

Little Scholars (Littleover)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509197
Inspection date	17 April 2007
Inspector	Justine Ellaway
Setting Address	10 Austen Avenue, Littleover, Derby, Derbyshire, DE23 3EY
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Registered person	Little Scholars 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 Scholars (Littleover) is one of two nurseries run by Little Scholars Limited. It opened in 1997 and operates from a converted building in Littleover, Derby. A maximum of 25 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.45 to 18.00, except for Bank Holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 21 children aged from one to under eight years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs three members of staff. All of the staff hold a Level 3 qualification or above.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted within the setting. Effective procedures ensure the premises are hygienic. Staff who prepare meals have a food hygiene certificate. Children wash their hands consistently throughout the day. They understand why they wash their hands and say it is 'to get the germs off'. The risk of infection is effectively minimised as children use liquid soap and paper hand towels for hand washing. Staff wear gloves and an apron for nappy changing and sanitise the mat after each change. There is a clear sick child policy to exclude children who are ill. A clear hygiene policy explains the procedures to follow when dealing with bodily fluids.

Children receive a good level of care when they have an accident or become ill to maintain their good health. All of the staff have a current first aid certificate. Appropriate records are maintained of accidents and medication which are signed by parents. A clear medication policy ensures that staff follow appropriate procedures when administering medicines.

Children put on sun cream before they go out to play and staff regularly remind parents to send appropriate clothing such as hats. As a result children's good health is promoted when they play outdoors.

Children play outside on a daily basis. They enjoy playing with the slide and climbing frame, sit and ride on toys and other equipment such as bats and balls. Good interaction from staff encourages the children to engage in play. They ride around a road drawn on the floor with chalk and stop and change direction when a staff member gives the signal. Pre-school children are developing a good awareness of their own space and that of others. They comfortably move around indoors and outdoors negotiating successfully around others. When lining up they do this without disturbing other children in the line. Children are successfully developing their small muscle skills as they regularly use scissors, glue spreaders and pencils. There are regular discussions about healthy foods, along with activities, so that children develop an understanding of what foods we should eat less of and which foods we should have regularly. Some of the outdoor play equipment does not provide appropriate challenge for more able and older children.

Children's independence and social skills are well promoted at snack and meal times. Children help to give out the crockery and help themselves to food and drinks. Staff sit with the children and talk to them about things such as what they are eating or what they have done at nursery. Good manners are encouraged. Children sit calmly at meal times and politely ask to leave the table when they have finished. They tidy away their crockery before they go and play. A clear policy on staff conduct at meal times underpins the good practice in relation to developing children's social skills.

Children are reasonably well nourished. Snacks are usually fruit. Lunch is varied and includes some healthy options, although the setting has not looked at all of the ingredients in each meal or how the meals are prepared to ensure they are as healthy as they can be. Children have access to drinking water at all times and pre-school children help themselves to a drink from the water cooler when they are warm and thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are happy to enter the welcoming and attractive environment. There are colourful displays of children's work and photographs are displayed of the children. Children have their own peg. As a result a sense of belonging is promoted.

The space is well organised for the children who attend. Pre-school children have two adjoining rooms where they can move around freely. There is sufficient floor space for children to play with toys such as building bricks and a train track. There is a good range of stimulating toys and resources which children enjoy playing with. These are attractively laid out and displayed for children to help themselves. Staff lay out a selection of toys and resources according to children's interests so that they have current favourite things to play with.

Children's safety is well promoted within the setting. A clear and detailed health and safety policy outlines practice. Staff complete a weekly safety checklist which informs the risk assessment. There are additional detailed written policies to ensure good practice and promote children's safety such as preventing slips and trips and answering the door. Safety gates are used to restrict children from wandering off. Children's safety is well promoted when they go outside. Staff check the outdoor area before the children go out and supervise the children at all times. Children are developing a good understanding of their own safety as they learn about this through activities. They are clear about the rules for crossing the road and a child says you must not run across the road 'because a car might knock you over'.

