

Little Teapots Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251562
Inspection date	05 October 2007
Inspector	Susan Smith
Setting Address	Erskine Centre Chevington Road, Chedburgh, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29 4UL
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Registered person	The Trustees of Little Teapots Playgroup
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Teapots Preschool is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community. It opened in 1998 and operates from its own premises within the Erskine Centre in the village of Chedburgh, not far from Bury St Edmunds. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open from 09:15 until 15:15 Monday to Friday, term time only.

There are currently 25 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding area.

The pre-school employs six staff, of these five hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group is undertaking the Suffolk accredited quality assurance scheme and the supervisor is a key practitioner for the local authority in the areas of the learning environment and planning and assessment.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-organised routines and activities. They know to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet, using facilities that allow them to be independent. Children's well-being is promoted because staff are well informed about children's health care matters and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. Staff attend first aid and food hygiene training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow to maintain children's health and prevent the spread of infection.

Healthy and nutritious snacks are prepared by staff which fully take into account any allergies or dietary requirements. They feature fresh fruit and vegetables. Children's special dietary requirements are recorded to ensure that individual needs are respected. Lunchtime is a social occasion when children sit down together with staff to eat their packed lunches. A jug of water is available throughout the day for children to independently access when they are thirsty ensuring that they remain hydrated throughout the session.

Children have the benefit of lots of fresh air and exercise at the setting where children free flow inside and out. They use a wide range of equipment including ride-on toys, tunnels and a raised playhouse which provides for imaginary play as well as physical play with steps up on one side and a slide the other. Children demonstrate increasing control while using equipment, such as a variety of mark-making tools, putting pegs into a peg board and construction sets, to help them develop their hand-eye co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment that is well maintained and suitable for its purpose. The premises are clean and cosy, giving an inviting and child-friendly atmosphere where children feel relaxed and at home. Staff take positive steps to minimise risks to children, for example, they monitor children's arrival and departure and ensure the entrance to the provision is kept secure to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unattended.

The building is made welcoming with displays and posters on the walls and children have access to an extensive range of suitable toys and equipment which meet safety standards. Children are able to move around freely and independently and access their preferred activities from those provided by staff and others stored in the child-friendly storage units. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through meaningful activities. For example, they take part in role play activities, dialling 999 in an emergency situation.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff regularly attend child protection training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow should they have a concern. As a result, children are protected and kept safe from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Outcomes for children are excellent. Children become engrossed in a wide range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities. This provides high levels of challenge which are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children are eager and enthusiastic as they freely select from the extensive range of high quality toys and resources provided by staff based on their expert knowledge of child development.

A key worker system enables staff to know children very well and maintain excellent and consistent working relationships with children and families. The pre-school have an extremely good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are clearly aware of the needs of younger children. Staff confidently use the framework to support their excellent practice.

All children make positive relationships with staff and their peers and are genuinely pleased to see each other and share their news and ideas. Children's self-esteem is promoted as staff highly value their contributions and praise their achievements.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children benefit significantly from the staff's excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how children learn. Excellent use of accommodation provides a rich learning environment where children are engrossed in purposeful activities of their choice. Planning incorporates a good balance of all areas of learning and provides a mix of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities. Learning intentions linked to stepping stones are clearly outlined in focused activity plans. Records are built on written observations which staff regularly evaluate and share with parents in order to make assessments. This ensures that starting points can be identified and children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. All staff are involved in assessing children's progress and share this information with the appropriate key worker. This ensures that their individual next steps in learning are clearly identified and are used to inform planning.

Staff support children exceedingly well during activities, providing challenge with open-ended questions and extending children's learning. Activities are planned which are innovative and stimulate the children's interest and meet different learning styles. For example, building trays are used to provide a host of natural materials such as leaves, conkers and soil for children to explore at their own pace and play imaginatively with. This helps children to develop their natural curiosity. Staff are well deployed and have a good awareness of the routines of the session. They manage children skilfully and sensitively, giving good explanations and using praise to reinforce positive behaviour.

Children relish their time at the setting. They have an excellent attitude to learning and are happy, well settled and purposefully engaged throughout the session. Children become extremely confident and self-assured in their play, negotiating and interacting with others to share their ideas and experiences. Children play a very active role in their learning, offering ideas and responding to challenge with enthusiasm. Children develop a strong sense of community, they enthusiastically talk about events in their own lives.

Children take turns to speak and listen as they sit in a group at registration time. They are extremely confident communicators and they play together well in pairs or small groups, sharing ideas and experiences. Children enthusiastically listen and respond to stories, eagerly offering

their own ideas and suggestions of what happens next. Children have excellent opportunities through planned and spontaneous activities to learn to identify the initial letter sounds, and staff skilfully support children and help them consolidate their learning by returning to letter sounds that they have covered in the past. Children are making excellent progress in their early writing skills. Staff praise and encourage children extremely well as they persevere with writing their names. The room has many labels and prompts encouraging children to know that text has a meaning. A well-resourced writing area gives children exciting materials which they use to develop their writing skills. A 'word bank' is available which has popular words on laminated cards, so that children can use them for reference when they are attempting to write independently or with the support of staff.

An exciting range of messy play enables children to experience different textures and states. They explore shaving foam, flour, sand and water. Children are engaged in purposeful activities outside in the fresh air where their curiosity and interest is enhanced. For example, washing their 'babies' and using brushes to mark-make on the walls. They learn to care for and observe growing things through planting herbs and flowers. A natural log area has been skilfully incorporated into the outside play area, which allows children to look for mini beasts, and the colourful display of laminated cards allow them to identify what they have found.

