

Little Explorers Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY342105
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Inspector	Kathryn Mary Harding
Setting Address	Rad Valley Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 8BD
Telephone number	07805 216411
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Registered person	Partnership Of Michelle Hurdley & Lyndsey Paddock
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Explorers Pre-School operates from Rad Valley Community Centre in the Copthorne area of Shrewsbury in Shropshire. It was taken over by the present proprietors in 2007. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 term time only. There is no access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs seven members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet as they are offered healthy and nutritious snacks such as fruit, bread sticks and cheese. They can access a snack bar throughout the session so they are able to help themselves to regular drinks of water and healthy snacks, so enabling them to deal with their own care needs.

The children are cared for in a warm setting where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene and personal care through the daily routines. Pictorial signs displayed in the toilet areas encourage good hand washing techniques. Children are gently reminded to wash their hands, so helping to prevent the spread of infection. Good nappy changing procedures are in place, so helping to reduce the risk of cross infection. As they sing songs they learn why it is important to clean their teeth.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. There are activities to help them develop control of their bodies such as a slide, large balls and stilts. They can access a wide range of equipment such as play dough and small world play to help develop their fine manipulative skills. They are encouraged to get fresh air as they go for walks around the local area so helping to develop their physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are warmly greeted by staff on arrival, giving the children a sense of belonging and making them feel valued. Parents freely chat with staff and stay to settle their children. The room is made more welcoming to children and parents as children's artwork, pictures and posters are displayed on the walls. The building is multi-use, so staff have to set up before the start of each session. During child-initiated activities children independently select activities from a wide range of activities, toys and resources that are of good quality, meet safety standards, regular checked and cleaned.

The rooms are checked prior to the children arriving and daily written safety check lists are undertaken. Safety precautions such as socket covers and locks on the entrance door are in place. However, when staff sit with the children at snack time they have hot drinks. This is a potential hazard. At the moment there is no outdoor area but good procedures are in place to help keep children safe on outings and walks around the local area. Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they have had a visitor into the setting from the road safety department and they have made traffic lights and stop signs to re-enforce their learning. They also know why it is important to take the register each day in case of fire.

Children are well protected by staff that have a good understanding of child protection issues and all staff have attended child protection training. They understand the correct procedures to follow for reporting concerns and have a good understanding of signs to be concerned about in relation to child protection matters. This helps to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well and staff offer reassurance to younger children as parents leave. They take part in a very good range of stimulating activities and play opportunities which they find interesting and enjoyable such as exploring in the baked beans, spinach and water. Staff know the children well and cater for their individual needs very well through the key worker system. Children in the setting develop very good relationships with staff and each other, as they freely approach staff and say they want to make a policeman. They learn to share and take turns when playing on the laptop as they use a sand timer. Children concentrate well on activities such as when pouring the water into different containers. They enjoy their time in the setting and staff have fun as they join in with activities, as they play circle games, giving them a sense of belonging and making them feel valued.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is effectively implemented for younger children. Staff observe children as they play and records of their artwork and photographs are stored in their individual learning stories. Plans link to aspects of the framework and are informed by children's observations and assessment so ensuring children's progression.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children show an interest in what they are doing and staff support them very well in their play, making children feel valued.

Staff are willing to attend training and have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Plans link to the six areas of learning and the stepping stones. Activities for children are adapted but focus activity time does not always meet the needs of all the children in the group. Incidental and planned observations are undertaken on the children and these link to assessments and the planning to ensure the next steps in children's learning are catered for.

Children behave very well, with staff continually praising and encouraging them, so enhancing their self-esteem. At child-initiated times children plan what they are going to play with and choose from the resources, so encouraging their independence. They play very well together and get excited as they build with the bricks and watch them topple over and dress up in the dressing up clothes. They kindly ask others if they would like to play in the water or go to the Quarry for a picnic. They concentrate well as they build with the construction sets.

Children have to find their own name on arrival and at snack time so encouraging their recognition of print. They can access books which they freely do and share with each other. They listen well to stories as adults point to the pictures and relay in a lively way, so encouraging their interest in books. They have made their own book about what they like doing at pre-school. They confidently talk in small and large groups. They can mark make as they access a wide range of mark making resources and are encouraged to record in their planning books what they are planning to play with. However, older or more able children are not forming their letters correctly.

