

Little Dragons

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY307471
Inspection date	11 June 2007
Inspector	Jan Burnet
Setting Address	Pattishall C of E Primary School, School Road, Pattishall, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 8NE
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Registered person	Pamela Katrina Caron Dori-Bishop
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 Dragons Nursery and the Dragon Club opened in 2006. It operates from a modular building within the grounds of Pattishall Primary School and also from the conservatory and computer suite within the school, during out of school hours. It is situated in the village of Pattishall, Northamptonshire. The provision operates throughout the year except for bank holidays and opening hours are Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 52 children may attend the day care at any one time when all space is available and 28 may attend the nursery unit only. There are currently 52 children on roll, including school age children. Of these, five are funded three-year-olds and one is a funded four-year-old. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting employs 8 members of staff. Of these three are teachers, three hold early years qualifications and one is a qualified nurse. The group holds National Day Nursery Association and Pre-School Learning Alliance membership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are aware of good practice with regard to their personal hygiene and routines to protect children's health are addressed well by staff. The risk of cross-infection is minimised because parents are aware that their child should not attend if he or she has a contagious illness. Children's best interests are served in case of accidents because all staff members hold in-date first aid certificates. The risk to children from unsafe food is minimal due to good food hygiene practices. Meals for children before and after school and for nursery children are substantial and nutritious. They learn about the benefit and effects of healthy eating. Fresh food is cooked daily on the premises and nearly all food is organic. Some produce is purchased from farm shops. Meals and snacks consist of a very good variety of vegetables, salad and fruit and children are offered milk or water to drink. Mealtimes are treated as social occasions and children enjoy their food. A three-week menu has been drawn and is displayed for parents. Meals include vegetable stir fry, spaghetti bolognese made with Quorn mince and salad, chicken and ham or vegetable pie and quiche with baked potato and salad. Puddings are fruit or milk based.

Children's emotional well-being is given a high priority and staff offer good support and encouragement. Children are settled and happy. A gradual introduction is arranged with parents so that separation anxiety is avoided. Children are developing an awareness of their own growth needs in relation to other living things as they care for and grow seeds and flowers. Their own enclosed outdoor area is small but children have access to climbing and balancing equipment in the school grounds and they are developing physical skills and confidence when using climbing, swinging and sliding equipment at the local park two or three times each week.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a very warm and welcoming environment and a good range of equipment, resources and activities are organised in the day care unit. The playroom is divided effectively to meet the needs of children at different stages of development and out of school care is provided in the unit and within the school. Toilets are easily accessible off the playroom but there is not a separate toilet for adults. Children's independence is encouraged as they are able to self-select resources from storage units and toy boxes in all areas.

Equipment is safe and in a good condition and risks of accidental injury to children are low because staff are vigilant and most potential risks have been identified and addressed appropriately. However, the washing machine has been moved out of the kitchen in order to meet the requirements of the environmental health officer and is now in the playroom. Potentially this has an impact upon children's safety because the machine has not been made inaccessible to them. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe, for example, not opening the door because, 'it may not be a welcome visitor', hold hands when out walking and keep to the inside of the path, no running and stop, look and listen when crossing the road. Children are gaining a good awareness of the fire procedure because it is practised regularly. They are safe from unwanted visitors and could not leave the premises unsupervised because the building is secure and they are supervised at all times in the garden and the school grounds.

Children's well-being is safeguarded because staff have a working knowledge of the signs of abuse and neglect and are aware of their responsibilities with regard to referral. The child protection procedure is thorough and informs parents that, 'in our nursery we aim to create a secure and caring environment where children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to'. It also identifies that 'the nursery has a duty to report any suspicion to the local authority'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the stimulating environment created by staff. They achieve well because staff use their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum for the foundation stage to provide good quality care and education. Children confidently select resources and they enjoy and get involved in activities. Staff continually ask open-ended questions so that children extend their thinking and their vocabulary. Children develop good manipulative skills with daily access to writing materials, scissors, malleable materials and construction toys and they enjoy pretend play with a good variety of small world and role play resources. Planning is good and is also flexible so that activities reflect children's interests. Observation and assessment are used effectively to ensure that children make progress and they are very well supported by staff. Children are settled and secure and they benefit from a well balanced daily routine that includes times for adult led, adult supported and child initiated activities. They have daily access to art and craft resources, sand and water and they regularly enjoy cooking activities. Today they are making jam tarts to eat at tea-time and they help to count spoonfuls of flour, weigh the ingredients, mix, mould and roll before using a variety of different cutters. Outdoor play, stories and singing are also part of the daily routine.

Children attending before and after school and during school holidays have free choice of all toys and books in play areas and can request resources from a cupboard containing, for example, games and construction toys reserved for them. After school they can choose to play outside with equipment suitable for older children borrowed from the school. Nursery equipment for younger children includes hoops, bats and balls, tricycles, scooters and rockers. Today older children enjoy transferring their own designs on to their t-shirts. After tea quiet activities are encouraged, for example, drawing, small world, construction, puppets, puzzles, card and board games. At the end of the evening children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories or watching children's television.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan effectively for three and four-year-old children and ensure that they are able to access a range of resources, which support their learning across all of the six areas of learning. Children are sociable and confident and show independence in selecting and carrying out activities. Staff challenge children effectively by questioning and extending learning according to their different stages of development. Children play cooperatively together or play happily alongside others. They are aware of behaviour boundaries and show consideration for others.

