

Little Foxes

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511769
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Inspector	Shirley Ann Jackson
Setting Address	Foxmoor School, Hunters Way, Cashes Green, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4UL
Telephone number	01453 757 251
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Registered person	Little Foxes
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Little Foxes Nursery has been established since 1994 and operates from an Elliot building situated within the grounds of Foxmoor Primary School, Stroud. It is managed by a committee, comprising of school governors, parents and nursery staff, and mainly serves the local community. Little Foxes is registered to provide sessional care for 20 children aged from two to eight years, and accepts children from two years nine months. It runs daily morning sessions, Monday to Friday from 09.00 until 12.00 and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 12.15 until 15.15.

There are currently 119 children on roll aged from three to ten years and of these, 43 are funded. The group do not currently support children with special needs or those for whom English is an additional language. There are 11 staff working with the children, six of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications.

The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

Little Foxes also provides care for children before and after school, from 08.00 to 09.00 and 15.15 to 18.00, weekdays during school terms. School-aged children may attend the after school club until they reach the age of 11 years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children follow established routines to help them to learn about positive hygiene practices. Pre-school confidently wash their hands using running water after messy play and using the toilet and before eating. However, staff do not routinely talk to the children about the reasons for washing their hands. Children attending the after school club are not encouraged to wash their hands before eating. Children's health is supported as a number of staff working in the pre-school group hold current first aid certificates and a first aid box is accessible if required. However, there is not always a member of staff working in the after school club who holds a current first aid certificate. They have to rely on staff in the school, which is some distance away. Appropriate procedures are in place for dealing with and recording accidents, and administering medication.

Children are offered snacks at the pre-school group and the after school club. These are healthy, balanced and are offered in suitable quantities for the children to enjoy. Staff do not routinely talk to the children about the benefits of eating healthy food. Children are offered drinks of water or milk at snack times. However, drinking water is not always readily accessible to children during the sessions. Staff occasionally talk to the children about the importance of a healthy diet. Staff take into account children's dietary requirements when planning snacks, this promotes their health. Children become involved in snack time as they pour their own drinks and the older children sometimes help to prepare snack.

Children in the pre-school and after school club have the opportunity to play outside every day, weather permitting. They do not have direct access to an outdoor play area, but have access to all of the school's outdoor facilities. Older children enjoy playing football, with the basketball hoop and playing with hoops. Pre-school children move spontaneously within the available space. They combine and repeat a range of movements, such as rolling hoops. Children engage in activities requiring hand eye coordination, for example, peg boards. They use one-handed tools and equipment, such as scissors. They show increasing skill and control in construction and small world activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in premises which are clean, bright and well maintained. The rooms are made welcoming to children with a number of displays of their own work. However, most of these are at adult height, so children's view of them is limited. The premises are secured when all the children are present. This prevents unauthorised entry and ensures that children cannot leave the building unnoticed. Children are able to move freely and safely around the areas used as staff have identified and minimised potential risks. Staff supervise children effectively as they play indoors and outdoors. However, when staff at the after school club take children outdoors they are not easily able to contact one another, relying on a whistle or a child to relay a message. Basic risk assessments are in place and staff are in the process of developing these.

Children play with a suitable range of resources and equipment. These are good quality and are well maintained. Staff ensure that toys are safe and suitable for the age and stage of development for the children attending. A number of resources are stored in low level storage units. However, the storage boxes do not have labels to help children to independently select them. Staff set out some resources for children before they arrive.

A number of staff hold current child protection certificates, so children's welfare is protected. Staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect. They are aware of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child in their care. A child protection policy is in place but does not include a procedure if an allegation is made against a member of staff. This is a breach of regulations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children attending the after school club settle well and enjoy their time at the club. They quickly become involved in their play on their arrival from school. Children are able to initiate much of their own play as most resources are freely accessible. This gives children choice in their play and builds their independence skills. Children of all ages play well together, for example, when playing in the role play area.

Staff offer a suitable range of activities to take part in, such as the computer, table tennis, football table, keyboard and karaoke machine. This encourages children to play together as well as part of a team when playing football outdoors. Children confidently talk to each other and are obviously comfortable in the company of the staff, asking for help when needed.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum as they have attended training to support them in this area. They have an appropriate understanding of how young children learn and progress. The level of challenge offered is sufficient to interest most children in the activities and to enable them to make suitable progress. Assessments and the use of information gained from it are satisfactory, but are sometimes inconsistent. Children's development records are not linked to the stepping stones, making linking them to the Foundation Stage difficult. Staff offer activities which cover the areas of learning and meet the needs of most of the children. However, some activities do not pose sufficient challenge to help the more able children to progress in their learning. Children are happy and settled and enjoy coming to the group. They are suitably confident to work and play independently or in small groups. Children show an interest in purposeful, first hand activities and experiences. They sometimes offer their own ideas to develop their play and learning. Overall, children make sound progress in their learning and achievement given their capability and starting points.

Children listen to others in small groups when the conversation interests them, for example, talking about their Christmas decorations. They respond to simple instructions, such as at tidy up time. They enjoy listening to stories and some children do this with increasing attention and recall. Some children use talk to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next. Children handle books carefully, they hold books the correct way up and turn the pages. They regularly sit in the book corner, 'reading' to one another and to dolls. They engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination, such as peg boards. However, there

are not always writing materials available in the role play area and children are not routinely asked to name their own work.

