

# Little Oaks Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	219985
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Rachael Mankiewicz
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<b>Registered person</b>	Little Oaks
<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 outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Oaks Pre-School was registered in 1967. The pre-school serves the community of Brackley and the surrounding villages. It operates from two classrooms in a converted bungalow within the grounds of a local Church of England School. There is an enclosed outside area available for outdoor play. They also have use of the adjoining school hall and playground for further physical activities.

The pre-school is open five days a week during term time. They offer ten sessions between 09:15 and 12:00 and 12:45 to 15:30. There are currently 96 children on roll. This includes 83 children receiving funding for their nursery education. The setting is able to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 14 members of staff who work directly with the children. The majority of staff hold or are working towards recognised child care qualifications with six currently holding qualifications to National Vocational Qualifications level three. The setting receives support

from the mentor teacher from the local authority. They have achieved level one of the Pre-school Learning Alliance accreditation scheme.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a clean, warm, comfortable and child-friendly environment. Staff take positive steps to ensure that hygiene is good as they support children's good practices regarding washing of hands and other personal care. Older children are fully aware that they are helping to prevent the spread of infection and they talk about germs on their hands when they come in from playing outside. Independent personal care and good hygiene practices are encouraged as children are able to access the adjacent toilet areas easily. The premises, toys and equipment children use are maintained in a satisfactory state of cleanliness. These practices sustain good levels of hygiene and help to prevent the spread of infection. Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff who have up-to-date knowledge of first aid in the event of any accident. Children, who have accidents or become sick whilst attending the playgroup, are cared for sensitively while waiting to be collected by their parents.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet to promote their growth and development as they enjoy a range of nutritious snacks. They independently access the good choice of fruit, vegetables and savoury snacks. Children recognise the numeral below the plate and know how many items they may eat. They express their enjoyment as they eagerly help themselves to food from the serving dishes. Children show preferences and talk about flavours and textures, and this is extended as they try different foods at taste testing and when celebrating different festivals. Older children know that they need to access water regularly to remain hydrated and they easily access the jug of water and beakers.

Children enjoy good opportunities to develop their physical skills. They have daily opportunities to do exercise through a choice of apparatus indoors or through playing outside for most of the session and whatever the weather. Most of the children relish the idea of splashing and pouring water whilst wearing appropriate wet weather clothing. Children also enjoy the benefit of fresh air to promote their development as they walk around the local environment including trips to the post box. Large and small equipment is used well to allow children to develop good control over their bodies. They explore different ways of moving over the slide and tunnel and count their jumps on the trampet. Children run, jump, climb and make their own obstacle courses outside. When inside the building, children move spontaneously and with confidence in the well-organised space. Quieter activities take place spontaneously indoors and outside. For example, children can choose soft cushions to enjoy looking at a book. They show increasing skill in their use of small equipment through construction activities and using tools as they play with dough.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are safe as a result of the adults' very good awareness of health and safety and because all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risk of accidents. Thorough risk assessments and good supervision by vigilant staff ensure a safe environment. This allows children freedom to choose activities that offer variety and challenge within safe limits both inside and outside. The premises are secure and children are unable to leave unsupervised. Staff and parents

implement well the arrival and collection procedures that prevent unknown visitors entering the setting. Older children learn about safety and use high quality equipment appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they begin to take personal responsibility for their safety. For example, they ride vehicles sensibly and negotiate space. Children learn about road safety as an activity and transfer their knowledge as they walk around the local environment. They are learning to keep themselves safe through regular fire drills. Older children know that spilt water on some surfaces means a slippery floor indoors but is an exciting activity outside in Wellingtons. High quality equipment and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development are easily accessed by the children. They safely and deftly manipulate tools and implements as they explore playdough and plant seeds and bulbs. Their good hand to eye coordination is seen as they responsibly carry, and safely use, scissors and other craft tools in many activities.

Children are well protected because all staff have a very clear understanding of the local child protection guidelines and have done up-to-date training. Their safety and welfare is further enhanced by excellent security of the premises, staff checks of all equipment and compliance of fire requirements.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are settled and enjoy their time in the company of friends and adults at the setting. They enthusiastically play and learn from the range of different activities and opportunities; benefiting from the care and encouragement of knowledgeable and experienced staff in the welcoming learning environment. Children's needs are met through effective organisation and planning for the progress of all children. Staff have very good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework which helps them offer an excellent range of activities to meet the needs of the younger children. They are skilled at encouraging children to extend their experiences, and at listening and talking with them. This helps the children develop positive relationships. Children listen and communicate well with each other and with the adults which enables them to contribute to the social activities in the setting.

