

Longtown Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	223556
Inspection date	18 October 2007
Inspector	Josephine Mary Hammick
Setting Address	Longtown, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR2 0LE
Telephone number	01873 860 560
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Registered person	Longtown Pre School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Longtown Pre-School opened in the early 1980's. It operates from three rooms in a temporary classroom located within the grounds of Longtown Primary School. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 21 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 10 nursery education grant-funded three-year-olds and four funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The group opens on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 15:00.

Three full-time staff work with the children. Two of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 3 and one to Level 2. The setting is working towards their bronze quality assurance award and receives support from a teacher/mentor from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and are generally protected from infection because staff have procedures in place to protect them. For example, tables are wiped prior to being used for snack and meal times and cloths are laundered regularly; this ensures that the risk of cross-infection is minimised. Children are learning why routines are important through everyday conversations with staff. For example, one child informed the group how germs spread if they do not wash their hands thoroughly or wipe the table properly.

Children are well cared for in the event of an accident. Sufficient staff hold first aid qualifications to enable them to deal with accidents effectively. Appropriate documentation is kept and shared with parents to safeguard children, including reporting of accidents and administration of medicines. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through regular routines for washing their hands before snacks and lunch times, after using the toilet and playing outside.

Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday practical experiences. At snack time children enjoy fresh fruit, vegetables and biscuits, low sugar juice and milk. However, opportunities are missed for children to develop their independence because food and drink is served to them by staff rather than their being able to pour and serve each other. Snack menus are varied so that children have many opportunities to experience different tastes and textures. Although parents provide packed lunches for their children, they are learning to make healthy choices about the foods they eat through discussions with staff and planned activities. For example, making vegetable soup or fresh fruit salad using exotic and unusual fruits. Children also enjoy making their own fresh bread.

All children benefit from the strong emphasis on physical development. They enjoy a range of indoor and outdoor activities which promote their physical skills. For example, they frequently play outside using a range of equipment such as bikes, building bricks and climbing frames. Music and movement sessions ensure that children benefit from opportunities to stretch and let off steam when they can't go outside. The wide provision of resources ensures that activities provide sufficient physical challenges to children of all ages. Children also have opportunities to use cutters, scissors, paintbrushes and other small tools to develop their manipulative skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a maintained and child-focused environment. Staff prepare the room with a varied range of appropriate resources before children arrive each day. This creates a stimulating environment for them. Children are able to access a range of developmentally appropriate toys and equipment. As a result they play safely and are happily occupied.

Children's safety is assured by procedures that are used to restrict access to the setting. For example, entry is restricted by the door being locked and visitors are supervised at all times. Children enjoy planned outings to places such as the local farm to see the lambs. Full risk assessments are carried out before each visit and a high adult-to-child ratio is adhered to at all times. This helps children to remain safe. Children's safety in case of fire is promoted. Regular discussions and fire drills help children to learn how they could evacuate the premises safely to protect themselves. Protection of children's welfare is satisfactory. The group have a written

policy on child protection and are aware of their duty to protect children. The policy is in line with current legislation. Consequently children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are happy to attend, they enjoy their time in a stimulating and well resourced environment. Children throughout the setting are happy, confident and have built secure relationships with each other and their key worker. Staff provide a good balance of child-initiated and group projects to ensure that children have access to a range of stimulating activities. For example, stories and songs during circle time ensure that play is linked in with the theme of colour and shape; the painting and gluing activities stimulate interest and extend learning in a fun and informal way. The children are keen and motivated by what is available to them and demonstrate a sound understanding of the overall theme.

Children's play and learning is supported by staff who have a fair understanding of how children learn, making links with the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' frameworks. Staff consistently interact with children to extend their learning and play. Children's confidence and self-esteem is developed through the attention and praise they receive for their achievements. Staff value children's creations, displaying them attractively on wall displays or including them in their own scrapbooks.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children enjoy being in the setting. They are enthusiastic about the range of activities provided. They concentrate and persevere well, whether playing alone or when benefiting from interaction with their peers or adults. Children are confident to express opinions or suggest ideas. For example, two children made treasure maps at home and keenly tried them out in the group. Staff joined in with enthusiasm and soon all the children became engrossed in treasure hunting. Staff ensure children have plenty of opportunities for conversation and discussions, while the less articulate children have good support to help them join in. Good use is made of questions to foster children's thinking and inspire curiosity.

Children enjoy stories and rhymes. They listen attentively and contribute well to discussions about features of stories. For example, they discuss how a character in a story feels when he changes his colour and the children talk about feelings of being invisible in a crowd or being special. Children sing tunefully and with enthusiasm; rhymes are used imaginatively to reinforce aspects of the topic. Children enjoy mark-making in different contexts whether they are forming patterns in paint, tracing their names with their fingers on their place mats or with pencils in their work books.