Children experience a variety of opportunities to explore and investigate. During a recent 'mini beast' topic they collected snails, ants, beetles and frog spawn. They have watched the frog spawn in a large bowl change to tadpoles and currently they are excitedly watching the change to frogs as legs are growing. On nature walks children take notebooks to draw and 'write' about what they see and they use a magnifying glass and binoculars to look at living things. In the

'wild woods' area of the school they have found lots of bugs under logs. Children are currently watching the change as their runner beans grow and are exploring their senses as they smell, touch and taste corn on the cob, baby corn, sweet corn from a tin, pop corn and cornflakes.

Pencil control is developing well and children use writing in a variety of ways, for example, in the role play café and flower shop. Children are encouraged to name their own pictures and name cards are available to help them to recognise and write their own name. They compare letter sounds that begin their names and are encouraged to recognise rhyming sounds. They enjoy stories and select books and handle them well. Children have opportunities to paint every day. They choose their favourite colours and also experiment to create colours by mixing paint. They build on a large and small scale with construction toys and other resources, for example, they have painted a large wall for their role play house. Children enjoy movement to music and explore sound with musical instruments. They make quiet and loud sounds and are learning to tap out simple rhythms. Children have made their own musical instruments. They act out favourite stories, for example, the 'Three Little pigs' and 'Goldilocks and the three bears'.

Children count, sort and match and are developing an awareness of calculation. They name shapes and colours as they play and are developing an awareness of weight and height. For example, they weigh ingredients for cooking and older children recognise numerals on the scales and so are aware of when to stop adding more. Children develop climbing and balancing skills with regular use of equipment in the school grounds and during regular visits to the village park where they have access to climbing apparatus, swings and slides. Skills with tools and small toys are developing well.

Three and four-year-old children experience a very good variety of activities that promote learning and aid their development. Staff plan topics for the year, identify learning objectives for the group in medium term plans and then draw up weekly activities with the objective in mind. Observations are recorded and are used to identify progress along the stepping stones that lead to the early learning goals. Examples of 'work' is kept in individual folders. Children make good progress and staff use what they know about children to inform planning for individuals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are known and are well met by staff. They are encouraged to talk about home and their experiences in order to appreciate and value each others' similarities and differences and they celebrate different religious and cultural festivals through the year. They learn about food and customs from different countries and older children are encouraged to identify countries that they have visited on a displayed map of the world. They choose from a good variety of resources that reflect diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Inclusion is given a high priority. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are valued and challenged and are supported well by staff who work with parents and other professionals to ensure that they are able to reach their full potential.

Children's self-esteem is given a very high priority and staff ensure that positive behaviour is always acknowledged. A comprehensive behaviour policy identifies the importance of set boundaries and states that, 'restrictions on the child's natural desire to explore and develop their own ideas and concepts are kept to a minimum and sanctions applied take account of their age and stage of development'. The aim of staff is to encourage a calm, relaxed atmosphere where children develop self-discipline, manners and respect for others. Consistency of care for

children between home and day care is addressed with a good settling-in procedure and thorough admission information. Verbal communication with parents on a daily basis is good and all required policies and procedures have been drawn up. Parents are invited to read the policies folder, although staff cannot be sure that all have done so. Staff demonstrate a commitment to assessing and improving the service provided as a suggestions folder is accessible in the office and letters were given to all parents when the nursery had been open for five months asking for their 'thoughts, feelings, ideas, suggestions' with regard to their child's care. A prospectus has not yet been developed but a web sight includes aims, staff information and a description of the day care environment. Activity planning and information on the 'Birth to three matters' framework are displayed.

The partnership with parents for early years education is satisfactory. The provision has been operating for a little over six months and only recently registered for funding for nursery education. Key workers intend to organise meetings every six months with parents to share progress records on their child. However, parents are not currently provided with information on the Curriculum for the foundation stage and are not asked to share information on their child's development with regard to the six areas of learning when the child starts nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider ensures that staff enhance children's care and education with the quality of organisation. The leadership and management of early years education is good. The provider is day care manager and is part of the staff team. Staff receive very good support and all are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Procedures for recruitment, selection, induction have been established and an appraisal system is being developed. Children benefit from the commitment shown by staff to improve their knowledge and skills as most are qualified and team members regularly attend training. They demonstrate a sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum for the foundation stage and staff are involved in planning and assessment to ensure that children make good progress. Advice from national organisations and local authority professionals is sort and welcomed in order to improve practice and outcomes for children.

Children benefit from a good staff to child ratio and their welfare and care are supported with staff implementation of the setting's policies and procedures. Children are encouraged to choose from a good range of activities and are able to select additional resources. Space is used effectively to maximise play opportunities for all children. Legally required documentation and records are satisfactorily maintained and are kept up to date. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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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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 there are separate toilet facilities for adults
- make sure that children have no access to laundry facilities.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop systems to make sure that parents are partners in their child's early years education.

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