Children gain confidence in using and recognising numbers during the daily routines and respond to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary in planned and spontaneous opportunities. They have opportunities to count as they count the number of children present and count the days of the week. They also count in French as they play circle games. They are encouraged to solve simple number problems, as staff ask 'How many more children have we now?' As they

sing songs they learn about the sequencing of the morning routine before arriving at pre-school. They look at shapes and have printed with different shapes.

Children talk about their families and important events in their lives. They talk about it being their daddy's birthday today, the fireman coming in next week and their visit to the opticians last week, so gaining a sense of time. They look at the days of the week, the weather and record their findings. They explore and investigate as they play in the shaving foam, water and sand. They become aware of the world around them as they have visitors into the setting such as a nurse, teacher, policeman and ambulance man. They can access a laptop with educational programs to consolidate their learning. They build and construct with a wide variety of construction sets.

Children's physical skills develop and improve through a variety of experiences. They negotiate an obstacle course as they balance along the string, slide down the slide, crawl through the tunnel and throw the bean bags into the hoop. They move around the room, pretending to be in a police car, ensuring they stop when they come to a red light. They cut along lines to help develop their scissor control and have access to a wide range of small equipment to develop their fine control skills.

Children have opportunities to play imaginatively in the home area and ask others 'If I'm the baby will you be the mummy?' As they discover the butterfly they look at the colours and name correctly. They freely access the musical instruments and enthusiastically play them and sing rhymes at the same time. They sing familiar rhymes with enthusiasm.

Good systems are in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including liaising with parents, outside agencies and ensuring individual plans are in place. Overall, children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued, listened to and very much respected as individuals. Their awareness of the wider world is extended as the setting have a range of activities, toys and resources to positively reflect diversity. They take part in weekly French lessons and have had a French day where they ate French food, counted in French and played French games, so encouraging their understanding of others and the wider world.

Systems are in place, such as individual education plans and staff liaise closely with parents and external agencies to effectively promote children's learning.

Staff have a patient, consistent approach to managing children's behaviour. As a result children behave well and understand what is expected of them, as they are given explanations why the behaviour is not acceptable and are encouraged to sort out any problems with each other. Good behaviour is encouraged as the staff give lots of praise and encouragement to the children for their efforts and reward them with stickers for good behaviour. The setting have a 'rules board' which was drawn up in conjunction with the children, so enabling them to have ownership of the boundaries of the setting. A sand timer is used, so they can learn to share the toys and resources. At snack time good manners are encouraged and kindness and respect is promoted so children relate well to each other and learn to have consideration for others. Children also use good manners without adult reminders. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff, parents and external agencies all work together to meet each child's needs. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child by completing a 'Look what I can do' booklet giving staff information about the child's interests. Parents are invited into the setting to discuss their child's achievements at a parents' meeting. Children can take a library book home in their home school bag and a 'my story sheet' is enclosed so children can draw or write something about the story they have read at home. An exercise book is also enclosed so parents can write any comments or questions they may have. They can also talk daily about their child with the child's key worker. An informative notice board containing what the children are doing in the session is available, so ensuring parents are fully aware of topics and projects. Parents spoken with commented very positively on the setting. They say staff 'Have worked very hard and provide lots of interesting activities and the children are extremely happy to attend'. A complaints procedure is in place and parents are made aware of the procedure to follow if they wish to raise any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. Staff clearly know about their roles and responsibilities, so helping to ensure that the planned activities are interesting to the children. They regularly evaluate the sessions to look at further improvement and meet regularly to discuss issues that have arisen and disseminate information gained from courses attended. They have appraisals to ensure they are all working effectively to meet the children's needs. Staff have a good range of resources to promote children's progress in all areas of learning.

The registered person uses effective recruitment procedures which ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. All of the required paperwork is well-organised and a very detailed and informative operational plan is in place. Staff are approachable, caring and work well together as a team to promote children's health, enjoyment and achievement. They attend regular training and have training matrix, so demonstrating a commitment to developing their practice. Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. They are shared regularly with parents to keep them well informed about the service and their child's activities. This contributes to continuity in the children's care. Overall, the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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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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 hot drinks are always out of reach of 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):

- ensure that focus activity time meets the needs of the children in the group
- encourage older or more able children to form letters correctly.

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