Counting and number recognition activities are well planned, practical and fun for children. Many count confidently beyond 10. During routines, play activities and discussions, children have plenty of opportunities to consolidate their understanding of one-to-one correspondence. Children enjoy working out simple number problems, such as how many more cups are needed at each table at snack time. Stories and rhymes are also used well to support children's awareness of simple number operations. Staff encourage children to check their answers so that, for example, they often spontaneously count using their fingers.

Children are inquisitive and interested in how things work. They explore different materials, such as water, sand and play dough. They find out how different construction toys and other items fit together. They enjoy using technology, for example, a computer regularly and a tape recorder. Children confidently handle tools such as scissors and use mathematical language to describe their pictures' appearance and the position of key features.

Children move confidently. During an outside play session they competently follow different actions, stretching and moving in different directions. They talk about how they feel out of breath after exercise, and the consequent need for a rest.

A varied range of collage and creative materials encourage children's imaginative painting and craft work. They often draw and paint expressively, trying out different techniques and using colour well. Role play areas are available throughout the session to enable children to develop their own ideas. However, the scenarios provided are limited and do not stimulate children's meaningful play.

Planning supports children's learning. Topics are interesting and relevant to children. Staff spend time researching topics to ensure ideas are fun. During a current topic on colour and shape, children recall their own experiences during discussions and through art and craft work and modelling activities. However, plans do not have clear learning outcomes that are followed through, focused activities, to stimulate children. Newly implemented assessment procedures are beginning to provide a clear audit trail of children's progress whilst they attend the pre-school. Parental contributions in the 'getting to know you file' and early observations help staff compile an initial profile on each child. From then on assessments are being implemented. Staff are developing systems to check children's progress in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual personalities and needs are known and respected within the setting. The group seeks information from parents such as children's special interests, festivals that they celebrate at home and things that are special to the family. This information is used to ensure that children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet their individual needs. This ensures all children are valued and included in the life of the setting. Children's play is supported by a wide range of resources such as books, dressing-up outfits and dolls which are aimed at promoting positive images of people from a wide range of cultures. Families of children with English as an additional language are welcomed into the setting to celebrate festivals and share traditions. For example, the children have enjoyed food tasting sessions and tried using chop sticks.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are recognised and supported by caring staff. Records are kept of children's progress and shared with parents and outside agencies to ensure that the children's changing needs are recognised and can continue to be met.

Children behave very well, care for each other and freely share and take turns. For example, when playing outside, the children negotiate who plays with the doll's' pushchair first, using terms such as 'share' and 'take turns'. They are developing a good understanding of right and wrong and are play happily within clearly set boundaries. Children benefit from settling-in procedures based around their individual needs, to support them in the transition between home and the setting. For example, parents and carers are encouraged to stay with their children

until they are settled. This helps children to feel secure and confident in the group. There is a well thought out log book for the recording of complaints, together with the contact details of the regulator, for parents to access at any time.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The well thought out information booklet includes information on the Foundation Stage framework and the six areas of learning. Photographs and labels in the children's scrapbooks help parents and carers to learn about what educational aspects of learning are explored in any activity. Newsletters and notices on the information board keep parents and carers informed about activities or the many social events. There is an active daily rota of parent helpers. Parents are always welcome to view or discuss their child's scrapbook informally or formally through appointments. This enables parents to be involved and take a part in their own child's learning.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The premises are well-organised and good use is made of the space available. All staff work well together and demonstrate enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates children of all ages. Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff who are appropriately vetted to ensure they are suitable and have sufficient skills and knowledge to work with children. Members of the committee are suitably vetted to ensure they are suitable as employers of pre-school staff and as a result children's welfare is safeguarded.

Policies and procedures are clear, comprehensive and regularly updated. Staff are familiar with their content to ensure children are well cared for. Staff access some training and seek support from the local authority, but some knowledge and skills are out of date. As a result, children do not benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. There is a sound commitment by staff to develop provision to promote learning in all areas. Staff are competent within their roles and have a fair knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Skills and knowledge support children's learning and development satisfactorily.

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 actions were set for the provider to: make certain that all committee members are vetted by Ofsted to ensure that they were suitable to employ staff to care for children; to implement an effective complaints procedure and log in line with legalisation; to ensure written assessments are clearly recorded to ensure progress is monitored effectively.

Since the last inspection the group have ensured all committee members have completed suitability checks ensuring the welfare of children is safeguarded. They have also sought advice and support from the local authority and from the internet before devising a well thought out detailed complaints log. This is kept on file for parents to access at any time. Children benefit from systems to ensure their well-being. After seeking advice, the group have implemented a system for recording children's progress which is on-going. Children now beginning to benefit from effective procedures to monitor their development.

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):

- ensure children are encouraged to develop their independence at snack and meal times

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):

- regularly review existing practice to ensure written assessments continue to chart individual children's progress throughout the stepping stones
- continue to develop opportunities for children to use their imaginations with particular regard to the role play area.

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