

# Little Friends Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY271462
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Tina Anne Mason

<b>Setting Address</b>	The Tea Rooms (Pavillion), Civic Hall - Blackshots Playing Field, Grays, Essex, RM17 9AW
<b>Telephone number</b>	07762 473573
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Little Friends Pre-School
<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 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 Friends Pre-School opened in 2003. The setting operates from a hall known as the Pavilion Tea Room within Black Shots playing fields in Grays. The pre-school serves the local area. A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Morning sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 Monday to Friday. Afternoon sessions are from 12:15 to 14:45 Monday to Friday. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 77 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 69 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of staff. Of these four hold appropriate Early Years qualifications and three members of staff are working towards a qualification.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well through effective procedures and staff's good hygiene practices. Children benefit from playing in a clean environment, with well maintained toys and equipment. Children are encouraged to follow good hygiene routines such as washing their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet.

Children are given appropriate care if there is an accident as a high ratio of staff hold current first aid certificates. If a child becomes unwell at the pre-school there are good procedures in place to ensure they are well looked after and to protect children from cross-infection. Children have their individual needs met because the staff request information from parents and carers on their child's dietary needs, requirements and allergies. Children are provided with healthy snacks on a daily basis and have access to drinking water throughout the session. Children learn about healthy eating through snack time, discussion and planned topics.

Younger children are developing their independence physically and emotionally. They are active and are becoming increasingly independent, acquiring control over their bodies and new physical skills. They are learning to express their needs and are beginning to meet those needs independently, for example, by being able to access water for themselves. As they grow the children become more aware of their own bodies and develop an awareness of others and their needs.

All children have access to physical play daily which provides lots of opportunities for them to develop their physical skills and to exercise both indoors and outdoors in the fresh air. The children use a good range of toys, equipment and tools that provide appropriate challenge. They take nature walks, ride trikes, and have access to balls and a range of climbing equipment. The children are learning new skills, developing a positive attitude towards physical exercise and a growing awareness of how it can help them to stay healthy.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a safe and secure indoor environment. All visitors are closely monitored, helping to protect children from unknown persons entering the building. Sufficient space is provided for children to have freedom of movement, with designated areas for rest and relaxation. The setting has recently been broken in to and vandalised which has made it difficult for the staff team to make the environment warm and welcoming as children's artwork and posters are being ripped down and damaged by vandals. However positive steps are being taken by the staff team to ensure the setting is able to maintain a high standard where children are able to feel safe and secure in their surroundings.

Indoor toys are generally clean and in good condition because staff clean and check them. However, this is not extended to the equipment as the chairs used by the children are worn and grubby. In addition the safety of the garden area is not secure as there are gaps in the fencing, which does not safeguard children.

Children are protected from harm as staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. There is a designated staff member responsible for coordinating child protection, and staff follow written policies and procedures that are in line with local government legislation. Staff

practise the fire evacuation procedure with children, helping them to understand what to do in an emergency.

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

The provision is good.

Children are secure and settled because staff are gentle, kind and caring in their approach towards them. An effective key worker system is in place and as a result staff know the children and their needs very well. Staff discover from parents the likes and dislikes of their children and use these as a basis for play to help them settle and enjoy their time at the setting.

Children are provided with opportunities to explore wet play and delight in sensory exploration and mess making with a range of materials, such as play dough, painting with glue sticks, baking and planting flowers. A variety of role play resources encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings and help them make sense of the world; children pretend to be mums and dads in the home corner and look after their babies. The framework 'Birth to three matters' is being developed throughout the pre-school to help practitioners plan and provide a range of experiences for young children's development. Children are able to make choices in their play as toys and resources are readily accessible to the children to provide them with complete independence in choosing from the full range available.

Currently the organisation of snack time does not provide potential learning opportunities or development of children's independence. For example, children are not involved in the setting up or laying of tables at snack time and they are not given enough opportunity to serve themselves or others to encourage both their social and independence skills.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children have opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities to enable them to progress through the stepping stones. Staff have good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan well for children with a good range and balance of activities. The activities and experiences provided cover each area of learning and meet the individual needs of the children. The teaching provides good levels of interaction and staff make good use of planned and naturally occurring situations to challenge and extend the children's learning. Staff observe and record children's progress across the areas of learning, the information gained from these assessments is used to influence future planning, to help children move on to the next steps in their learning.

