

Little Angels Pre School Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY359225
Inspection date	25 September 2007
Inspector	Moira Oliver
Setting Address	St. Matthews Church, Harwich Road, COLCHESTER, CO4 3HR
Telephone number	01206 862395
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Registered person	Little Angels Pre School LTD
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 Angels Pre-School Ltd registered under their new name in 2007 and they operate from St Matthew's church building in Colchester, Essex. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is open each weekday in term time from 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.15 to 14.45 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and on Wednesdays from 09.15 to 11.45 and on Fridays from 09.15 to 12.30 to include a lunch club.

There are currently 41 children from two years to five years on roll. Of these, 37 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and six are working towards further qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and are protected from the risk of infection because the staff are excellent role models on hygiene practices. For example, they wear gloves and aprons for food handling and talk to the children about washing their own hands before touching the food. The kitchen is clear and hygienic and appropriate chopping boards are used for food preparation. Children are supported by sensitive staff who deal well with toileting accidents and nappy changing, ensuring procedures limit cross-infection and are respectful of the children's privacy.

Children are well cared for if they have an accident or are unwell. All the staff hold first aid qualifications and a well-stocked and regularly checked first aid box ensures they can be dealt with effectively. Accident, medication and incident books are kept and completed accurately and signed by parents. Key workers know their children well and discuss medical issues with the parents making sure they know how and when to use items such as inhalers. Parents contact numbers are available at all times including when they are on outings to ensure parents can be contacted in an emergency.

Children have a very good understanding of simple good health and personal hygiene practices. They routinely wash their hands after visiting the toilet and use wipes to clean their hands before snack. Children manage the soap, taps and towels independently and throw tissues away after wiping their noses. Staff take opportunities during the sessions to reinforce personal hygiene practices and discuss the importance of washing off germs.

A wide range of healthy foods are offered at snack time and children's individual needs are met as they choose to come to the snack bar when they are hungry. Snack time is a sociable event where children help themselves to the food and pour their own drinks before sitting with their friends at the tables. Children enjoy cheese, crackers and fresh fruit such as apple and grapes. Posters in the snack area and discussions with the staff promote healthy eating, and children are encouraged to try new tastes. Parents and children are consulted about the menus; they are asked to contribute by providing a list of their child's likes and dislikes. Menus are displayed for parents keeping them informed and providing an opportunity for them to discuss any dietary issues. Water is available at all times to ensure they are not thirsty and children access it independently putting their cups in the bucket provided when they have finished.

Children are eager to use the range of physical activities both indoors and out, and have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. Staff share a strong belief that children's learning is greatly enhanced when they are outdoors and therefore provide many play activities in the garden all year round. In the months when there is no heating on in the building the children have free access to the outdoor area throughout the sessions. They enjoy climbing, balancing, scooting and pedalling, negotiating obstacles such as other children. Older children are beginning to understand some of the effects that exercise has on their bodies as they use real stethoscopes to listen to their hearts before and after exercise and feel the temperature of their bodies and their breathing. Children develop throwing and catching skills as they throw bean bags into baskets and their balancing as they travel across the balancing boards. They use scissors to cut straws and paper and rolling pins and cutters with the play-dough, learning how to use simple tools effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming, child centred, safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. The premises are bright and light and set up invitingly for play. They are secure and staff are vigilant as they monitor arrival and departure times ensuring children do not leave unsupervised and unauthorised persons do not have access. Clear policies ensure children only leave with authorised adults and parents inform the staff if anyone other than themselves is collecting and passwords reinforce the children's safety.

Thorough risk assessments are carried out on the premises daily and check sheets are used to ensure all areas and equipment are safe. For example, staff fit door stoppers on to prevent children jamming fingers, cover electrical sockets, secure unused areas such as cupboards and check all equipment. The outdoor area is checked and secure before the children arrive, however, staff are unsure of some of the bushes and trees in the garden and therefore do not know if the berries pose a hazard to children.

Children are supervised at all times by staff who work directly with them. The staff are vetted and have a wealth of experience, knowledge, skills and qualifications in childcare. Children are protected because the staff have a sound understanding of their roles in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. They update their training regularly and have a clear, detailed policy which is shared with parents.

Children remain safe on well-organised outings. Staff write clear procedures for each main pre-school outing, such as to the Zoo, which inform staff and parents of their roles in keeping the children safe. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they take part in road safety activities and when staff talk to them about the importance of staying together on outings. They are supported at all times in their use of large equipment such as climbing frames and staff teach the children to travel over and round them safely. They learn how to find a space when joining in action songs so they do not hurt others when they jump.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children confidently come into the setting and are welcomed warmly by the staff. They access resources from those set out and can choose to play indoors or out and they freely move from one area to another. Children show lots of interest in the activities because they are planned around individual children's interests. For example, a pirate theme takes over the provision and the climbing frame becomes a ship and the sand tray a treasure island. Some children chose to dress-up at home as pirates and come in proudly showing off their costumes.

Children acquire new knowledge and skills as they throw bean bags into baskets and take part in a game with a programmable bee. They learn to control its movements as they send it forwards and backwards across a story board. They ask lots of questions in their play as they wonder what happens next in the stories adults read to them. Children confidently request for activities to be repeated on following days that they have not had a chance to take part in.

