

Little Cherubs Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286355
Inspection date	04 July 2007
Inspector	Alison Putnar
Setting Address	Winstanley Community College, Kingsway North, Leicestershire, LE3 3BD
Telephone number	0797 3313601
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Registered person	Samantha Mary Williams
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Cherubs Pre-school opened in 2004 under the current management. It operates from two rooms within the youth wing in the grounds of Winstanley Community College in Leicestershire. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:00, and from 12:30 to 15:00 on Tuesdays, during term-time.

There are currently 39 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 33 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding catchment area. There are currently no children with learning difficulties or disabilities attending and none who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four staff. The manager and deputy hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is adequately maintained as staff follow appropriate hygiene practices, such as, sterilizing tables before children have their snack. The children begin to develop and understand healthy practices through routines of the session. They are reminded to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. However, this is not always closely monitored and equipment for hand-washing is not always well stocked. Well-written policies and procedures are in place and followed to prevent cross-infection. For example, the sick children policy is shared with parents ensuring the risk of spreading illness is minimised. Children are appropriately cared for, if they have minor accidents, by staff who hold first aid qualifications. Records are in place and completed accurately with any details of accidents and medication. This ensures children's medical needs are catered for.

Children are adequately nourished as they have light snacks and refreshments during the session. Staff take note of any dietary requirements provided by the parents. Children's independence is beginning to be promoted as they are able to choose when they want to have their snack. However, they are not fully supported to develop good social skills and engage in worthwhile conversation as the organisation of the snack time does not promote this effectively. Children kneel at the snack table and are given their snack by staff who stand close by. Sometimes children learn about the benefit of healthy foods. They talk about milk making strong bones during the snack. This is less well promoted through planned topics. Children develop their physical skills generally well through the use of appropriate equipment. They use bikes, tents, tunnels and large soft bricks to explore movement. Good opportunities are provided for children to practise the skills they already have as equipment such as bikes are out frequently. Sometimes they are encouraged by staff to explore and develop new skills. For example, a simple assault course is built, where children are encouraged to crawl over, travel under and round the large soft play pieces. Limited use is made of the available outdoor facilities, as such, opportunities are missed for children to benefit from the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. They are well-supervised to ensure the risk of accidents is reduced. Frequent conversations about safely using toys and equipment help the children to learn about keeping themselves safe in the setting. Children and staff talk about the potential for hurting themselves if they play near the low steps in the setting. The fire evacuation drill is practised to ensure all can get out calmly should the need arise. The required written procedure for emergency evacuation is included in the setting's operational procedures. However, this is not displayed, potentially adversely affecting the safe evacuation of students and any visitors. Children are safeguarded as staff generally understand the processes to follow if they are concerned about child abuse. Senior staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities to protect children and take appropriate action in relation to reporting any allegations and concerns.

Staff endeavour to create a welcoming environment through displaying posters and children's art work. Toys and resources are safe. They are generally well presented encouraging children to take part in the range provided. Overall children enjoy their play as they are free to make choices from the selection provided. Their interest and enjoyment is promoted further through

