

# Little Owl Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	226316
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Shami Kumar

<b>Setting Address</b>	Baptist Church, Main Street, Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE12 8RZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01509 890195
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Little Owl 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 Owl Pre-School opened in 1990. The setting is a church based group operating from the Baptist Church Hall in the Leicestershire village of Woodhouse Eaves. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding area.

There are currently 55 children from two to four years of age on roll. This includes 26 funded three-year-olds and 15 funded four-year-olds. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. The group operates from 09:15 to 11:45, Monday to Friday; and 12:45 to 15:15 Monday to Wednesday. Children attend a variety of sessions.

Six staff work with the children. All staff have an appropriate early years qualification, with one member of staff holding the Level 3 and a further three currently working towards this. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the Local Authority

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is generally promoted as the playgroup staff adhere to appropriate hygiene routines. For example, staff wear gloves when changing children and tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray. Children have an understanding about washing and drying their hands after using the toilet and staff provide steps so children can carry out such self-tasks themselves. However, before snack a communal bowl of water is used which increases the risk of cross infection between the children. There are satisfactory arrangements in place to care for children in the event of illness. If a child becomes ill during the session, the staff ensure they are comfortable while waiting to be collected by parents. Children are protected because the contents of the first aid box is fully stocked and staff are first aid trained and can administer treatment in the event of an accident. There are appropriate permissions and records in place regarding accidents and the administration of medication and consent for emergency medical treatment has been requested, ensuring that parents are fully informed about their child's care.

Children's health is promoted by staff taking a range of positive steps to encourage healthy eating. Through planned topics, discussions and daily routines the children learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy healthy snacks such as various fresh fruit, raisins, bread and vegetable sticks. They also taste different foods such as chapatti's that link into plans to celebrate different cultures. Children are able to have a drink of water at any time throughout the session in order to meet their individual needs. Any drinks or food provided by parents is stored appropriately. Children's dietary needs are met effectively by staff and parents sharing information. Although children do not sleep in the setting, they are able to rest in a comfortable area.

All children have regular access to a range of small and large equipment that encourages their overall physical development. They use a variety of tools and games that develop their fine physical skills and co-ordination. For example, they choose from construction, hammer and nails equipment and writing activities. They have fun whilst developing their large muscle skills and body control. For example, they skilfully ride wheeled toys, climb and balance on apparatus, go through tunnels and exercise on the soft play equipment. Children demonstrate spatial awareness as they manoeuvre cars and scooters skilfully to prevent collisions. In addition children have opportunities to develop an awareness of space as they are encouraged to move imaginatively during music and movement sessions.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safe and generally well cared for in premises that are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. The staff ensure that the environment gives children good access to a sound range of facilities to promote their development. Children use a wide range of equipment that is clean, suitable and safe. Through planned activities children learn to care for resources as they help staff to clean the construction sets, wash the dolls clothes and bathe the dolls. The pre-school provides child and adult sized furniture and equipment which are appropriate for their purpose. The provision is well organised to meet children's needs and they are happy and well settled. The comfortable sofas in the book area enable children to sit on their own and with staff to look at books. They are able to move around independently and the resources are attractively arranged so that children are encouraged to self-select safely.

Children's safety is satisfactorily promoted because staff take steps to promote safety within the setting. For example, the front door is kept locked, electric sockets are protected and the fire equipment is checked annually. Staff to child ratios are high, there is always a member of staff with a current first aid certificate on duty and parents consents are obtained for outings. A daily visual check is made of the indoor and outdoor play areas. However, risk assessments highlighting risks and the actions required to minimise them are not carried out regularly which has the potential to affect children's safety. Staff position themselves well at arrival and departure times and ensure that children are seated until their parent or carer arrives. Parents are asked to introduce the staff to anyone different who is to collect their child and identification is asked for. This is to ensure that children only leave the pre-school with known adults.