Initial information received from parents helps the staff build on what the children already know and helps them progress into the pre-school room and on to school. Children begin to develop their independence and learn to play in groups as they participate in a range of interesting activities. For example, they play together harmoniously in the hospital area and then move on to play independently with construction materials and playdough which helps develop hand to eye coordination. Children explore a variety of interesting materials which stimulate their curiosity. For example, they eagerly develop their senses as they make animal biscuits and create imaginative animal shapes with playdough. Children continue to use their imaginations well and with enthusiasm as they take part in role play and a wide range of art and craft activities and music. Children respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings where appropriate, including explaining about their busy weekends and holidays. Their perseverance to complete activities and their confidence to share feelings develops as they play.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children participate enthusiastically in the planned activities on offer and take the initiative to develop their play in other ways. This is because they are able to access other resources easily and independently and they are not

restrained by routines and the limitations of space. For example, they enthusiastically move construction items to make their own designs in another area of the garden and experiment how water moves downhill. Children begin to make sense of the world around them as they explore a variety of materials and discover with amazement and later understanding why things happen and how they work. They experience with great dexterity a range of different tools and implements, including gardening and woodwork tools. Information technology is developed through good access to the computers and remote controlled toys. They choose to use simple working technology such as tills, phones and cameras to support their learning. Role play opportunities allow them to imitate the adult roles of dry cleaners and mechanics amongst many others. Creative and imaginative skills are being promoted with a good range of art resources, and the children take pride in their paintings and collages.

Children are aware of their own bodies and their ability to use their senses through planned and unplanned activities. They begin to understand why their hearts pump their blood around more quickly as they exercise. Children find out about the environment as they plant seeds and garden. Daily discussions about the weather help children learn about the climate and the seasons. They begin to explore the wider world through visits to the post box and school and outings further afield. Children look at holiday destinations and take part in the celebration of festivals.

Children are forming positive relationships with other children and seek out friends to share experiences and to enjoy time together. They take turns and work together well in small and large group activities. They show concern for others as they play, making sure their friends are included in the games. Children count confidently and show increasing skill in recognising and using numbers to support their play, For example, comparing who made the most jumps on the trampet. They compare two numbers as they count during number games and sorting opportunities. Older children are beginning to develop the use of mathematical ideas to solve problems in planned activities and by participating in many day-to-day domestic routines. Children recognise the numerals on the calendar during group time and can name consecutive large numbers. Their language skills are good, they show awareness of the listener, and negotiate well within their play. They listen with enjoyment to stories and respond to simple instructions. Reading skills are developing, as they recognise their own name, the names of friends and labels around the setting. Children know how books work and handle them with care. They understand that print has meaning and make marks freely throughout their activities. For example, they use their emerging writing skills for real purpose as they write their names on their drawings. They discuss the stories they have enjoyed and offer different endings.

Staff make effective use of time and resources to provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. They have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage guidance on which to base their planning and assessment and ensure that children make progress. A comprehensive range of well-chosen resources supports children's learning across all the areas. Staff effectively support children in a mixture of adult- and child-initiated activities and enable them to make progress. Children are encouraged to make the most of their experiences by the staff's careful consideration of what the child might be able to learn. This is supported through good questioning and enabling by the very knowledgeable key worker staff. Systems for planning for the individual child's progress are excellent as challenge and individual targets are highlighted. Further information gained from the parents both verbally and in comments on observation sheets is used to inform planning. Parents are advised how they can extend their children's learning at home ensuring that everyone is working co-operatively for the benefit of the child. They report how their children are progressing and achieving at home.

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

The provision is good.

Children and parents are appreciated and valued as individuals by the welcoming staff who ensure that children are settled and that their needs are met. The very good levels of support ensure that all children feel included in the pre-school and playschool rooms and that they receive a great deal of individual attention. Children gain confidence and self-assurance through making choices about activities and moving around the room interacting with staff and other children. The opportunity to choose between playing inside or outside during any weather benefits the children as all areas of learning are now offered while children are enjoying fresh air and the freedom of more space. There is good access to further resources indoors, particularly in the creative and graphics areas. Children are able to develop independence in other ways. For example, they access the toilet area for themselves and help tidy up at times during the session.

