

# Little Den Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	507935
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jacqueline, Ann Connell
<b>Setting Address</b>	Chawton Park Road, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1RQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0794 1367287
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Little Den Pre School PG
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 Den Pre School has been registered since 1983. It operates from a scout building on the western outskirts of Alton, Hampshire. It has a secure outdoor play area. The group is managed by a committee of parents. Children come from the local area. It operates from 09.15 to 12.00 each weekday morning during term time. It is also open from 12.30 to 15.00 on Tuesday afternoons during the spring and summer terms.

The pre school provides sessional care for up to 20 children aged from two years nine months to five years. There are currently 24 children on roll. Of these, 16 receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre school employ five members of staff who work for a variety of sessions throughout the week. Of these, three hold an early years qualification and two are currently working towards one.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from experiences which help them to develop a healthy lifestyle. Most days they play outside in the fresh air. They enjoy a wide range of physical activities. These contribute to their good health and help them to develop a positive attitude towards exercise. Children become increasingly confident as they throw and kick the balls or ride the wheeled equipment. They learn to coordinate their bodies when they balance across an arrangement of beams. Discovering different ways of crossing these beams provides them with additional challenge. For example, they try walking sideward and sliding across on their tummy. Children learn about the effect of exercise on their bodies when they discuss how they feel before and after exercise. They talk about being puffed out and thirsty when they have been running around or taking part in music and movement sessions.

Nutritious snacks help children to learn about healthy eating from a young age. They choose from a selection of fruit and vegetables, such as banana, apple, grapes, raisins and carrot sticks. Children eat these with enjoyment. They prepare their own snack and pour their own drinks. This encourages their independence. They have time to eat at their own pace. Staff ensure children have additional drinks during hot weather. They are aware of individual dietary requirements and ensure these are respected.

Children play in a clean environment and develop a firm understanding of good hygiene and personal care as they progress through the pre-school. For example, they know that washing their hands before eating their snack helps to prevent germs from spreading. Topics about keeping healthy encourage them to take care of their body. For instance, they discuss the importance of cleaning their teeth regularly and of wearing sun cream in hot weather. Children's welfare is supported because staff work closely with parents to collect information about any individual medical concerns. There are four members of staff who hold a first aid qualification. There are procedures in place to record accidents and parents become fully aware of any accidents, because they sign the completed records.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

The calm atmosphere helps children to feel secure. Bright and colourful wall displays make the environment welcoming and inviting. Children develop confidence as they move freely around the playroom where staff identify most potential hazards. This is done through regular risk assessments and daily checks. However, occasionally they fail to identify a hazard. For example, a hot drink on the floor in the middle of the playroom. There are procedures to keep children free from harm. The premises are secure and parents record their child's name as soon as they arrive. Children learn about keeping safe in the pre school. For example, they know that they must not run in the playroom, as this may cause an accident, and that they do not go into the kitchen. Furniture and equipment are in a good condition and meet the developmental needs of the children. There is a wide range of safe, stimulating and good quality play materials. The staff check the equipment regularly to ensure it is safe, clean and age appropriate.

The required procedures and documents are in place, and understood by staff, to promote children's health, safety and welfare. For example, staff maintain the required ratios and supervise the children effectively at all times. There are fire procedures, which include regular

fire drills, and procedures for use in an emergency. All members of staff are aware of their professional duty to safeguard children and understand the child protection procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enter happily and quickly become involved in their play. They enjoy their time in the setting and respond well to the staff's warm and friendly support. New and less confident children benefit from the good settling-in procedures. Children become increasingly confident as they develop strong and secure relationships with the staff who know the children well. For example, they know the children who need more encouragement to join in an activity or to speak in front of the whole group. Children's self-esteem grows when they receive praise for developing a new skill, such as trying to write their own name for the first time. They play well together and enjoy one another's company. They take part in a broad range of activities which support their development and learning and provide them with a wealth of new experiences.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All children are actively involved in a wide range of appropriate and relevant activities and are keen to learn. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They provide a well balanced programmed of planned activities that promote children's learning and allow them to progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff observe children's progress and stage of development. However, the written records are not up to date and do not give a clear picture of each child's progress. This makes it difficult to identify the next stage of learning. Staff manage children effectively using positive behaviour management. They show consistent interest and offer a high level of interaction with the children.

Children relate confidently to each other and to adults. They co-operate with one another and share their toys and resources well. They are eager to participate in the activities provided. For example, they are enthusiastic as they dip sponges in a variety of rich colours in order to create butterfly pictures. They show good independence as they serve themselves fruit and pour their own drinks. Children behave very well. They understand the rules within the setting and abide by them.

Children speak confidently whilst playing together and in front of the whole group. All children respond politely when their name is called at registration. Children's language develops when they discuss the day of the week and the weather. Activities such as weaving help them to understand the meaning of words, such as over and under. They handle books carefully and thoroughly enjoy listening to favourite stories and rhymes. A visit from the local librarian promotes their enjoyment of books and encourages them to make their own book. They recognise their name, for example, they find their name when they arrive or go to get their snack. They begin to make their mark and to make writing patterns. The more able begin to name their work. Older children enjoy writing postcards to their friends.