Children are protected because staff clearly understand their role in child protection. There is a very clear and detailed written child protection procedure. Staff have had recent training in child protection and are aware of the different types of abuse and procedures for reporting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settle well at the nursery. They are given good support to settle. Staff from different areas of the nursery speak to and make a fuss of all children so that when they join together at meal times they feel comfortable with all adults. Children are very confident, both in moving around the setting and in their interaction with staff and their peers. They frequently talk to staff and ask questions. Children's self-esteem is well promoted as they receive lots of praise and encouragement. Staff are constantly engaging children in discussion and showing an interest in what they are doing. A staff member talks very positively about some paintings the children have done during the morning and the children show a sense of pride in the work they have produced.

Activities are well planned for the toddler room. They are linked to children's interests as well as their stage of development and aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Progress records are regularly completed so staff can identify their next steps.

NURSERY EDUCATION.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are very clear on the six areas of learning, the aspects within each area of learning and how they might help children to learn. Planning is very effective and meets the individual needs of the children who attend. Observations are undertaken at the beginning of

each week which inform the toys and activities for the following day for each child. This is then repeated each day of the week, with staff also referring to targets to identify how they might help a particular child learn a particular skill within their interest. Children are mostly challenged during play and activities, however there are some missed opportunities when more able children join in an activity that does not extend them. Regular observations are undertaken with good examples recorded of when a child has achieved something. Staff are skilful in helping children to progress, they use lots of effective questioning and show children how to do something and then encourage them to try for themselves. Story time is made interesting as staff use varying tones of voice to convey the drama and characters. The use of time and resources is appropriate in providing a stimulating environment for the children who attend.

Children show high levels of attention and concentration when listening to staff at story and circle time. They follow instructions carefully. They have good relationships with others and are constantly talking to staff or their friends whilst they play. Children are very confident and independent. They move confidently around the setting and are unafraid to ask staff questions. They are very good at helping to tidy away after activities and put things back where they should go without having to ask a member of staff.

Children are developing good communication skills. They take turns in conversation, such as at the snack table when they talk about the warm weather, they do not talk over each other. They make relevant comments, for example, when a staff member is sweeping the floor and the snack is arriving a child says 'you need to hurry up, you need a bigger brush'. Children love listening to stories and have lots of favourite books. They recite their favourite stories whilst they are read by a member of staff. A child offers to read a book to the other children and they listen keenly whilst he reads. The children help him out with the order of the story. Children's name cards are displayed and they make good attempts at writing their own names, with more able children attempting other words with support from staff.

Children ably count by rote and more able children can count well beyond ten. There are lots of opportunities for children to develop counting skills during the day. The concept of calculation is skilfully introduced at snack times and children are beginning to learn about adding and taking away. Children ably recognise different shapes such as circle and square and start to look at halves as they cut a paper plate to make a model.

Children show lots of curiosity and often ask questions such as why and what. There are regular opportunities to investigate and explore and look at the natural world. They grow sunflowers and tomato plants and help to take care of the fish in the nursery. When the nursery had a new computer the children opened up the old one to see what was inside. Children learn about information communication technology through the use of a computer, programmable and wind up toys. They enjoy using the computer to make lists, which also helps them to develop their letter recognition. Children frequently talk about what they done, with a dedicated session at circle time talking about their previous evening to help them develop a sense of time. An interesting activity looking at where children live using maps, helps to develop an understanding of a sense of place. Children have also visited places in their local community including a garden centre and a supermarket café. When learning about other food from around the world the children set up a Chinese restaurant as their home corner and chose how it should be laid out.

Children regularly draw and paint and use their imagination well. They enjoy showing others what they have done and show a sense of pride when a staff member asks if she can put it on the wall. Children enjoy singing and have favourite songs. They have regular opportunities to build and construct using blocks and build a very high tower from Duplo which they discuss

how they can support it from falling over. Children have regular opportunities to use other materials such as junk to make models, but on occasion the range of tools and resources is limited so that their creative and imaginative skills are not fully promoted. Children ably control musical instruments as they tap out their rhythm of their own and others names.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met well whilst at the nursery. Staff know the children very well and develop a close relationship with them. A form is completed at the time of placement to gather information about the child. Children with learning disabilities or difficulties are given good support. Staff are proactive in supporting the parent and involving external agencies if appropriate. Staff are clear on how they can help and support the child during play.

