children to support their learning. They use good questioning to encourage children to think about what they are doing and express their own thoughts.

The curriculum planning is broad and balanced as it covers all areas of learning. It shows clear links to the stepping stones to ensure staff are aware of what children should learn. Staff carry out regular observations and use these to inform children's records of progress. This enables key carers to monitor what individual children are achieving and learning. Staff use the effective assessment process to informally discuss future planning. The written short term plans show how to adapt activities for children that are more able but they do not identify individual children's needs specifically. However, the staff know the children well and ensure that they challenge and extend them at the activities.

Overall children are actively involved in play and activities throughout the sessions with a few weaknesses in organisation. The grouping of the children works well for most of the session but at some circle and snack times, it is less effective. Children sit for long periods and some become restless. This lessens children's enjoyment and learning. Children generally independently choose from the activities. Staff usually encourage child initiated play however, a few times staff direct children to an activity, which, if not their free choice, restricts their enjoyment and independence.

Children respond well to adults and form good caring relationships with them. They speak confidently to staff and approach them freely. They listen well and take turns when speaking. They follow simple instructions such as when lining up or playing outdoor games. Most children speak openly at circle time, showing a good use of vocabulary. They enjoy books and have regular opportunities to practice mark making. Some children are very good at forming letters correctly.

Children count confidently and regularly enjoy number activities during free play. They explore measuring and weighing. Children learn to recognise simple shapes in the environment and make pictures using 2-D shapes. Their understanding of simple calculation is promoted during everyday routines such as the preparation of snacks. Staff regularly reinforce mathematical concepts during play and everyday routines.

Children enjoy investigating using their senses as they explore a good variety of different materials and objects, both natural and man made. They learn about their environment as they go on interest walks where they find and identify various objects using photographs as aids. They carry out simple science experiments where they look at changes and differences. They have access to simple technology, which they explore. They learn different skills as they use a wide variety of tools and equipment, including activities where they use a sewing machine to make a collage. Children discuss past events as grandparents visit the group. They learn about other ways of life as they explore topics on other countries, jobs, and customs.

Children enjoy music and respond enthusiastically during singing sessions. They spend time playing musical instruments and creating different sounds. They listen to music from around the world. Children use their imagination well as they role-play and express their ideas at activities.

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

The provision is good.

Staff value children as individuals and meet their needs well. Children from a variety of backgrounds are welcome in the setting and staff acknowledge and respect differences. Staff informally discuss family backgrounds with parents but do not include this in the written registration documentation. Staff ensure that children have access to a variety of resources that represent the wider community. These resources and planned topics help children develop a positive attitude to others and learn about the world around them.

The setting has effective arrangements in place to care for children with special educational needs. Staff support these children well and give them appropriate care.

Overall children with special needs integrate well into the setting with the majority of the activities adapted to meet their needs to enable them to participate fully. A few activities are less easily accessed by certain children but the setting is trying to address these issues. The other children respect and understand that some children behave differently and need extra help.

Children are well behaved and respond positively to staff. They begin to understand acceptable behaviour through good staff interaction. Children learn to play together happily and some negotiate roles well as they play. Staff are good role models, helping children learn how to share and show concern for others. Children benefit from a lot of praise and encouragement from staff. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

Children benefit from good parental involvement in their learning and development through the use of an initial profile form when they start in the setting. Staff use this profile to develop a good understanding of their individual key children. Parents also receive helpful and informative written sheets about the topics and activities so that they know what children are learning. General information on the Foundation Stage, parents' open evenings, consultations, verbal feedback, and notice boards enable staff and parents to work together to help children make progress. Parents have some opportunities to contribute to children's ongoing records and assessments. The result of this is that the partnership with parents and carers is good.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Generally the setting is well organised and space is used effectively for the children. The majority of the legally required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place with a minor weakness regarding parents' countersignature of records of accidents and medication. The setting does not formally obtain written information about children's religious and cultural backgrounds. The committee has limited input into the setting and it is unclear whether all adults involved in the group have completed all the necessary clearances. The recruitment procedure fails to include thorough health checks for non-supervisory staff. This potentially could put children at risk.

Children benefit from being cared for by a satisfactory level of qualified staff. The staff receive an effective induction so that they know how to support children in their play and learning. The policies and procedures, though needing updating in places, are consistently applied by staff, which helps contribute to the smooth running of the setting. They work closely as a team and all are included in the planning and decision-making.

Good leadership and management of the setting enhances children's nursery education. The staff are committed to continuous improvement and development. The regular supervision and appraisals support staff in their roles and help them develop as individuals. Ongoing training is actively encouraged and promoted. Staff regularly monitor and evaluate the overall provision for education to ensure that children benefit from attending the setting. Overall, the provision meets the needs of

the range of children well for whom care and nursery education is provided.

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

The previous care and nursery education inspections recommended that a formal induction process be produced and implemented, and that the setting should extend the learning opportunities within topics for the more able children.

The manager of the setting has produced an induction pack which she uses with new staff to ensure that they are fully informed about their roles and responsibilities. This results in an improvement in the organisation of the setting and in the care of the children.

The staff formally plan how an activity can be adapted generally for more and less able children. They also regularly discuss children's individual needs when planning activities. The staff are aware of how to extend individual children even though they do not put this information within the written daily activity plans. This enables children to achieve.

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

There are no complaints to report.

## **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):

- carry out thorough risk assessments, which are documented, to ensure all potential hazards are identified and minimised
- ensure that the recruitment procedure includes thorough health checks for staff and that relevant committee members continue to complete suitability checks for Ofsted

### **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):

- improve the snack and circle time to maximise children's learning and enjoyment

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