Children learn to keep themselves safe by practising fire drills and know where they are to go to stay safe. Visits from the fire brigade and lollipop lady reinforce learning about fire and road safety. Within the setting children understand safe practices as staff remind them about not running, not sitting on tables and being very careful on the steps when going outside. Children are protected well by the staff, some of whom have attended child protection training. They have a good awareness of child protection procedures and know how to put these into place should they have any concerns about the welfare of a child. Children are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted.

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

The provision is good.

All children are well settled because they have good relationships with staff. Children of all ages and developmental stages enjoy their time in the setting. They separate from their parents and carers easily and arrive eager to participate. Children are happy and settled because they have good relationships with staff who support them well. Children begin to develop independence as they choose freely from a broad range of purposeful activities and express their ideas during play. For instance, children enjoy using the role play area where they pretend to hang up their washing, put their babies to sleep and pretend to go shopping. Children under the age of three follow the same curriculum as older children funded for nursery education, and the setting is beginning to assess their development using the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Staff are experienced and enjoy the company of the children in their care. They spend time talking to and playing with them. Staff provide good support to enable younger children to take part in planned activities and they cope well with routines. The needs of the younger children in the group are met because staff get to know them well through group work. They acquire new knowledge and skills constantly through first hand experiences they are offered. For example, they plant cress and engage in activities relating to the life cycle of a chicken.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are involved in planning which means that they are well aware of learning intentions and how they can move children on. Children's progress is monitored through observations which are carried out on each child's capabilities. Staff use assessment records appropriately to identify the progress the children are making towards the six areas of learning. Planning of activities are clear, however, activities are not evaluated, therefore, information gained is not used effectively to inform future planning to ensure that children move to the next step in their learning. Staff use their sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan a balanced range of activities that provide fun challenges for

all the children. Most children are confident learners and access activities independently. Activities such as sand, paints, play dough, sticking and gluing are provided daily with additional activities linked to the six areas of learning. Staff encourage the children to think, predict and remember. For example, they talk about what day, month and season it is on a daily basis. Children are helped to extend their thinking whilst they play because the staff are skilful in asking questions to make them think. For example, "What do we need to make our plants grow?", "Which tree has the most apples?" and "What would happen if this was a real egg?". Staff use planned and spontaneous opportunities to develop children to learn different colours, shapes and count objects. Staff act as positive role models and manage children's behaviour positively, therefore children play well together, share and take turns. Children are involved, motivated and engaged in a broad range of developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities. They are keen to offer their ideas and respond well to new activities when they are presented to them by staff. For example, planting cress seeds and making a little book on the life cycle of a chicken.

Children's speaking and listening skills are developing well. They confidently tell the other children about their pet rabbit, having a birthday after the holiday and going on holiday next week with their family. They participate well in discussion time and respond well to staff. Children develop good language as they become familiar with stories and discuss the pictures. The staff keep the children's interest captured as they use voice moderations during story times. Children are learning to listen and to sit quietly in order to listen to a story about a 'Frank the Farmer' which is a continuation from the current topic. They participate enthusiastically and talk about different vegetables a farmer can grow. Children are learning to recognise letters and their name through the effective use of laminated name cards which they use to self register. Children are beginning to understand about letters of sounds as they listen to tapes and play games to recognise different sounds. They access a good variety of mark making and writing materials in order to build up their confidence. For example, they make lists in the shop, use different types of pencils and crayons in the graphics area and chalk or paint pictures. Most children count to five and beyond very well using correct number names with daily opportunities used to reinforce this. For example, children count the number of children around the table and how many children are in today. There is a specific maths area which children are able to access which help them to identify numbers, problem solve, match and sort. Children also learn to problem solve as they learn to complete puzzles and staff talk to the children skilfully to develop their understanding of why some things sink and float in the water. They compare size by looking at how tall they are, whether their tower is bigger than them and how long their sausage is. Children take part in number games helping them to develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts and language. For example, the children talk about how many apples on the tree and which has more, which has less and how many more would they need for them to be the same.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is well encouraged. They take part in a good range of activities that encourage them to explore and investigate. For example, they learn to plant cress, beans and flowers, water them and watch them grow and change. They regularly participate in cooking activities, such as making cakes and bread and look at and predict change. They engage in activities relating to the life cycle of a chicken, with staff talking to them about hen's laying eggs, how they like their eggs to be cooked, and how they can crack so easily. They discuss different animals and staff encourage parents to bring in their pets so that they are able to discuss different aspects with them. Children's learning is reinforced and develop a strong sense of the community as they enjoy visits from the fire brigade and the lollipop lady. Children particularly enjoy making a visit to the local school when they use the computer suite to develop their mouse and keyboard skills. They recognise different shapes