Children are developing a good understanding of responsible behaviour. They play very well together for long periods of time without interruption. They show a good level of care and concern for others. When a child is reading a story another child offers to help him and sits with him giving him support. Staff are positive role models and encourage an environment that is friendly and calm. Expectations are clearly established so that children know what they are supposed to do at certain times, for example, lining up to go outside. Staff give the children appropriate praise which boosts their self-esteem. Consistent management of unwanted behaviour ensures that children understand right from wrong. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

A good relationship is established with parents and carers to promote consistency of care. They receive a useful and clear information brochure at the time of placement which contains the relevant policies and procedures. A written admissions policy ensures that all parents receive the same information. Staff have regular verbal contact with parents and feedback what the children have been doing during the day. The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. They are given good opportunities to become involved in their child's learning. Staff meet with them at the beginning of each six weekly topic to share what their child will be learning. A sheet of information is displayed containing details of the topic, which area of learning is being covered and what activities children will be doing. Parents can contribute to their child's progress record and provide evidence of what their child can do.

Children become aware of wider society by playing with a suitable range of resources and participating in activities that effectively promote an understanding. There are male and female dolls, dolls of different race, books, jigsaws and posters that show people of different race. There are also books and play people that positively promote disability and the setting did an interesting activity looking at disability as staff cut out photographs of medal winners from both the Para Olympics and Olympics and looked at them with the children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff team are supportive of each other and committed to providing good quality care for the children who attend. They are receptive to change and discussions about improvements to benefit the children. They are friendly in their interaction with each other, the children and the parents. As a result children enjoy their time at the setting.

Good deployment of staff means that they are always working with children either in small groups or on a one to one basis. Good support is given to children as staff move to an activity if children need help or they are learning a particular skill. Effective systems are in place to promote consistency through regular staff and planning meetings.

Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure adults are safe to work with children. Thorough induction arrangements ensure that staff have all of the relevant information to carry out their job effectively. Staff working at the nursery have a minimum of a Level 3 qualification. This positively impacts on the care provided to children.

There are clear and detailed policies and procedures that are easy to understand. This includes a handbook for the Manager to ensure consistency of approach. Staff are familiar with the policies and procedures. The setting demonstrates a commitment to improve through regular training, self evaluation and keeping up-to-date with changes. The owners are particularly effective in identifying changes early and seeking information so they can ensure they are familiar with this at the earliest possible opportunity. The nursery is currently working towards the Local Authority quality assurance scheme. As a result the quality of care and education is well promoted for all children.

Appropriate procedures in place for checking staff are suitable, to promote children's safety and welfare. Staff have regular access to relevant training courses to improve their knowledge and skills which positively impacts on the care provided for children. There are clear and detailed policies and procedures and staff demonstrate a sound understanding of them.

The leadership and management of funded nursery education is good. There is clear leadership of the setting and the owners have a strong focus on ensuring children's individual needs are met and their personal development is well promoted. Staff are well supported to play an active role in the nursery. They are involved in identifying the strengths and areas for improvement to secure a feeling of being part of the nursery rather than just a staff member. Appropriate systems are in place to monitor the effectiveness of the Nursery Education and the owners are proactive in addressing any minor concerns they have. A clear and simple system allows staff to identify at a glance if there are gaps in areas of learning or children's achievements.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Nursery Education inspection the nursery was asked to provide opportunities through daily routines such as mealtimes to develop and consolidate children's independence and self-help skills and to develop opportunities to develop children's understanding of the locality in which they live and the natural world.

Children's independence and self-help skills are well promoted at meal times as children assist in setting the table and help themselves to food and drink. Children participate in a varied and interesting range of activities to develop an understanding of the locality in which they live and the natural world. As a result they make good progress through the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage curriculum in the area of Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to amend the child protection policy to include the procedure to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff and to further develop the use of lunchtimes to include more opportunities for children of all ages to learn social and independence skills.

The child protection policy now includes a clear and very detailed procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff, fully promoting children's welfare. Lunchtimes are a social occasion where children sit and chat whilst they eat their meal. Their independence is well promoted as they give out cups and plates and tidy away afterwards.

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.

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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):

- extend the range of healthy foods and ensure that meals are cooked as healthily as possible.

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):

- ensure that children are consistently challenged through play and 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