

Little People Day Nursery and Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	307466
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Inspector	Shirley Leigh Monks-Meagher
Setting Address	113-117 Liverpool Road, Patricroft, Eccles, Manchester, M30 0ND
Telephone number	0161 789 7020 0161 789 7030
E-mail	
Registered person	Tracy Elizabeth Palmer
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 People Day Nursery and Pre-School opened in 1996 and is owned by a private individual. It operates from a two storey, renovated clothing warehouse and is situated on the main A57 Liverpool Road in Eccles. Children attending the nursery are grouped according to their age or developmental stage into Babies, Little Bears and Big Bears Pre-School play areas. These areas are all currently on the ground floor. There are secure play areas available for outdoor play.

The setting provides care for children from the local and wider community.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 82 children under eight years at any one time. There are currently 53 children from six months to four years on roll. This includes nine children in receipt of the nursery educational grant. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as an additional language. Operating hours are 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday throughout the year, with the exception of Bank Holidays.

A staff team of 16 are employed by the registered person which includes a cleaner and two cooks. Of the staff working directly with the children, nine have early years qualifications equivalent to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) level 2 or 3 and several others are

currently working towards appropriate qualifications. The setting receives support from the Sure Start Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a clean environment. Staff follow many good practical hygiene routines to help minimise cross infection, such as the regular and systematic cleaning and sterilisation of toys and equipment and providing children with individual bedding. Children learn about personal hygiene, such as toilet routines and washing their hands at appropriate times. Older children competently wash their hands thoroughly, using soap and warm running water and dry themselves with individual paper towels. They are beginning to understand that this 'gets rid of the muck'. Well maintained documents relating to medication, minor accidents and incidents protect children's welfare and an effective sickness and exclusion policy protects them from illness.

Nutritious and healthy meals freshly prepared on the premises, provide children with a balanced diet that includes fresh vegetables and fruit. For example, children enjoy vegetable chilli and rice followed by yoghurt for lunch and a selection of white and wholemeal bread sandwiches for afternoon tea. Meal times are social, relaxed occasions where children are given sufficient time to develop their independence with chewing skills and sufficient food to meet their individual needs. Children understand the importance of drinking water. Babies are consistently offered fresh water and more able children competently help themselves or younger children to drinks from the water coolers situated around the setting.

Children benefit from regular outdoor activities. They run and play in the fresh air which contributes to good health. They explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences. Staff know the children well as individuals and this encourages children to confidently try new skills, ask for help and set their own limits in a safe environment. For example, children skilfully manoeuvre wheeled vehicles, balance on equipment and climb under, through and over obstacles that provide varying levels of challenge. Children recognise physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Babies are encouraged to develop physical skills. They have ample space to roll, crawl and explore their environment and plenty of suitable equipment and furniture to help them to pull up and develop their mobility. All the children benefit from well balanced routines which allow for vigorous play and rest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed into the bright well maintained environment. Photographs of the children at play and displays of their work adorn the premises and contributes significantly to children's strong sense of belonging. Ample space ensures that children can play and explore in safety and comfort. Resources are plentiful and age-appropriate. They are easily accessible because they are at child height and well maintained, minimising risks to children. All children's play areas are very well organised to maximise children's potential.

There are good systems in place to keep children safe and secure. The premises are secure, entry is via a doorbell system and staff are vigilant about the security of the premises. All visitors are recorded and children are only released to pre arranged named adults. Risk assessments

take place frequently for indoors, outdoors and outings. These effectively minimise hazards to children because identified concerns are acted upon immediately and followed up successfully. Children are gaining an awareness of the importance of personal safety. For example, the older children understand how to negotiate steps and varying levels in the floor when moving from their play area to the dining room and how to evacuate the building safely in the event of an emergency. Role play activities with a zebra crossing mat, lollipop sign, traffic lights and their wheeled vehicles is developing their understanding of road safety.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff who have a clear knowledge and understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of professional concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children feel secure, safe and contented in the nursery. There are close affectionate relationships throughout the setting yielding a happy and harmonious environment where children bloom. Good quality interaction between the children and adults results in confident children who develop strong self-esteem in a supportive and trusting environment.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and provide varied and imaginative activities, experiences, care and education for young children. They are sensitive to the children's needs and recognise them as individuals. Systematic observations identify what the children can do but not always if they know or understand something. As a result, staff do not use them effectively when identifying appropriate next steps and planning for children's individual development and progress. This results in some activities being too challenging for some children. For example, the letter to Santa activity. Babies and children do, however, enjoy many experiences which enhance their development, such as exploring using their senses. For example, children express their delight building and knocking over sand pies and their faces register amazement when they make toys squeak or lights flash. Music and songs are used for fun and to soothe children. Children handle and investigate a variety of objects, such as brushes and bristles, wooden and metal spoons, pebbles and loofahs. Activities with jelly, paint, pasta and rice, gloop and textured fabrics enhance their tactile experiences. Stories and lots of effective small world and role play opportunities are helping the children to make sense of their world.

Nursery Education.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and are purposefully and consistently engaged. There are many opportunities for independent and adult initiated learning throughout the sessions. For example, children are able to design, create and build because they can freely access a huge range of media, tools and materials. Children are independent. They put on aprons and coats, choose activities and select resources, use the toilet independently and quench their thirst at the water dispenser. Their concentration is developing well. They spend lengthy periods of time on the computer, matching, sorting and playing with small world toys, such as the fire station, people and engines. Children confidently express themselves using a wide and varied vocabulary. They spend lots of discussion time with the staff, during their play and consequently are developing good recall skills and questioning minds. They are beginning to identify and recognise their own and others names in their environment. Children are delighted by stories and enjoy dressing up as characters, predicting events and even making up their own stories during their role play. Great fun is had acting out 'the bear hunt' and recording their version of the story by making a book using photographs. Children are developing an understanding of the reason we write. Their environment is full of the written word.