Children show an interest in numbers and counting. They use maths language in their play, for example, when cutting out 'snowflakes'. Children willingly attempt to count, with some numbers in the correct order, such as counting down from ten to blast-off in their 'rockets'. They confidently counted the number of candles on a child's birthday cake and clapped his age. Some children begin to represent numbers using fingers, for example, to show the number of children having snack together. Children show an awareness of shape in the environment as they play games with staff. They have opportunities to show an interest in height as they stand by the height chart and a member of staff measures them. However, staff do not use everyday routines for problem solving and to extend the more able children.

Children investigate construction materials, such as bricks. They have opportunities to explore objects, for example, when they collect twigs and leaves during a nature walk. Children realise tools can be used for a purpose. They begin to try out a range of tools and techniques, such as cutting out snowflakes. However, joining materials, such as tape, staplers and glue are not freely available for the children. Children remember and talk about significant things that have happened to them, such as going to parties. They gain an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others as they take part in activities celebrating different festivals. However, there are limited opportunities for children to learn how to operate simple equipment.

Children begin to differentiate colours as they talk about the colour of the paint they use. They explore what happens when they mix colours saying "look what happens when we mix it, it makes purple!". Some children understand that different media can be combined. Children sing simple, familiar songs. They show an interest in the way musical instruments sound. They explore and learn how sounds can be changed. Children pretend that one object represents another, especially when they have some characteristics in common, such as using a peg board as a birthday cake. They use available resources to create props to support role play, for example, dressing up as Father Christmas. Children show an interest in what they see, touch and feel.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children begin to learn about the faith and culture of others through celebrating different festivals. The group has a suitable range of resources which reflect the wider community. However, there are few positive images around the room to help children to develop a positive attitude to others. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported by staff who encourage children to take part in activities at their own level.

Children's behaviour at the group is generally good. Staff are positive role models for the children. They are calm, quietly spoken and respect the children and their individuality. Staff use praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour and to build children's self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Younger children separate from their main carer with support. Older children separate with confidence and are eager to start their play. Children show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities, for example, choosing what to play with at free play time. They talk freely about their home, discussing Christmas decorations. Children relate and make attachments to members of their group, for example, asking each other what they want to build with the bricks. They feel safe and secure and demonstrate a sense of trust, such as seeking staff out

to show them their work. Children show willingness to tackle problems and enjoy self-chosen challenges. They show a sense of pride in their own achievement, for example, the child who made a 'pirate ship' with paper and stickers.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are invited to an evening event when staff talk through what the group offers and their policies and procedures. However, parents are not given any information on the Foundation Stage in writing to refer to later if required. Information is shared through regular newsletters, a notice board, coffee mornings and talking to staff on a regular basis. Parents questionnaires are sent out annually to seek parents views and to ensure that the service offered is what parents want. Parents are involved in their child's learning as they help children to find items for the interest table. Parents spoken to are satisfied with the care and education offered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The staff members in charge of the pre-school and the after school club are experienced and appropriately qualified for this role. They are supported by an enthusiastic staff team and a management committee. The staff team are keen to update their knowledge through regular training. This aids their professional development and benefits the children attending the setting. The staff team work well together and are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the group.

Staff make mostly effective use of the space, time and accommodation. This gives children the opportunity to enjoy their play and to be active and quiet. The group uses the key worker system, but parents are not informed of who this is until the spring term. This does not benefit the sharing of information or individual planning.

Most legally required documentation is in place and is well maintained. The group's registration certificate is clearly displayed for parents to see the group's conditions of registration. Staff are aware of the mandatory ratios and work within these during each session. This gives children appropriate support in their play and learning. The group's policies and procedures are in place, but some require updating and expanding.

Leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. An action plan has been put in place following the last inspection and the group have tackled recommendations raised in a positive manner. Staff regularly review their practise following training and support visits from the local authority. The setting has a development plan in place, but this is mostly verbal. Positive, working links have been built with the school where the group operates. This helps to ease children's transition from the group to the school. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group agreed to; develop the written complaints procedures to include contact details for Ofsted and request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

The complaints policy has been updated to include all the necessary detail. Written consent is obtained from parents seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

At the last education inspection the group agreed to; develop medium and short term plans to show clear links to the areas of learning and the stepping stones to ensure that all areas are covered effectively; provide more opportunities for more able children to develop their early reading and writing and develop communication between the nursery and school to assist in children's transition from one to the other, and develop the staff appraisal system.

Staff have altered their planning a number of times following the last inspection. The current set show links between the areas of learning and the stepping stones. Staff provide a writing table with free access to resources and pencils on the easel for children to name their own work, but these are not always used by the children. Staff provide name cards for the children to register themselves on arrival, helping with their early reading skills. Positive working links have been built with the school and the group assisting children's transition to school.

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 nursery education are satisfactory.

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 that drinking water is always freely accessible to the children
- ensure that all children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating to avoid the spread of infection
- review and update policies to ensure they reflect regulations and the group's practice

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 children are encouraged to name their own work, have free access to writing materials in all areas, learn how to operate simple equipment and have free access to joining materials
- ensure that observations and assessments are linked to the stepping stones

- ensure that more able children are appropriately challenged when taking part in adult-led activities
- provide parents with written information on the Foundation Stage, stepping stones and early learning goals

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