opportunities to request additional resources from the storage cupboards. Generally staff are able and willing to provide for the children's requests. The areas used by the children are maintained to a satisfactory standard. Children are able to relax, play or read quietly and comfortably as cushions and floor mats are provided in the book area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The younger children in the setting make adequate progress in development as they access a suitable range of activities. They explore freely and incidentally learn as they take part in activities alongside older children. For example, two children play next to each other at the shallow sand trays. The older child uses her finger to write her name in the sand. The young child watches closely and then uses her finger to make random marks in the sand, developing early writing skills. Children's enjoyment is supported as they are able to make choices in play from the range provided by staff. The setting is at a very early stage of using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide them in planning a fuller range of activities to support children to make maximum progress. As a result, on occasions, children are occupied rather than actively learning. Good relationships are evident. Most children are confident to take part in activities. All are supported appropriately by staff who know them well. A child who becomes upset during the setting is warmly comforted by a staff member. Together they talk through his concerns and as a result he is happy to return to an activity.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff have a generally good understanding of the foundation stage. They use this knowledge to guide them in planning a range of activities that provide a suitable curriculum for children. As a result, children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Children generally behave well. They respond appropriately to staff expectations for behaviour, enabling learning to take place. Children respond when a staff member pauses during a story to wait for some in the group to settle and listen. The use of space and grouping of children at times does not always effectively support and maximise children's learning. For example, all children are grouped together at story time. The length and content of the story is not always appropriate for the varying ages and abilities. Some younger ones struggle to listen, resulting in older ones and staff being distracted and the flow of the story is lost. Plans of activities include a suitable variety of learning experiences across the six areas of learning but lack differentiation for the varying abilities of children. This potentially means that older children are not sufficiently supported to reach their full potential and that younger ones lose interest as activities are too difficult. Good systems are in place for staff to observe and record children's progress. The information gained is not yet fully being used to plan further activities that help children to build on skills they already have. There are satisfactory systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Overall, children make sound progress in learning. Most settle quickly as their parents leave. Older children are developing good friendships as they invite others to join in their play. Several are confident to share experiences with unfamiliar adults, when excitedly talking about new shoes for a wedding. Some are confident to try new activities and to initiate play. They are keen to have a go at using a computer in the setting and talk about experiences of computers in their own home. Important social skills of sharing and taking turns are supported. Some routines of the day, such as snack time, are less well used to promote social skills and opportunities to incorporate other areas of learning are missed. For example, encouraging

children to count the chairs needed for those in a group or calculating how many pieces the fruit needs to be cut into.

Children have developing language skills. Many understand the concept of a conversation, they listen and respond appropriately during talks with adults. They share experiences during one to one conversations. Less opportunities are created for children to practise talking in larger groups. Children enjoy stories read by staff and listen generally well. Older ones demonstrate early reading skills as they act familiar experiences of reading to a group. They turn the pages and tell the story from memory and from reading the pictures. Opportunities are provided for children to attempt mark making and some are able to write their own names during adult led activities. Younger children also attempt this following words of encouragement from staff. Some children know sounds of letters in their names, but less frequently explore the sounds of other letters. Less opportunities are provided for children to attempt to write during play or to use text for a purpose. For example, labels are displayed on food packets in the shop but there is no provision for children to pretend to write shopping lists. Younger children enjoy the role-play area, acting out familiar scenes, such as, pushing dolls in the prams. However, the range of equipment and resources sometimes restricts older children from developing their imagination further. A good range of resources are provided for children to explore a variety of art and craft work. Occasionally, painting activities are too adult led, with many pre-cut shapes given, restricting children's own ideas and creativity. Good opportunities are provided for children to use a variety of tools such as paint brushes, scissors and pens. This also supports development of their smaller physical skills and hand to eye co-ordination. Children practise fastenings on clothes when dressing the dolls and when putting on coats to go home.

Children demonstrate their ability to count as they independently count building blocks in a tower they have constructed. They are less familiar with simple calculations such as the number when one is added or taken away. Mathematical resources, such as, shape puzzles are available and as a result children correctly name simple shapes including square, rectangle and circle. Practical play activities, for instance water and sand, are used less effectively to help children look at size and capacity, when filling and emptying beakers and bottles. However, some older children use appropriate language to describe size when comparing the heights of themselves, talking about being taller than their friend. Resources reflect positive images of the wider world and are used effectively to help children to explore people's similarities and differences. Topics are planned that enable children to explore features of the wider world. For example, through topics on jungle animals. Little use is made of the immediate grounds to help children explore the natural world, such as, going on bug hunts in pre-school grounds. Morning registration time is used to engage children in conversations about the days of the week and the weather. Children have some opportunities to use old telephones, keyboards and pretend tills during role-play helping them to explore some aspects of information and communication technology. They sometimes use equipment such as cameras to record activities in the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settle well in the setting. A welcoming atmosphere is apparent, where staff are enthusiastic in conversations with parents and children. The flexible settling in processes support children and parents to become familiar with the setting and enable relationships to develop. Children's individual records are well-maintained and ensure relevant information is documented to enable staff to cater for all individual needs. A programme of staff training and development is in progress to further develop staff skills of fully supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Good strategies are used to develop children's confidence and self-esteem. Each year older children, supported by pre-school staff, make visits to the local school fostering a smooth transition into school. A celebration is held for those moving on. Other special days and festivals are acknowledged through planned topics and activities. This helps children to explore aspects of the wider world and society. Children begin to understand acceptable behaviour as they discuss simple 'rules' for the pre-school. Positive reward systems are in place, these include stickers and reward charts which support children to show pride in their achievements. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have firm relationships with staff and begin to form close relationships with their peers. Many are kind and show empathy for their friends. For example, a child asks another how she grazed her arm; she expresses concern and offers a comforting touch as the events are shared.