Children are developing an early understanding of number and mathematical concepts. For example, simple counting songs and visual aids are used effectively by staff to help children gain an awareness of early concepts of simple addition and subtraction, such as 'three little ducks'. Older children classify and compare, such as grouping bricks by size and colour. The fun and practical activities in the sand and water play are helping the children to understand about volume, capacity and weight.

Children experiment in hands-on activities. They are gaining an awareness of change as they follow the seasons and prepare and bake cakes. Children construct using a wealth of resources and design and make large and small models. Children are gaining a perception of time. They confidently recall past events when they appear on the 'big screen', know the routine of the day and ask questions about 'tomorrow'. They express their learning and ideas creatively using a wide variety of media. For example, after searching out and observing mini beasts in the outdoor area they use paint to record their observations. Their caterpillars, ladybirds and worms are proudly displayed on the wall. Musical experiences are helping the children to understand rhythm, beat and tone. Children's perceptions of their experiences can clearly be seen in their imaginative games.

The quality of nursery education teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and generally their understanding of how children learn is reflected in their teaching styles. They clearly know about children's individual abilities because they work closely with and systematically observe them. However, as with the children under three years, the information is not utilised effectively in assessment and planning and activities do not always benefit from key staff's understanding of individual children. For example, the Gruffalo story session was ideal for the more able children but having two stories was too lengthy for others. Thus over challenging their capability of sitting and listening and resulting in them becoming bored, restless and spoiling the enjoyment of the activity for themselves and others.

Staff have a skilful approach to developing positive relationships and children's self-esteem. This plays a significant part in facilitating positive outcomes for children. Effective interaction provides children with challenging thoughts and opportunities for self-reflection and the routine and structure of the day promotes children's learning. A very well organised and stimulating environment induces children's curiosity, encourages independence and choice and is conducive to learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children significantly benefit from the strong, professional partnerships that are established with parents and carers. They are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet children's individual needs and ensure that they are fully included in the life of the setting. As a result, key workers have a clear picture of children's individual health, dietary, social and emotional needs, religious and cultural beliefs and work effectively to ensure these are catered for within the provision. Children learn about the diversity of our society through resources which positively portray non stereotypical images, the positive role model of staff and through celebrating a variety of celebrations and festivals. Children taste cultural foods and they are learning about national flags of the world and are beginning to understand that people use a variety of languages to communicate with each other.

Staff warmly greet children and are interested in what they have to say helping them to feel secure and valued. Photographs of the children at play and samples of their work are displayed throughout the setting promoting children's self-esteem and respect for others. They are learning to work harmoniously with others whilst enjoying the freedom to explore within appropriate boundaries. For example, in their outdoor play the children negotiate who will ride in the rickshaw and who will pull it. Staff effectively support children in sharing and taking turns fairly. Children behave well. They learn appropriate codes of behaviour and staff use consistent age-appropriate strategies to promote acceptable behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents positively endorse the care and education their children receive and feel well informed about their children's progress and are involved in their learning. Parents facilitate some activities, such as telling a story or are able to share information about their jobs as a paramedic and in the police force. They support topics by providing resources, suggest ideas for activities like the recently held sports day and share observations about their children's achievements at home with the key workers.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The effective organisation enhances children's care and education. A motivated, enthusiastic and established staff team work well together to conscientiously implement the setting's policies and procedures, support each other and underpin the smooth running of the setting. Staff's commitment clearly demonstrates their regard for the well-being of all children and promotes children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to contribute positively. Daily routines cater for individual needs because they are flexible.

The comprehensive operational plan ensures that staff are generally clear about their roles and responsibilities enabling children to benefit from continuity of care in a secure environment. Recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure children are cared for by well qualified, experienced and suitable adults. However, the management team do not always rigorously enforce all aspects of the procedures. For example, monitoring the return of reference requests. Indoor and outdoor space is organised to maximise play opportunities for children. Well maintained records remain confidential whilst being easily accessible.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Children benefit from the efficient management of the educational programme. Staff receive positive direction from the management team and are encouraged through regular training and updates to maintain and extend their professional practice. There are established procedures in place which monitor and evaluate the quality of the curriculum. However, they are not implemented rigorously enough to accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning and thus indicate and direct staff training and development of the provision.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to formalise the lost child policy, consistently maintain consents for all children who attend the setting and minimise a hazard in the outdoor area.

The setting have formalised the procedures they would follow in the event of a child being missing or becoming lost by transcribing their practice into a written format and including it with the policies and procedure documents that make up their operational plan and which are shared with parents. Emergency medical advice or treatment consent was obtained from the parents of the children who attended the out of school provision at the time, to ensure procedures were consistent with the practice undertaken for nursery children. However, the setting are no longer operating an out of school provision. The rendering at the base of the external wall in the outdoor play area has been repaired to minimise any danger to children from the metal framework. As a result of the actions taken by the setting children's safety and welfare are better protected.

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 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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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):

- continue to develop staff's understanding of how their observations of children inform their assessment of and ability to plan effectively for children's individual development, learning and progress. (applies to nursery education also)

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):

- strengthen the systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of staff practice, teaching and learning to effectively highlight areas for further development. (applies to day care also)

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