

Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY236663
Inspection date	21 August 2007
Inspector	Myra Lewis
Setting Address	Little Acorns, Woodridge Avenue, Coventry, West Midlands, CV5 7PN
Telephone number	02476 407200
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Registered person	Just Learning Ltd
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 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 Acorns Nursery is run by Just Learning Limited who have day care facilities throughout England, Scotland and Wales. It opened in 1993 and with the current organisation from 2002. It is a purpose built nursery unit in Coventry. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 46 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. Children attend a variety of sessions.

There are currently 87 children aged from zero to under five years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whom speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff who work with the children. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The setting also receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is actively promoted because staff help and support children in learning the importance of good hygiene practices through established daily routines. Children are confident and independent in managing their self-care needs and show a good understanding of nursery routines. They wash their hands competently after toileting and before eating, whilst younger children are well supported by staff. Suitable nappy changing facilities are available where staff provide children with individual attention and meet their needs effectively. There are good levels of hygiene throughout the nursery because staff understand their roles and responsibilities to minimise the spread of infection. However, the bathroom is not adequately ventilated which increases the risk of cross-infection.

Good use is made of the outside play area so that children have easy access to a broad variety of different activities. Children are taken out in small groups so they can fully explore their play environment. Staff divide the play space into different areas to provide children with many opportunities to: build and construct; play with musical instruments; grow sunflowers, vegetables and dig in the garden, and develop their co-ordination skills using the climbing apparatus and wheeled toys. Plans reflect opportunities for children to enjoy physical activities inside, such as music and movement and there are weekly dance classes to further support children's physical development. Children are able to rest or sleep according to their individual requirements.

Children's health is further safeguarded because staff have a relevant understanding of first aid and hold appropriate first aid qualifications. A clear sickness policy is openly shared with all parents so that prompt action is taken if children become unwell. Whilst most rooms benefit from natural daylight, the lighting in the central area is poor and not conducive to children's well-being. There is a well-stocked first aid box that is checked at regular intervals. Records of all minor accidents and medicines given to children are recorded accurately and acknowledged by parents.

All aspects of children's individual dietary requirements are discussed and agreed with parents. Children's meals are freshly cooked on the premises each day. Four weekly menus are rotated and reflect well-balanced meals. Staff are aware of children's individual likes, dislikes and preferences. Children are actively encouraged to develop their independence as they serve their own meals, pour their own drinks and clear away after lunch, with good support from staff when needed. Portion sizes are good. Children enjoy sociable mealtimes as they sit together and learn good manners. Staff help reinforce children's understanding of healthy foods through planned activities and discussions with staff. The children enjoy different food tasting and cooking activities. For example, making fruit kebabs. Therefore, children's understanding of healthy eating is actively promoted.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are well cared for in a safe and secure environment. They are divided into age appropriate groups and move freely and independently around the play rooms. All toys, resources and equipment are safe, suitable for their purpose and meet safety standards. Children have easy access to a wide variety of well-maintained resources. Staff ensure toys and resources are

checked as a matter of routine and any broken toys or equipment are removed promptly. Positive images of diversity are clearly reflected through toys, puzzles, books and posters.

Risk assessments are carried out on all areas and generally prompt action is taken to rectify identified hazards. However, some window closures are not restricted and pose a security risk. There are good systems in place to monitor the safe arrival and collection of children. They are only released into the care of persons nominated by their parents. Children learn to play safely and understand the rules in place to keep them safe through various activities and discussions with staff, who reinforce safety messages. Attention to fire evacuation is good and practised with the children on a regular basis.

Children's welfare is further protected because staff have an appropriate understanding of their role and responsibilities with regard to child protection. Staff follow agreed procedures and know who to contact should they be concerned.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are eager to learn and participate in a broad and varied range of stimulating activities made available to them. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan age-appropriate activities which support young children's learning effectively. Children participate in a wide variety of activities which are made easily accessible to them. For example, painting, water or sand play, small world play, puzzles, books and construction using various resources.

The play rooms are well set out to provide children with many opportunities to make independent choices about their play. However, the play areas are not always used to maximise the changing needs of younger children, which impacts on their learning environment. Young children form trusting relationships with staff and receive lots of positive interaction; relationships are good. Babies receive individual attention from staff who spend their time holding, talking and playing with them to stimulate their learning and development. Babies have a close bond with the staff who work with them. They increase their communication skills as the staff respond to their gestures and sounds appropriately. Children receive good support and guidance whilst engaged in their activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff work effectively as a team and plan a good variety of different play opportunities for children, which are clearly linked to the six areas of learning. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and have individual responsibility for key groups of children. They observe and monitor children's learning and use assessments effectively to evaluate children's progress. The information gained is used to inform future plans. However, plans do not clearly reflect the different challenges and learning intentions for the older, more able children, which impacts on some aspects of their learning. The pre-school room is well-organised and good use is made of the indoor and outdoor areas. Children are secure in their surroundings and can choose from a wide range of accessible toys and resources. This enables them to make independent choices about their play activities.

Children show interest in a range of purposeful, first hand activities, where they can use their own ideas and respond appropriately to different play situations. For example, children make houses for different sized 'people' using a range of small tools and a variety of different materials effectively. They become fully engaged in their self-chosen activities and persevere with tasks.

For example, whilst listening to a story tape, children tried hard to listen carefully for the signal to prompt them when to turn the page.