and colours by participating in fun indoor and outdoor games and draw pictures. The children use equipment in the role play area such as cash tills, phones, and weighing scales to develop their learning of everyday technology. Children have good opportunities of developing their imagination as the role play area is well used. They enjoy playing families as they pretend to do the washing and hang the clothes on the line and pretend to buy food from the shop with pretend money. The children have many opportunities of exploring different textures such as water, sand, play dough, paint, cornflour and soil. The children are beginning to talk freely and tell staff about their ideas. For example, making cakes with a cherry on the top, hearts, rabbits and long sausages from the play dough. Children also have additional opportunities to be creative. They express themselves through music and dance and pretend to stretch like a giraffe, walk heavily like an elephant and jump like a frog.

Children's physical development is catered for through a range of indoor and outdoor activities. Children learn to balance as they go up and down on the space hoppers and see-saws, they climb, aim balls in a net to develop their physical and co-ordination skills. They ride a variety of wheeled toys with skill, go through tunnels and play parachute games. Children are beginning to develop their finer manipulative skills and co-ordination by using a range of resources and tools which include scissors, peg boards, hammers and nails, and play dough cutters. Children use a variety of different materials and choose methods of joining which include glue and sticky tape to make collage pictures and parcels. The staff know the children well and there is a range of child-led and adult-initiated activities. Consequently, children remain occupied and make good progress in all areas of their learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well met because staff work well with parents. Continuity of children's care is well promoted because staff form friendly relationships with parents enabling ongoing communications to take place at the beginning and end of sessions. All children are made welcome and take an active part in the life of the pre-school. They feel a strong sense of belonging as they move freely between activities and have space for their belongings. Children form relationships with staff and their peers and they settle quickly because staff are sensitive to their needs. For example, staff ensure that any child sitting on their own is quickly spoken to and encouraged to join in. Currently there are no children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or children who speak English as an additional language attending the pre-school. However, staff have past experience and ensure that they work with parents, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and other agencies to meet the children's needs. Children are learning to respect diversity within their immediate and wider society through planned activities. Toys and resources that promote equality of opportunity are integrated within their play environment, for example, books, dressing-up clothes, play figures and dolls represent different races, cultures and disability. Children learn about different aspects as they talk about various foods they eat in different countries, how they dress differently and why people use wheelchairs and walking frames. Children engage in activities that develop their awareness of the local community. For example, children visit the local school, collect leaves to make collages and look at the horses in the field.

Children are well behaved because they feel secure and are well occupied. Staff are skilled at using positive methods to develop children's self-esteem and to encourage them to learn patterns of good behaviour. Staff act as good role models to the children. For example, they treat one another and the children with courtesy and respect and listen to children carefully both in group and individual situations. Staff deal with unwanted behaviour consistently and

