

Lawshall Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	508618
Inspection date	27 November 2007
Inspector	Lynn Denise Smith
Setting Address	Buttercup Building, All Saints School, The Street, Lawshall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29 4QA
Telephone number	01284 828112
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Registered person	The Trustees of Lawshall Pre-School
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 outstanding. 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?

Lawshall Pre-school is run by Lawshall Pre-school Committee. It opened in 1998 and operates from a demountable classroom. It is situated in the grounds of All Saints School in the village of Lawshall. A maximum of 15 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open from 12:30 to 15:00 each week day, term time only. All children share an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 31 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs five staff. All of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children develop an excellent understanding about keeping healthy as they follow the staff's clear and comprehensive directions regarding their health needs. They understand the importance of practices such as hand washing and effectively talk about cleanliness and the removal of germs. Fun, visual reminders placed at the children's height over the wash hand basins remind them to use their 'one, two, three steps', one for the water, two for the soap and three for the paper towels. Children independently access the toilets which are partitioned but integral to the main playroom and younger children's personal needs are efficiently met by sensitive and caring staff.

The children's environment is kept extremely clean and hygienic as staff have stringent procedures for maintaining the premises. All surfaces are wiped with anti-bacterial spray and clean table cloths are laid on the tables before snacks and meals are served.

Children's medical needs are superbly met as staff gain extensive information from parents about their children's special requirements. Medication is only administered with the parents written permission and children who fall unwell during the pre-school session return to their parents as promptly as possible. Children who have accidents within the pre-school have their injuries effectively dealt with by one of the many qualified first aiders. A clear written account of their injuries is shared with their parents. The accident records are monitored on a regular basis to evaluate whether there are any areas within the setting which cause recurring incidents.

Children enjoy an extremely healthy and well-balanced mid-session snack during their time at pre-school. They are offered a range of fruit, bread sticks and other healthy alternatives. Children have extensive opportunities to develop their independence as they pour their own drinks, help to set the tables and take their cups to the low-level sink when they have finished their snack. They are actively involved in the preparation of snack time as they cut and prepare the fruit and make their own sandwiches. Children talk proficiently about what foods are good for them as they share calm and gentle discussions with staff.

Children have superb opportunities to experience fresh air throughout their pre-school session as they independently make free choices about whether they play indoors or outdoors. They have excellent opportunities to experience all kinds of weather as they are provided with appropriate clothing to enable them to enjoy cold weather as well as the summer sunshine.

Children's physical development is expertly developed as they are provided with a wide range of play experiences which enable them to extend both their fine manipulative and larger physical skills. They use an extensive selection of tools such as scissors, pens, puzzles, construction toys and small world figures to help to challenge their hand to eye co-ordination. The well-planned and exciting outdoor environment provides children with fantastic opportunities to extend a wide range of physical skills. For example, they balance on a range of balancing beams, run around on the grassed and hard surface areas and climb up and over the grass mound. They enthusiastically play with a parachute and understand how their body movements will effect the way in which the parachute moves. They negotiate bikes and ride on toys and soon master how to make them move in the directions they choose by using the pedals and steering wheels.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The children's play environment is extremely well-presented. They play in two rooms of a demountable classroom within the grounds of a local primary school. Children enter through a door at one end of the building and walk into a bright, exciting and interesting main playroom. They place their coats and belongings on low-level coat hooks which are effectively labelled with the children's names and their individual picture which a member of staff has crossed stitched onto material. Every inch of the walls and ceilings are made welcoming and exciting as staff present an excellent range of posters and examples of the children's creative work around the rooms. Integral toilets and hand washing facilities enable children to develop independence and to wash their hands under running water when they have participated in messy play.

The smaller of the two playrooms offers children the opportunity to access an extremely comfortable, well-equipped book corner and an exciting role play area. Children freely access the extensive and extremely well-presented outdoor area through a door to the side of the building. The outdoor area consists of an undercover area, a grassed area, a garden where the pre-school grow produce, a play house and an excellent range of fixed and non fixed equipment. Tables are presented under the undercover area which are set out with indoor toys and activities. The fences and sheds are decorated with bright colourful numbers and letters.

Children safely access a superb selection of toys and play equipment which is placed in well-labelled storage containers and drawers around the edges of the room. They self-select their play materials from the fun and exciting range available to them. The toys and equipment on offer are of good quality and the selection is regularly added to and updated as funds become available. An extremely rigorous cleaning routine followed by staff ensures that children play with clean and hygienic toys and play materials at all times.

Children's safety is paramount within this setting as staff demonstrate their efficient understanding of how to keep the premises both indoors and outdoors safe and well-maintained. Daily risk assessments are carried out prior to the children's arrivals and toilets and hand wash basins are effectively cleaned throughout the session. Children develop an excellent understanding of the importance of keeping safe as they follow the staff's clear routines. For example, emergency evacuations are carried out on a regular basis with a simple explanation from staff about the procedure and why it is necessary.

