

Long Buckby Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220210
Inspection date	23 June 2007
Inspector	Sharon Waterfall
Setting Address	Baptist Church Schoolrooms, Market Square, Long Buckby, Northamptonshire, NN6 7RR
Telephone number	01327 842587
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Registered person	Long Buckby Pre School
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 good. 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?

Long Buckby Pre-school is a committee run group which opened in 1971. It operates from the Baptist Church School Rooms in the village of Long Buckby. The pre-school operates five mornings a week 9.00 am to 12.00 noon and for two afternoon sessions, Monday and Tuesday, 12.30 pm to 3.00 pm. The children access a care room on the first floor and secure outdoor area at the front of the church.

There are currently 51 children on roll, including 38 funded three and four year olds. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding villages. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

Six staff work with the children, half hold relevant childcare qualifications and with other staff working towards them. The pre-school is affiliated to the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority through visits from a qualified teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are learning about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical routines and activities provided. A physical activity is provided for the children daily, including large climbing apparatus, walks in the local environment or games such as musical mats. Children develop good physical coordination as they competently climb large apparatus, having to use core body skills to balance themselves at the top of the frame to climb over. They enjoy coming down the slide on their tummies and backs challenging their limitations in a safe environment. Their smaller physical skills are developed as they use small equipment such as paint brushes, construction and pencils.

Children's health and well-being is well supported by the knowledge gained by the setting about individual children's needs. Good hygiene practices are carried out by staff, who understand the importance of good role modelling, therefore children effectively learn about the importance of personal hygiene and that of the equipment they use. The sickness policy ensures that appropriate action is taken if a child is unwell to prevent the spread of infection and staff's positive hygiene procedures support this process.

Children's nutritional needs are well met through the provision of fresh fruit daily and accessible drinks at all times, particularly after physical activity. Activities such as cooking help the children to experience and try new foods. Individual dietary needs and preferences are met as clear information is gathered from parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a relatively safe and secure environment. For example, risk assessments are reviewed and specific ones are developed for outings. However, a fire door and high stacked chairs in the main care room pose safety risks to children. Safety policies and procedures are clearly implemented by staff to ensure that children learn about keeping themselves safe, such as actively taking part in emergency evacuations and talking about road safety when walking in the local environment.

Around the setting children's work is displayed creating a welcoming environment for the children and their families and a sense of belonging to the children. Resources have been carefully selected to support children's play and are checked by staff regularly to ensure they remain suitable. The children play with a varied range of quality toys and resources; they engage in lots of purposeful activity to direct their own play. For example, children have not only soft toy animals to care for in the Rescue Centre, but also animal dressing-up clothes enabling them to become more involved. Resources are age-appropriate, varied and enable children to progress developmentally.

Children are protected and kept safe from harm as staff have a clear understanding of their role in child protection. The child protection policy has been recently updated to reflect current legislation and staff attend ongoing training to ensure their knowledge is up to date. The person with responsibility for child protection has a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if there are concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The variety of the activities enable the younger children to explore new experiences, learn social skills and develop a sense of security and autonomy. For example, through painting activities the younger children are mark making and exploring the texture and feel of the paint as they hand print in a variety of colours. Through the cooking activity they learn about change of ingredients and how some food is made, they enjoy the physical skills of stirring, pouring and mixing and are delighted when a cake is produced later. They are able to talk about significant events if they cook at home or simply express that they do not like fruit in cakes - with one child declaring that they will give the fruit bit to their mum.

Through dice games children begin to learn about taking turns, matching colours and counting numbers, and enjoy the competitive nature of winning, though enjoy taking part in a group activity. At story time they sit with a familiar adult and snuggle in, feeling secure and important to someone, whilst learning about print, story structure and joining in with repetitive phrases. Choosing activities and staying on task is supporting them as competent learners and helping them to develop independence. Children separate easily from their carers and enjoy their time in pre-school, interacting well with other children and some friendships are beginning to form as children follow one another to activities and engage in imaginary play.

The staff are beginning to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support and guide some of their planning for the younger children. They are able to differentiate the Foundation Stage planning to ensure that they provide opportunities for the younger children that are age appropriate and have realistic expectations of children's achievements.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The supervisor actively uses the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance to ensure planning includes all six areas of learning and links in with the stepping stones. The emphasis leans towards ensuring that all of the stepping stones are covered through the year for all children and some are revisited to consolidate learning. This means that for children in their final term of pre-school, rather than reflecting on the children's current achievement and building on that using the stepping stones to challenge and plan individual children's future learning, they are repeating stepping stones that offer no extension in further development. Activities themselves are interesting and a wide variety is offered through the daily sessions and stimulating outings into the local environment. Children's independence is encouraged as they choose what they want to play with and the environment is child friendly and organised into specific learning areas. Staff observe children continuously and put together the most attractive portfolio's that contain a wealth of information about the children's progress, interests and development. However, this information is not effectively used to inform future planning or to develop children's specific learning goals. The evidence collected does show that children are actively engaged in their play and are making appropriate progress towards the early learning goals.