Children develop an excellent understanding of mathematical concepts and staff skilfully promote their methods of problem solving through the use of skilful questioning and challenging well-planned activities. This promotes children's confidence and enthusiasm to join in with mathematical activities and use maths in everyday play. For example, children initiate a game of 'Hide and seek' and confidently count up to 10. Small world play enables staff to extend children's learning as they play with cars on a car mat with a garage and aeroplanes. Children instinctively use positional and size language to describe the whereabouts of the aeroplanes and cars.

Children competently display their skills in using a computer and operate everyday technology during their play. They really enjoy using their imagination in the home corner and various well-planned role play experiences, such as hanging washing on a line and hospital play. They explore musical instruments and enjoy singing and responding to music, for example, enthusiastically moving their bodies in different ways, such as slowly, hopping, jumping and dancing as they take part in 'Beat babies'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children in this setting are valued and have a good sense of belonging. Children settle well and play happily together. Parents are welcomed into the setting which enables staff to get to know families very well. Children are encouraged to discuss their home lives, this helps them feel accepted and part of the community.

Children are able to make choices about how to spend their time as the session is relaxed and allows time for completing chosen activities. Small group sizes encourage children to socialise and build relationships with each other. Staff ensure that the resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. They celebrate a range of festivals and fund raising events including Red Nose Day which helps children develop a positive attitude to others and an understanding of their place in the world.

The setting has a very positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The designated member of staff is attending training. This enables the pre-school to meet individual needs well, complying with the required code of practice. Staff work closely with other professionals to provide continuity of care and gain further insight into how to best support individual children.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are learning right from wrong and to show respect for others. They are learning responsible behaviour because staff are good role models and use calm and consistent strategies appropriate to children's stage of development. For example, politely reminding children not to run inside.

Most of the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes. Parents receive extensive information about the running of the provision and are kept up-to-date with any changes through regular newsletters and via notice boards. A complaints policy is in place which outlines the procedures the nursery will follow if a parent has a concern. Although no complaints have been received by the setting, there is no appropriate method of recording complaints to share with parents.

The welcome pack is full of useful information to help parents understand the ethos of the setting. Their views are sought and acted upon via a comments book. Effective settling in procedures and the daily exchange of information between parents and staff ensures children's changing needs are met and provides continuity of care.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is outstanding. Parents are made welcome into the pre-school by friendly and approachable staff. They come in to collect their children and are clearly relaxed and at home as they chat with staff and take children's work. Parents have excellent opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. Photographs showing children enjoying activities are linked to areas of learning and consequently parents are developing an understanding of how children learn in the Foundation Stage. The setting have developed a 'Wow' board for parents to highlight their children's achievements outside of the setting. An informative notice board provides relevant and up to date information regarding recent updates and pre-school news. Parents speak extremely positively about the pre-school, detailing many aspects of the good practice. They are encouraged to share and contribute to their children's records of achievement.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Operational procedures and policies work in practice to support the successful running of the provision and to promote children's good health, safety, welfare and development. All the required documents and consents are in place to ensure staff follow parents' wishes regarding their children's care. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated, however some do not reflect recent changes to current legislation. Robust vetting and recruitment procedures have yet to be fully developed to ensure children are protected and cared for by staff with a sound knowledge and understanding of child development.

The well-organised environment and effective staff deployment enhances children's enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. The excellent adult to child ratios positively support children's care, learning and play. The group are in the process of undertaking the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme to further improve their excellent practice.

The leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding. The pre-school is led by an motivated leader, who is fully supported by her capable staff team. The strong leadership inspires a committed team of staff who work exceptionally well together. The pre-school leader has a clear vision of providing outstanding nursery education which is shared by staff with a strong focus on the personal development of all children. Clear job descriptions and an effective appraisal process ensure that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and identifies any training needs. Self-reflection has highlighted strengths and weaknesses which have been used to plan areas for further development. Regular staff meetings enable staff to review the effectiveness of the curriculum planning. This ensures that the quality of nursery education is adapted accordingly to meet the individual needs of the children. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last care inspection the setting was asked to provide clarification of Epipen training provided for staff with the insurance company. The setting has fully reviewed it's policy with regard to the use of Epipen and this has been approved by the insurance company. They were also asked to vary the times and exit routes used when carrying out fire drills with the children. This has now been implemented and all practices are recorded and evaluated. This ensures the welfare of the children.

At their previous nursery education inspection the provider was asked to provide opportunities during the rising five session for children to reinforce prior learning and extend activities to offer further challenges for the more able four year olds. Separate curriculum planning has been adapted to met the needs of the rising five group. Children are given the opportunity to practice their skills at their own pace and time. Staff are very skilled at engaging with children and following their interests. They use questioning extremely well to extend the children's learning in this age group. For example, while children are happily exploring numbers and counting objects for themselves, staff talk to them about big numbers, such as tens, hundreds and thousands to extend their numerical knowledge. In addition, the setting is obtaining extra resources to provide further opportunities for the children to extend their learning. This ensures that the more able children are provided with appropriate challenges and promotes their learning and 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 outstanding.

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 a record of complaints is kept at the setting and is shared with parents on request
- ensure rigorous vetting and recruitment procedures are in place.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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