Children are extremely well-protected from potential harm as staff constantly update their knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures and policies. Their understanding is further promoted through in-house training and regular discussions. Children are always in the direct supervision of the checked and cleared staff, and visitors to the premises are monitored and supervised at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children have superb fun at this pre-school. They are enthusiastically involved in an extensive range of activities which help them to make excellent progress in all aspects of their play and learning. Children confidently move around the pre-school accessing the huge selection of toys and play equipment available to them, for example, during each session they are provided with

opportunities to play with core resources, such as sand, water, dough, painting, sticking, puzzles, construction toys, role play, books, a computer and an extensive programme of outdoor activities.

Children develop excellent relationships with the adults caring for them as well as with each other. They receive superb adult interaction from the staff which enables them to be fully supported in their play and learning. Their language development is expertly promoted as staff demonstrate a sound understanding of how to ask open ended questions and to listen attentively to the children's comments.

Children's self-esteem is superbly developed as staff use positive methods of praise and encouragement at all times. They encourage the children to 'have a voice' and to speak in both large and small groups. Children tell their friends about real and imaginary experiences which have happened to them and share stories from home.

Younger children's needs are superbly met as staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of their requirements. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is effectively used to inform staff's practices and to guide their planning. All children are offered comfort and reassurance and approach staff with ease if they want assistance or just a nice cuddle.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding about the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Two core staff have undertaken formal training on this subject and cascade it down to the other staff. They ensure that their knowledge is kept up to date by accessing support and guidance through the Early Years Partnership professionals.

Well presented and clear long, medium and short term planning is in place which details the learning intentions over a two year rolling cycle. The specific stepping stones which are being covered are transferred into the medium term planning and a selection of adult-led activities are then covered through the weekly plans. Staff review and evaluate the weekly adult-led activities to assess their effectiveness and to see whether children are gaining the learning intentions planned.

Children's progress and achievements are very effectively observed and recorded by staff. They make notes on stickers which are then transferred to their progress records. Staff have recently devised a system of working towards children's personal targets. Each key-worker devises a list of specific targets which their children need to reach, or which foster their interests. Observations are undertaken to ensure the children achieve these.

The pre-school session is very effectively organised to enable children to fully benefit from all aspects of the session. They are actively involved in meaningful free play for a good part of the session as well as participating in some more structured activities and discussions.

Planning shows how staff differentiate for the more and less able children, however, this is not fully completed for all activities. The setting provides care and education for children with a wide range of abilities and for children who may have had a morning's session at nursery before arriving at pre-school. Additional stimulation and challenge is not always applied for these children.

Children effectively learn in a calm and relaxed environment. Staff are clear about their procedures for behaviour and maintain a good learning environment by monitoring the noise level and changing the routine of the session if they feel this is appropriate.

Children are confident and settled within this pre-school. They develop caring relationships towards each other and are often seen greeting their friends on arrival with a hug and a cheerful smile. They are independent as they freely access the indoor and outdoor environment, use the integral toilet and washing facilities and help to prepare their snacks. Children are motivated to learn and enjoy participating in new experiences.

Children are very confident speakers, they talk proficiently in both large and small groups and can articulate their feelings well. They play in an environment which is very rich in print and understand that words have meanings as they see words displayed effectively around the pre-school. Children have very good opportunities to make marks throughout the pre-school as they are provided with a wide range of resources to promote this activity. They learn to write their names clearly as they copy their name from their self-registration card. Children self-select books from a large range which are presented effectively in a comfortable book corner. They are beginning to link sounds and letters when they think about the letters in their names.

Children's mathematical learning is well promoted as staff present them with an interesting selection of equipment to use throughout the sessions. They use numbers in everyday activities and spontaneously count up to 10 when playing. They use simple calculation, for example, at snack time when they compare the lengths of their bread sticks before they start eating and as they eat each bite.

Children have good opportunities to develop their understanding of the natural world and the environment as they participate in a wide range of activities to promote their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children explore nature and wildlife when they play in the natural areas of the garden. They have a range of logs and stones around the edge of the garden which they carefully lift to see the various insects underneath. They are able to dig and explore in a specific section of the garden. They have daily use of a computer and access a range of electronic toys. Children construct with a number of different materials and build for a purpose when they make models from junk. Children have a number of visitors who come and join them at the pre-school, for example, a parent who is a police officer visits and tells the children about keeping safe.

Children are very creative within this setting. They thoroughly enjoy accessing the exciting range of creative play materials on offer to them. They paint and stick freely every session creating pictures from their imagination. Children become very actively engrossed in role play as they access the interesting home corner. They use dressing up clothes to become different characters and to express their imagination. Children enjoy listening to a variety of different music. They dance and move to the music in different ways. They have daily access to a range of musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are superbly shared between the parents and staff as parents complete a detailed personal information sheet and child profile. Staff use this information to develop a sound understanding about the children's likes, dislikes and interests to help them plan an individual learning programme for each child. Children's needs are at the forefront of

practice throughout this pre-school which ensures that they receive excellent individual care and attention.