Children engage easily in conversations with others and talk confidently about past and present events in their lives. Staff make good use of constructive questions to promote children's thinking, which are further supported by written prompts. For example, 'Can you build a tower with these bricks'. Children confidently ask the adult to explain what is written and eagerly set about the task, counting the number of bricks from one to seventeen spontaneously.

Children have many opportunities to practise their early writing skills because they have easy access to a good variety of writing materials. They hold and use pens, pencils, chalks, scissors and rulers with increasing skill. They are learning to recognise letters of their name whilst more able children can write their own name confidently. Good use is made of the daily routines to reinforce their letter and number recognition but staff do not maximise their use of everyday routines to build on children's ongoing learning. Displays of children's work are well presented which builds their self-esteem positively. However, there are limited opportunities for children to display their own work. Children show interest in numbers and shapes within their surroundings. Their mathematical understanding is developing well because staff provide children with opportunities that help them learn to count, sort, match and sequence.

Children develop their creativity through a wide range of craft activities, such as exploring and using a range of natural resources, junk modelling and free style paintings. They develop their imagination in the role play and outside play area. For example, children thoroughly enjoy making cakes using rice and baking cases whilst playing in the home corner, which is well supported by staff's positive interaction.

Children have free access to the computer to develop their understanding of technology. They are able to use it independently and use the 'mouse' with increasing skill and competence. Children listen attentively to stories and join in singing and action songs. Therefore, children's learning is strongly supported and they are making good progress in their overall development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern and develop caring and trusting relationships with staff. Children have equal access to all toys and resources regardless of their ability, gender or background. Their individual needs are discussed and agreed with parents in detail. Any specific requirements are shared openly and the needs of children are recognised and acknowledged.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are positively learning to develop caring attitudes towards other children and adults. They are actively encouraged to care for their pets and their environment. Through planned activities, discussion and celebrations of different lifestyles children learn about their own culture and those of other people.

Positive behaviour is valued. Staff use consistent strategies to promote good standards of behaviour and have high expectations of children's behaviour. They support children in understanding the need to share, take turns and play together. Children respond well to praise and encouragement and their behaviour is good. Staff act as good role models and offer children clear explanations and reasons why for unacceptable behaviour. The setting's behaviour management policy is made accessible to all parents.

Partnership with parents is good. All parents know who their child's key worker is and have daily, informal contact with them at the beginning and end of each day. They share relevant information about their children's daily activities. Staff and parents work closely together to meet the individual needs of all children in attendance. Information is shared openly, there are regular newsletters and additional information is clearly displayed. Consultation with parents is sought through regular questionnaires. Information gained is collated by the overall organisation and any issues are dealt with effectively. Those parents spoken to are extremely pleased with their children's care and feel well informed about the service provided.

The partnership with parents regarding nursery education is good. Parents are actively encouraged to share what they know about their children and discuss their progress with staff on a regular basis. However, children's starting point of learning is not clearly identified which potentially hinders their ongoing progress. There is good information on the Foundation Stage curriculum detailed in the information provided for parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled in this friendly, caring environment. They are well supported through effective staff deployment and established daily routines that take account of children's individual needs. There are effective recruitment and selection procedures in place to ensure staff are suitably vetted. All necessary documentation is in place and stored securely. Policies and procedures are clear, well presented and made available to all parents.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The staff plan a broad range of interesting and stimulating activities to positively support children's ongoing learning. Their progress is monitored through effective observation and assessment. Activities are relevant to children's developmental needs and show a wide variety of different play opportunities. This is demonstrated through good photographic evidence. Staff have a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities and have access to further training, to develop their knowledge and skills to benefit the children in their care. The manager and staff meet regularly and are committed to ongoing improvement. Support from the local authority is welcomed to promote the further development of the educational programme.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection the setting was required to: ensure that recorded observations and assessment were used to plan the next steps in children's play and learning.

The management team provided staff with internal and external training opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills in observation and assessment of children. This included relevant information on the six areas of learning in children's individual profiles and reviewed the key worker system so that staff have regular opportunities to contribute to planning and assessments. The staff are all skilled in observing children and record their observations to inform development records. These are consistently used by the staff to inform the planning of activities. As a result, children are actively engaged in play and enjoy their time at the setting.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the setting were required to: use observation and assessment to inform future planning; provide more opportunities for children to explore the local environment, and reinforce children's acquired learning in practical activities, for example, health and bodily awareness and calculation.

Through further training opportunities and regular room meetings with staff the manager has supported staff in the further development of observations and assessment to inform planning. These include more opportunities for children to participate in impromptu outings to the local park and shops to broaden their learning environment. Through practical activities staff make good use of general conversations to reinforce the children's acquired learning, with lots of discussions about what they did, what happened and the result of the activity. For example, growing seeds, such as sunflowers. However, a further review of planning will be carried forward following 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 further 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- review risk assessments to demonstrate windows are safe and secure
- provide sufficient ventilation in the bathroom and improve lighting in the central area
- ensure play areas are utilised effectively and are sensitive to the changing needs of the younger children.

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):

- make sure children's starting point of learning is fully discussed and agreed with parents, and ensure plans clearly identify the challenges for older, more able children to guide teaching

- make further use of the daily routines to maximise children's ongoing learning and provide more opportunities for children to be able to display their own work.

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