Children become familiar with numbers when they play with the maths equipment or use their fingers during counting rhymes. They have opportunities to count when they see how many children are present each day. Children show a good understanding of shape and measure as they weigh out the ingredients for biscuits or match different shapes. They measure the room and the length of the tables with tape measures and have a height chart to compare their own

measurements. When playing with bricks, the more able children can calculate how many bricks are needed to make two towers of the same height.

Children have extensive opportunities to learn about the wider world. They learn about nature when they explore the wild area behind the pre-school. They gather leaves and twigs in order to make a dough garden. They discover that the seeds they plant need to be watered and are fascinated when a baby comes into the group to be bathed. They learn more about their local community when they meet a police officer and a librarian. They look at local photographs and a map of the town and then work out whereabouts they live.

Children enjoy music and are familiar with a range of musical instruments. They eagerly join in songs such as The Gruffalo song and listen intently to some visiting musicians. Children express themselves freely as they move around to music, for example like fluttering leaves. They develop their creative skills when they build junk models and express themselves in painting a picture. They are familiar with a variety of materials, such as play-dough and sand. They use equipment, such as, tape recorders and programmed toys competently.

Staff work directly with the children and sit with those who are learning a new skill until they become confident. This encourages children to try new experiences, such as weaving strips of paper in and out. They give clear explanations and continually ask open ended questions which challenge the children and extend their learning. For example, they encourage children to observe the changes in the texture of the sand when water is added to it. They show enthusiasm and make learning exciting so that children are well motivated and eager to learn.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included because the staff know them well and have a very good understanding of their needs. For example, children from the same family are respected as individuals. Those who lack confidence receive sensitive support so they can integrate at their own pace. Each day staff spend time describing the available activities. This helps children to feel respected and valued as part of the group. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in the life of the setting because staff work closely with their parents and other professionals in order to offer good support.

Children show consideration and respect to one another. They speak politely, share their toys and take turns. They behave well because they understand the ground rules for behaviour. The calm environment combined with the staff's skilful observation means that behavioural problems rarely arise. Children's self-esteem grows because they have frequent opportunities to become independent. They choose their own activities and manage their self-care skills with increasing confidence. Children learn to respect people in the wider world through a wide selection of resources, which reflect diversity, and a variety of well-planned activities. They enjoy meeting visitors from other countries and learning about their dress and culture. They have exciting celebrations of different festivals, for instance, the Thai festival of Songkran when they make house decorations.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They show wonder, for example, as they watch snow falling or observe tadpoles changing into frogs. They begin to understand the difference between right and wrong and know, for instance, why it is important to share. Children engage in conversation spontaneously with both adults and other children and enjoy learning about other cultures.

The partnership with parents is good. Staff develop a friendly, working relationship with parents who value the nursery and speak of it with high regard. Some parents become involved as committee members. They receive information about the six areas of learning although their knowledge of the Foundation Stage is limited. They feel involved in their children's learning because they come into the group as parent helpers. They are well informed about their child's progress because they speak to staff each day and they know the name of their child's key-worker. Parents have regular newsletters and a copy of the information sheet, when their child starts at the setting. However, the information contained in this is not comprehensive. Although a copy of the policies and procedures is available to view, most parents have not seen it. Consequently, they do not have a thorough understanding of how the group is organised.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are relaxed and comfortable in the pre-school and are therefore confident to initiate and extend their own play. The familiar routine and well organised space helps them to feel secure. Staff work to the correct ratios, and often exceed them, so that children have good support at all times. All members of staff have appropriate skills and undertake additional training in order to improve their practice. They have all been vetted. However, there are no procedures for the appointment of new staff or for ensuring their suitability. At present, there is no induction programme to enable new staff to understand their responsibilities. The documentation is effectively organised and compliant with regulations.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The leader and staff work very closely together. They aim to ensure all children receive good quality care and achieve to the maximum of their potential. Through daily discussion they evaluate activities and identify how they can progress children to their next stage of learning. They work together in planning activities and take part in team training days. Staff have annual appraisals in order to support their professional development. The leader builds strong relationships with children, parents and staff and promotes equality of opportunity and an inclusive environment. She works closely with the committee who, because of frequent changes in personnel, are not always aware of their responsibilities. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to ensure all necessary detail is covered within the documentation and that practice in the setting reflects the written policy. Since then, all the policies and procedures have been revised and most of the practice is in line with the documentation. This contributes to the children's welfare.

## **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 good.

### 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):

- develop the written information given to parents about the setting and the Foundation Stage [also applies to nursery education]
- improve the procedures for appointing new staff, ensuring their suitability and providing them with induction training.

#### 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):

- improve the monitoring systems to show children's progress through the stepping-stones of learning and ensure all these records are up to date.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)