Children enter the pre-school confidently and part from their parents and carers with ease. They develop an excellent sense of belonging as they find their individual named coat hook to place their belongings on and self-register using their carefully printed name cards. They are actively encouraged to bring comforters from home and know that they can access these at all times.

Children have extensive opportunities to learn about other people's customs and cultures as they celebrate a range of festivals and special occasions. A full range of religious and fun festivals are effectively planned for throughout the year ensuring that children develop a thorough knowledge of a wide range of differing customs. They play with an exciting selection of toys, dolls and books which reflect diversity and equality of opportunity.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are superbly supported by confident and knowledgeable staff. Their individual needs are effectively met as staff have experience of adapting activities and ensuring they provide a fully inclusive environment for all children. Staff work effectively with outside agencies to develop a greater understanding of the support available to assist children in their care.

Children are extremely well-behaved. They are confident and relaxed within their pre-school environment. They learn to share and cooperate effectively as staff support and guide them. Children develop a sound understanding of the pre-school rules as they are clearly displayed on a hand made poster. Staff are also very clear with their instructions, for example, children know that they must be quiet and listen to the staff when they raise their hand in the air. A well-presented visual time line reminds children what is going to happen throughout the session and enables them to guide their play time.

Children's well-being is superbly enriched as the staff and parents develop an extremely caring and informative relationship. Parents are effectively informed about every aspect of the pre-school by way of notice boards, a prospectus, written policies and regular newsletters. In addition to the publications available to them they also share important ongoing verbal communication with staff on a daily basis.

The partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents play an active role in their children's nursery education as they are provided with important information about the topics and themes the pre-school will be covering over the coming half term through newsletters and posters. They are informed how they can help their children to gain the most from the accompanying activities.

Parents are provided with copies of the pre-school's long, medium and short term planning on their notice board and know that they can ask staff to explain any aspect of their children's education which they are unsure of. Parents are invited to share their children's progress and achievements with their key worker. They know that they can ask to see their child's key-worker at any time or they can attend a more formal open day.

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

Children are extremely independent and knowledgeable. They are kind and caring towards each other and develop a good understanding of other people's needs through a wide range of activities and discussions with staff.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are effectively cared for by a team of five dedicated and committed staff who have worked together at the setting for over five years. Two joint managers who hold Level 3 qualifications are supported by an additional three staff who also hold childcare qualifications. All staff and committee members are fully vetted and cleared to work with children. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place for the appointment of new staff, however due to the stability of the group these have not needed to be implemented for a number of years.

Children receive excellent adult interaction from the team of staff as a high adult to child ratio is maintained throughout each session. Staff are extremely well-deployed around the setting to ensure they can fully support the children both indoors and outdoors. Staff are knowledgeable about their daily responsibilities as they follow the effective staff rota.

Staff constantly review and update their knowledge through training and seminars. Their personal interests and training needs are superbly fostered by the training programme which has been put in place. Good access to early years professionals enables them to keep up to date with current guidance and changes within the childcare world.

Clear and effective records are completed and maintained at all times. They are stored effectively to ensure confidentiality as well as being available for inspection. A full set of written policies and procedures supports the staff's practices and are available for parents to view.

The leadership and management is good.

The setting is effectively run by a strong team of committee members who fully understand their roles and responsibilities. The committee and staff meet on regular occasions to discuss the day to day operations and to plan future activities and fund raising events. The meetings are well-recorded and records of their discussions are available for parents to read. Committee members are invited to work within the setting to gain a greater understanding of how the written policies they review and update are put into practice.

The committee is actively involved in raising funds for the pre-school and have been dedicating their commitments to upgrading the outdoor area and resources over the past year. An excellent range of new equipment has been purchased through this money and parents are kept fully informed about what the funds have been spent on.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection the pre-school was asked to improve the programme for knowledge and understanding of the world to include opportunities for children to learn about other cultures and beliefs and to develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision. They were also asked to improve vetting procedures for committee members and staff and to ensure all relevant documentation is in place.

Children now have greater opportunities to develop their understanding of the world as they participate in a wide range of festivals from around the world and celebrate special occasions. The provision is now fully evaluated through a process of self-evaluation which enables staff to review their practices.

Children are well-protected as the committee and staff are now fully vetted. Appropriate evidence to prove that all adults connected with the provision have been cleared is kept on file. Clear record keeping procedures are in place and ensure that all relevant documentation is available for inspection at all times.

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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. 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 MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

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 more able children are provided with activities which challenge their thinking and develop their learning.

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