



Little Owls Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY297422
Inspection date	19 May 2005
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	Century House, Well Lane, Danbury, Essex, CM3 4AB
Telephone number	01245 221333
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Registered person	Little Owls Nursery 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Owls Day Nursery is privately owned and opened in 2005. It operates from five playrooms within a converted works facility, located on a small business park within walking distance of schools and Danbury Park. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 83 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The group opens five days a week all year round. Operating times are from 07:30 until 19:00.

There are currently 45 children from 0 to 5 years on roll. Of these seven children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions or full day care. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas.

The nursery employs ten staff. Nine of the staff, including the manager hold early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3 or a teaching qualification. Three staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because all members of staff effectively follow clear environmental health and hygiene guidelines. Children learn about the importance of good hygiene and personal care through the daily routine. They independently wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet and nappy changing is undertaken by the staff in a sensitive and hygienic way. Children are consistently protected from illness and infection. They are cared for in an extremely clean environment and there are first aid boxes within each room.

Children are well nourished. They enjoy nutritious, freshly cooked meals and healthy snacks and help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the day. The staff ensure that they are aware of allergies and other special dietary requirements so that children's individual needs are met. Topics and themes encourage the children to learn about healthy eating and to try different fruit and vegetables.

Children enjoy physical activity and show great enthusiasm and excitement when invited outdoors to play. The provision for physical play is excellent. The outdoor area has been developed imaginatively and is used throughout the year. Excellent use is made of the indoor soft play room. It is extremely beneficial to the children that this space is available as an addition to the minimum space requirements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and learn in a safe, welcoming and child-centred environment. Their welfare and safety is a paramount consideration and staff undertake risk assessment inside and outside the premises and on outings. A very high regard is given to security with CCTV and secure entry systems installed. Children are learning to keep themselves safe, for example by walking and not running indoors to avoid accidental injury. Although there are fire safety and evacuation procedures, some newer children and staff have not yet practiced a fire drill.

Children choose freely from a range of good quality toys that are checked frequently

for damage and cleanliness. Particular care is given to the range of baby equipment to ensure that this is always safe and meets the needs of the individual child.

The nursery has all the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. The staff have a secure understanding of child protection procedures in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children follow a well planned programme of fun activities designed to help them make progress in their development and learning. They enjoy selecting toys and making choices about their play. Children develop warm, trusting relationships with the staff, who effectively promote their confidence, independence and social skills. Their early communication skills and vocabulary are sensitively developed; the staff work directly with the children, introducing new words and asking questions to make them think.

The learning experiences of the younger children attending the nursery are effectively enhanced by the staff who are developing a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework. Activities and assessment records are now directly linked to the framework. All children are made to feel special and secure; staff have good expectations of the children's developmental progress and they respond to their needs in a warm and affectionate manner.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning are good. The staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn effectively. Children are busy, eager to learn and spend time persevering and concentrating on their tasks and activities. The staff observe children, record their progress and use this information to effectively inform the next steps of learning for the children. Evaluation and monitoring procedures are used extremely well to improve the quality of the teaching and to ensure that children are keen to learn and make good progress. A very good balance of child-initiated or adult-led activities are provided to give children confidence and a positive attitude towards learning.

Children are involved in an exciting range of activities which support their language, mathematical thinking, imagination and creativity. They are making good progress towards the early learning goals and particularly enjoy demonstrating their skills and knowledge, for example by adeptly writing their names on artwork or labels and by independently using the computers. Their physical skills develop and improve through the range of challenges offered, indoors and outside. Good quality props and role-play scenarios such as the garden centre shop enhance the children's imaginative and creative development. The children are active in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They enjoy planting seeds and go on nature walks to nearby Danbury Park. However, there are few investigative tools such as magnifying glasses or other science items available to the children. The staff

are well aware that providing additional equipment will enhance the children's exploratory, scientific and mathematical skills further.

Children form harmonious relationships and play and learn co-operatively. They have a secure awareness of right and wrong and are learning to show respect for others and their cultures and traditions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are secure and happy in their surroundings. The staff know the children well and show care and concern for their individual needs. A system is in place to support any additional needs a child may have and training has been arranged for the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO.) Staff have a clear understanding of equal opportunities, ensuring children have access to a range of diverse and positive images. Although there are clear written policies regarding equal opportunities and special needs they do not refer to the current legislation and guidance.

Children respond extremely well to the staff's expectations for good behaviour. They develop self esteem and respect for others by learning social skills such as sharing and turn-taking. Plenty of praise and encouragement is given when they complete a task or help to tidy up. Children are given many opportunities to share their thoughts and feelings and staff listen and respond sensitively.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. The parents are made to feel very welcome and the staff take time to gather information about each child so that good relationships are formed and children settle quickly. Parents are well informed about their child's time in the setting through written information and close contact with the staff. However, the written complaints policy does not include Ofsted's address and telephone number. Notice boards within each room display activity plans and information about the Birth to Three Framework. The parents have started becoming involved in the children's learning. The children take books home to share and parents bring items needed for craft projects. However, less information is supplied to the parents of children receiving nursery education about the Foundation Stage curriculum to allow them to enhance and share their children's learning experiences.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel comfortable and at ease within the well organised environment. Effective group sizes and staff deployment allow children to confidently initiate and extend their own play and learning. Children benefit greatly from the extremely high adult: child ratios and the well qualified staff team. Clear recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with a secure

knowledge and understanding of child development.

Children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement are well supported by the policies and procedures within the operational plan. The required documentation for the efficient and safe day to day management of the provision is well maintained and promotes the welfare, care and learning of all children.

The leadership and management of the nursery are good. The management team focus on development and achievement of all children through staff development. They have worked hard to develop a strong staff team that provide good role models for the children. There is a positive induction programme, training is actively encouraged and all staff are very clear about their responsibilities. Roles and tasks are delegated and shared amongst the staff team to ensure that all feel important, motivated and show a strong commitment to further professional development. Appraisals and evaluation are undertaken and the curriculum is regularly monitored to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Clear links with outside agencies and professionals are in place. A great deal of thought has been given to the future development of the nursery to ensure that an inclusive environment is promoted. An out of school club is to begin operating later this year and the nursery is to join an accredited quality assurance scheme.

The provision effectively meets the needs of the children that attend the nursery.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable as this is the first inspection following registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- ensure that fire drills are regularly practiced with the children
- review and update written policies and procedures regarding equal opportunities, special needs and complaints.

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 the links for communication to encourage parents and carers to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways
- continue to develop the range of resources in order to maximise children's learning.

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