children are polite as they respond to the praise and consistent guidelines set by staff. They are encouraged to share and take turns and they are learning the difference between right and wrong. Children play together harmoniously, for example, they share the large wooden blocks, play dough and take turns at the craft table. Staff use praise well, rewarding children with comments such as 'that's wonderful', or 'well done' which increases their self-esteem and confidence. Children arrive keen to learn, and they co-operate with others in their play. For example, a group of children play in the role play area and help each other to hang out the washing on the line. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There is an effective partnership with parents and staff operate an 'open door' policy and welcome parents into the setting. Policies, procedures and other relevant information are available to parents. Parents are able to access written information about the setting before their child starts and also its education provision. Parents' views about their child's needs and interests are sought before the child joins the group and these are used to help settle the child. Parents are invited to attend for settling-in visits to enable their child to settle smoothly. Parents are also encouraged to assist with certain topics such as making chapatti's, bringing in their pets and fundraising. Children benefit because parents receive regular information about current topics and planning of activities through newsletters and details on the notice board. A book borrowing system and parents assist the more able children with letter sounds which keeps parents involved in their children's learning. Effective informal systems are in place which keep parents up to date with their child's progress towards the six areas of learning. Regular communications at the beginning and end of sessions and assessments are examples of systems used to keep parents well informed.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the groups efficient organisation and the regard staff have for the well-being of children. Staff create a happy, welcoming, friendly atmosphere. They work well together as part of an established team, providing good support for children. Staff organise the space within the premises well to provide a child-centred environment. All the staff hold an appropriate childcare qualification, are experienced and have a strong commitment to attend regular on-going training. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are cared for by suitable staff. There are well-written policies and procedures in place for the safe and efficient management of the setting. Staff are encouraged to undertake regular training and take on new initiatives to develop their knowledge and practice. These include first aid training, equal opportunities and child protection. Necessary documentation such as registers, accidents, medication and incident records are quickly and accurately completed. All documents are confidentially stored in order to protect children and their families. The high adult to child ratios positively supports children's care, learning and play.

The leadership and management is good. The manager is well motivated and inspires the staff to provide good quality care and education for the children. This results in an enthusiastic, happy, committed staff team who work well together. The manager supervises the staff well and provides an effective induction for students and new staff. Regular staff meetings and appraisals are in place which ensure that children are well protected and are cared for by staff who are skilled and knowledgeable. The setting strives to maintain good standards as there are action plans in place which address areas for improvement and to develop the educational provision for children. For example, there are plans in place to develop the outdoor area and to improve their resources in everyday technology. There are close links with the local school making the transition from pre-school to school a positive experience for children. For example,

the children regularly visit the computer suite at the school to develop their mouse and key board skills.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last care inspection the setting was required to establish a system to record any incidents resulting in physical intervention and to ensure that parents were notified. The setting now has individual sheets for recording any incidents which parents countersign. They were asked to inform Ofsted of any changes regarding committee members to ensure that they are suitable. The setting has been proactive in doing this and informing Ofsted of any changes. They were required to include times of arrival and departure of staff and children. The setting now has a system in place which clearly records the arrival and departure of children and staff. They were asked to have a written policy for lost and uncollected children and to ensure that the behaviour statement includes bullying. All policies required have been put into place and the behaviour statement includes bullying. They were asked to ensure that parents were clear regarding contacting Ofsted at any time during the complaints process. The policy has been revised with relevant details and parents are now made aware that they are able to contact Ofsted at any time during the process. They were required to improve records and to ensure that parents were aware of having access to their child's records. The setting has improved systems and parents are now given information on having access to their child's records. Finally they were asked to improve opportunities for children to eat nutritious snacks. The setting now provides a varied selection of healthy, nutritious snacks consisting of various fruits, vegetable and bread sticks, raisins and cheese. These aspects which have now been addressed has improved the health, safety and well-being of children.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was required to develop the partnership with parents by providing them with regular information to their child's next steps in learning in order to help then support their child's progress in their home environment. Since the last inspection the setting has developed the partnership with parents by providing them with detailed information on current topics, the planning and the activities the children will be accessing. Children also regularly choose a book to take home with them and some of the more able children, letter sounds. Parents are encouraged to read books to them and help them with sounds so that they are involved in their learning.

### **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.



## 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):

- ensure that good hygiene practices are maintained with regard to hand washing before snack time
- conduct regular risk assessments of the premises, with action plans and timescales to minimise identified risks.

#### 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 planning to show how activities are evaluated and how the information gained is used to inform future planning.

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)