Parents are given a good level of information about the setting. Written policies and procedures are shared. Documents about the day to day running are generally shared appropriately overall. Staff are available to discuss any issues with parents at the beginning and end of each session. Partnerships with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. A good level of written information about the Foundation Stage curriculum is provided. Children benefit as information about future topics is shared with parents through newsletters, although this does not fully include specific ways parents can support children's learning at home. A parents' evening provides good opportunities for discussions and plans for children's progress; here a yearly written report is shared. Children regularly take art-work home enabling parents to talk about activities their children have been involved in.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are well cared for by staff who hold relevant qualifications and have appropriate experience. Children's safety is protected as staff have been through relevant vetting procedures. Written policies and procedures are in place, and contain relevant information. These work in practice to promote children's health, safety and well-being. The organisation of staff ensures children are well cared for. The routines of the day are less well organised to have maximum benefit on children's development. Staff work well as a team and become involved in activities and to extend children's learning through their own language. Most required records are in place and generally well organised with the exception of the record of previous complaints. This is a breach in regulations. Records are stored confidentially and the majority shared with parents as required. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The team show a commitment to improving the educational curriculum through seeking and taking on advice from relevant professionals. Together they have considered the training needs of some staff, but have not yet had opportunities to complete appropriate training. The staff team meet to discuss issues in the setting but have not yet developed systems of discussing strengths and weaknesses of the educational curriculum. As a result, some areas of learning are less well covered through the activities than others.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the setting agreed to improve systems for obtaining written permission to seek necessary medical advice or treatment. A secure system ensuring this information is completed by parents before children are left at the setting is in place, thus improving practice in ensuring children receive appropriate care and attention in the event of

more serious accidents. In addition the setting agreed to review organisation of staff to promote the safety and welfare of children in the setting and to ensure that all toys are of suitable design and conform to safety standards. Staff regularly inspect toys as they are set out, ensuring they are safe for children to access. In addition staff supervise children well to ensure they receive appropriate support during activities, maintaining their safety and well-being. At a recent complaint investigation an action was raised in relation to developing a record of any complaints. This has not yet been addressed and as such remains an area for improvement following this inspection.

Nursery education

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration Ofsted has received one complaint in relation to National Standard 11: behaviour management, National Standard 5: equipment and National Standard 2: organisation. Ofsted made an unannounced visit to investigate the concerns. A recommendation was made that required the setting to review the policy for managing behaviour and to ensure it is fully understood and followed by all staff. An action was agreed in relation to the provider developing a record of complaints. The investigation remains ongoing at the time of this inspection.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- develop a more stimulating range of activities for the younger children as explained in 'Birth to three matters'
- ensure a record of complaints is maintained and appropriate information from that record is shared with parents on request
- review the organisation of groups in the setting to provide a richer experience for children with regard to story time and 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):

- develop planning further to include differentiation in intended learning outcomes for the varying abilities of children, in order to support all children to reach their full potential
- develop skills of using the information gained through assessments of children's development to plan future activities helping children to build upon the skills they already have
- provide increased opportunities for some staff to develop a more secure knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum
- develop systems of monitoring the educational curriculum to ensure each of the six areas of learning are covered equally and comprehensively.

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