Older children are aware of their own needs and begin to respect the needs of others. They make sure their friends are included in the activities and are aware that some children have different needs to themselves. For example, older children work well together as a team to include and assist all their friends in art work projects and in role play. They gain knowledge of different cultures and religions as they celebrate festivals and national days, and this helps children understand about the diversity of the wider world. They enjoy meeting people and welcome visitors to the group. A policy helps staff promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children although it is not always clear how this is implemented.

Children behave very well as they are made aware of what is appropriate behaviour. They respond well to the consistent boundaries set them and the encouragement to behave well given by the caring staff who act as good role models. Children show concern for each other when their friends are upset. Older children begin to take responsibility and manage their own behaviour. They begin to negotiate when there is a problem and respect each other as they play and share. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The children's well-being at the nursery is enhanced by the excellent partnership with parents. Written agreements with parents are clear and detailed. Parents are informed about how the setting operates and the activities provided through a prospectus, written notices, newsletters and displays and information about the care of the children. Staff obtain information about the children's needs, particularly regarding words used for personal care, which helps ensure consistency of care. A comprehensive policy is in place regarding learning difficulties and/or disabilities which details how the service will be provided to children. The very good levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive a great deal of individual attention so that their needs are effectively met. Children's achievements and preferences are recorded by the parents in an 'All About Me' booklet. This enables staff initially to build on what children already know. Good information sharing on a daily basis is seen as important, including verbal information sharing and written exchange of records after meetings with keyworkers. Parents are able to easily access the policies and procedures. The setting tries hard to seek parent's views; they have parent comments boxes and carry out regular questionnaires. Children benefit from their parents' involvement in the running of the setting as members of the management committee. Parents and carers are able to help children settle in to the group and some help by offering their time and skills. Children enjoy the involvement of their parents and other adults and this contributes to their sense of assurance and belonging.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is outstanding. This contributes greatly to the children's progress in the pre-school. Parents receive comprehensive information about the Foundation Stage in general. Colourful wall displays, including photographs and descriptions, show how children are learning through play. Parents are able to attend curriculum information evenings to gain further information. Key workers inform all parents about their children's progress towards the early learning goals and seek their views. Comments made by parents about achievements of their children are used to plan the next stages in learning. Parents are encouraged to extend their children's learning at home and suggestions are made daily as the children are collected, in newsletters and at meetings with the keyworker. Children do benefit from parents being made fully aware of their child's progress and achievements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The good quality of care and education offered to the children is based on effective organisation throughout the setting. The leadership and management of the nursery education for funded children is outstanding.

Children's care is enhanced by the space and resources being laid out well to enable children to make the most of the play and learning opportunities. They move freely from one activity to another, with little encouragement and this ensures children are occupied and happy throughout the session. Children's care and education is encouraged by the very good staff to child ratios and the care given by qualified and skilled staff. Children benefit from the good supervision and sensitive interaction. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of child development. They hold relevant childcare qualifications and extend their own professional development through access to training and local short courses. The management team have a suitable and rigorous system in place to ensure children are cared for by staff with appropriate qualifications and experience. The recruitment and vetting procedures and procedures to ensure continued suitability of staff are sound which helps ensure children are well protected. All documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place to ensure that the individual care plans are met. The operational plan, including policies and procedures, is reviewed regularly.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. Staff and management work very well together as a team committed to the continuous improvement and development of the setting. They have comprehensive systems in place to discuss and reflect on their practice and evaluate the provision of nursery education, in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and ensure children's progress towards the early learning goals. Children's individual needs are continuously assessed and discussed by the child's keyworker, other staff and parents, and used to inform the planning. Staff support and encourage children very well during activities while still allowing them time and space to initiate their own learning. The emphasis the setting places on continued improvement in education can be evidenced through the range of activities and resources and innovative ideas available throughout the setting. Staff positively take advice from other professionals and the setting is used as an excellent example to other provisions. Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to review two policies and procedures. A system to record any incident of physical restraint in an emergency is now in place. The procedure

to be followed if a parent fails to collect a child or if a child is lost has been reviewed. The adjustments to these policies and procedures help ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

As an outcome of the last inspection for nursery education, the setting was asked to review planning for progress. The review has taken place and continues to be revisited, ensuring that the children are making excellent progress.

### **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**

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 outstanding.

### **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 the policy which promotes equal opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children is periodically reviewed and the implementation of it is monitored.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)