The children are interested and excited to join in activities and they are motivated learners as they immediately access resources as they come into pre-school. Good relationships with staff and peers are being formed and children show care and concern for others, as children identify and pass favourite resources along to their friends. They are learning to share and take turns through planned activities when playing dice and card games.

Children look at books independently after choosing them from the book area and approach adults to look at them together. An awareness that print has meaning is shown when children ask what the words say and from memory recall the substance of the story. Picture cues are used also to tell each other the stories and an interest in books and stories is evident. Mark making is provided through creative tasks and children enjoy drawing and painting, however, opportunities for writing for a variety of reasons are not incorporated into activities such as role-play therefore not extending learning for more able children. Children are confident in speaking in groups, joining in with songs and guessing what happens next in stories. Their language and vocabulary is developed through the topics and themes, such as talking about timetables, platforms and tickets on a train trip.

The children are developing their number counting and recognition skills as they sort numbered cards, measure their height and count the number of children present during registration time. Within a card game older children recognise, sort and sequence numerals to 10, with basic calculation developing through number rhymes. Outings in the local area help the children to experience the world around them as they learn about caring for chickens and growing plants in a local residence garden. During a cooking activity they weigh ingredients, follow a recipe and observe the changes in ingredients when added together, this is if the children were in the first group as those that engaged afterwards missed opportunities for this learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's continuity of care is promoted as a good range of information is gathered on the registration and 'All About Me' forms about the children and discussions with parents at this time ensure staff know children and their specific needs when entering the setting. Parents receive information about the setting through policies and procedures, regular newsletters, the prospectus and daily discussions with staff. Parents say that they are very confident in approaching staff and feel very welcomed, gaining information about what the children do from an annual consultation and children's creative work they take home. They are enabled to be involved in aspects of children's learning as they make up the committee and have suggestions of how to support children's learning half-termly. Partnership with parents and carers is therefore good.

Children have a good understanding of acceptable social behaviours and develop good self-esteem from constant praise and positive interactions. They play well together with friendships beginning to form and care and concern shown for others. For example, children clap to support another child's achievements and offer friends resources they are known to favour. Session routines are known and responded to easily with children feeling secure in relationships with staff and peers. Therefore, children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children are valued as individuals; activities are provided to ensure inclusion for all children using information gathered from parents and staff knowledge. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the issues regarding providing pro-active care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's awareness and understanding of the diverse community is promoted through effective use of appropriate resources that reflect positive images and through discussion and creative activities. Their own individuality and identities are respected by caring and supportive staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children benefit from a staff team who are committed to ongoing improvement and practice as they undergo training for relevant childcare qualifications and updated training in new childcare practices. The appraisal system and induction processes ensure that the relevant policies are fully applied throughout the nursery and practice is evaluated in addition to the regular staff meetings. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are professional and understand the needs of the children and for continued improvement.

The operational plan, space organisation and curricula implementation promote positive outcomes for children. The staff work very well together as a team, ensuring responsibilities for activities, planning and assessment are shared amongst key staff to provide a learning environment that interests all children and values staff's skills.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Children's achievements are observed and recorded sufficiently within the pre-school and staff use their knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan a wide range of activities and experiences for all children. The nursery education is monitored and reviewed as staff seek advice from outside agencies and hold regular planning meetings. The manager is very dedicated and demonstrates a real commitment to improving the setting to support and meet the children's and parent's needs. In the main, recommendations and key issues set at the last inspection have been successfully implemented improving the education provision for children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to develop an action plan that set out how minimum staff training and qualification requirements would be met and to develop an induction for new staff. Both of these recommendations have been successfully implemented with half of the staff holding relevant childcare qualifications and others currently attending training and an induction is in place that includes staff knowledge of all policies and procedures. These ensure that children's health, safety and welfare are promoted.

At the last education inspection the provider agreed to improve planning to ensure that aims were clearly identified, improve staff's knowledge of the aims for specific activities they were supporting and using assessment information to inform planning. The first two the provider has implemented completely, the planning clearly shows the intended learning outcomes for children and staff are now more involved with planning and work with children when required not just at one specific activity. This ensures that children's needs at that time are met and staff have clearer ideas of what children can achieve. Although excellent information is gathered regarding children's achievements it has not yet been used effectively in planning children's next steps to learning and is a recommendation to develop within this inspection.

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

- improve children's safety by ensuring all hazards are minimised, with particular regard to stacked chairs and the efficiency of a secure fire door within the main care room.

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):

- use information gained in children's portfolio's to assess their progress and ensure that the information is effectively used to link into planning and children's individual next steps to learning
- ensure children in the wise owl group are provided with challenging activities that broaden their experiences and extend their learning abilities.

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