Children really enjoy their imaginative play, for example, the home corner and dressing up. Children explore using a range of materials, such as play dough, paint, sand and water. They become familiar with everyday technology as they use the cash register and telephone in the role play area. They freely use magnifying glasses and binoculars to examine and investigate.

Children are confident and readily approach adults and their friends. They clearly enjoy each other's company and play together. Practitioners respond to children's achievements with praise and encouragement, such as 'what a lovely picture' and encourage the children to show the other members of staff, as a result children are very well behaved. Children receive good opportunities to build up a repertoire of songs that they sing with vigour and enjoyment, both spontaneously and during planned sessions. There is an excellent range of books within the setting, and children clearly enjoy listening to stories and know how to use the books correctly.

Staff make the most of story time and capture children's imagination. For example, children are encouraged join in and read stories out loud to the rest of the group. Children have a good level of independence in selecting and carrying out activities. They are confident speakers with a wide vocabulary and learn successfully that print carries meaning; they recognise their own name at registration time and they use a good range of words to express their thoughts and ideas. Counting is a usual element of the routine. As a result, children count confidently. They learn about simple calculation through their active involvement in simple number rhymes and children enjoy learning about size when playing with the 'compare bears'. Children enjoy making lady bird cakes where they are able to look at quantity, and are given the opportunity to measure and count out the ingredients.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled within the group. Staff are readily available at the beginning of sessions to support any children who may need help to settle. As a result children come happily into the group and become quickly involved in the ready-prepared activities. The younger children are developing their awareness of themselves and finding out what they can do. They are developing confidence in their physical skills and are secure emotionally, enabling them to express their needs.

Children's behaviour is good. They have a clear understanding of the boundaries of behaviour and are developing a sound understanding of right and wrong. Staff manage children's behaviour well and give clear, age appropriate explanations to help the children develop self-control. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from the staff. They feel valued because staff take the time to listen to them and notice the good things they have done.

Children learn about diversity and the world in which they live. They celebrate different festivals and access toys and resources. Dolls and dressing up clothes reflect different cultures, and small world play people have wheelchairs and walking aids, helping children to learn about disability. Activities are not gender specific and all children have the opportunity to play with all toys and resources. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

One of the pre-school's supervisors is the group's nominated special educational needs co-ordinator [SENCO]. She has attended appropriate training and she continues to develop her knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of special educational needs. In addition, staff work closely with the area SENCO in order to provide appropriate care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, the staff demonstrate a strong commitment to providing an inclusive service that meets the needs of all children attending the setting.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are extremely happy with the care provided by the setting. They are greeted warmly by practitioners who are friendly in their interactions. The parents of children who receive nursery education benefit from a two-way sharing of information between parents and staff to enhance their children's learning. In addition, regular newsletters ensure parents are kept updated with important information relating to the daily operation of the setting. Although parents are provided with access to their children's developmental records, they do not receive sufficient information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result, parents are not well informed of their children's educational programme.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are settled and well cared for by qualified staff who use their skills to provide stimulating and interesting activities. There are effective procedures in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff, with good contingency arrangements to ensure staffing ratios are maintained at all times. Staff deployment is good, and staff work with children in small groups. Staff training needs are identified through regular meetings and designated staff have specific roles of responsibility.

Staff effectively organise the play room with good consideration given to the suitability of toys and resources. They provide a warm and welcoming environment for children to learn and develop. There are many written policies and procedures for the effective management of the pre-school.

Leadership and management of funded children is good. There is a commitment to improving the care and education for all children. Staff work well as a team and management effectively monitor and evaluate activities to ensure the children make good progress in their development. As a result staff are highly motivated and show genuine enthusiasm and love for their work with the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the setting was asked to, develop an action plan detailing how staff induction training will be implemented and to review policies and procedure to make sure they meet both the National Standards and the Guidance to the Standards. (This refers to standards 7 and 13).

A staff induction procedure. Children are effectively protected as staff are monitored to ensure they are able to meet the needs of all children attending. All policies and procedures have been reviewed and are in line with the National Standards, ensuring the well-being of children is maintained at all times.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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**

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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 all equipment used by children is clean, well maintained and safe
- make the garden fencing safe and secure
- maximise learning opportunities and development of routines encouraging children's independence in everyday situations, such as snack time.

### **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 partnership with parents to meet the needs of the children, including details of long, medium and short term planning and information about the educational programme

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