Children develop high levels of self-confidence as they come together in small groups for registration and take part in discussions about the routine of the day, activities available and the weather. They have turns to bring items in for 'show and tell' and confidence grows as they

talk about their own interests. Small groups for story time and singing provide valuable opportunities for children to really become involved and contribute to the story or rhymes.

Younger children are supported by sensitive staff to settle and leave their parents. Their needs are understood allowing them to come straight into the main playroom and choose their activities where parents can stay to help them settle. Small groups and high staff ratios support children to feel secure and they very quickly settle into the activities. A rolling snack program allows them to make decisions about their own needs and to continue with their chosen activities for longer periods.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Teaching is firmly rooted in the staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage.

Children are happy and purposefully engaged in their play showing high levels of interest. They enjoy taking part in the activities which are planned around their individual interests. They excitedly come in and climb onto the 'pirate ship' or hunt for treasure in the sand. Children's achievements are celebrated and often photographed to share with others and their parents when they return to collect them. They are motivated and eager to learn, working well together sharing resources and waiting for their turn. They take pride in their environment as they help to tidy-up the toys and are developing independence as they put on their own aprons before painting. Children confidently pour their own drinks at snack time and are learning to manage their clothing when changing for P.E.

Children enjoy stories and know how books work, starting from the front turning one page at a time. They happily retell stories using voices for the animals. They are actively involved at story time due to the staff's creative ideas using props and expressive voices to bring the story to life. Children are learning to recognise their own names as name cards are used at different times during the session. Some can write letters like shapes on their work and others use letters in the dough to print their names. Children enjoy mark making and have valuable opportunities to make large patterns on the walls and paths outside with chalks. Children use language in their play, chatting to staff and each other and describing events from home.

Mathematical language is used by staff and children throughout their play, they compare the sizes of the towers they make and talk about shapes in their pictures. Children use numbers to count how many spaces are in a game and how many children are present. Snack time and number rhymes provide good opportunities for them to use simple calculation. Children recognise numbers from their number rich environment, dough numbers hang from the tree outside and material numbers are displayed on a number line chain.

Valuable experiences take place when children discover nature in their environment. Outings to the woods and playing outside provide opportunities to look at wildlife, insects, birds and squirrels. Children experience a range of activities planned around topics which broaden their horizons and underpin learning about the wider world. Discovering places such as Austria, Greece, Germany and Russia, learning about the people, music and taking part in religious and cultural festivals increases the children's understanding. Children enjoy technology and are beginning to use it to record their achievements with the use of digital cameras and a laptop.

Children use their imagination in role play as they come into the setting dressed as pirates. They delight in having their faces painted and pretend to be cats as they crawl around the book

area. Children use paint and printing techniques to create art work which is valued and displayed on the walls. However, children do not have free access to a range of creative media, limiting their independent creativity. Children develop an appreciation for a range of music as they listen to a range of different music styles linking to the themes. Children sing to themselves and enjoy joining in with fun action songs in small groups. They use all their senses as they take part in developing a sensory garden with herbs and lavender.

The staff work as a highly effective and supportive team and the children benefit from their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. A key worker system ensures staff get to know all the children and their parents very well and can meet their individual needs. Staff work directly with the children, talking to them, skilfully questioning them, actively encouraging them to think for themselves. They plan a broad and balanced program across all six areas of learning and staff take turns to plan, sharing the responsibility. The group have an extensive range of resources, however, there are limited opportunities for children to self-select from open shelving, limiting their choice. Staff plan for individual children maximising their learning by following their interests. Focused activity sheets show clear learning intentions and are evaluated supporting staff to develop their practice. Children's starting points are recorded and assessment clearly shows progression. Staff record children's achievements daily, updating their records regularly to share with the parents. Inclusion for all children is meticulously planned and monitored working closely in partnership with parents, ensuring children's needs are met.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children enthusiastically make choices and decisions throughout the session, they are eager to arrive at the pre-school and cope with separating from their parents well. Staff work very closely with the parents to ensure they know the child's interests, likes and dislikes in order for them to support the child to feel safe and secure when their parents leave. Key workers build important trusting relationships with the parents which benefit the children. Parents are welcomed and some join in with the sessions supporting the children in their learning at the setting. They are provided with a wealth of information about the setting and invited to attend any training with the staff, helping to provide a consistent approach. Policies and procedures are shared with the parents and staff encourage them to read one displayed policy each week. The pre-school provide questionnaires to parents when their child leaves to encourage feedback to support them to improve their practice further. They address any issues and a parent's forum is developing to ensure parents have the opportunity to have their views and comments heard and addressed.

Children develop self-esteem, respect and understanding of others through well planned activities and themes. They have valuable opportunities to learn about the wider world and their part in it as they take part in celebrating festivals from a variety of cultures. They use a range of resources reflecting positive images of gender, religion, culture and disabilities actively promoting positive attitudes towards others. All children are fully included in the life of the setting including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff are highly trained and work closely with parents and others to plan effectively to help children's progress.

Children's behaviour within the setting is consistently of a high standard because the staff are attentive and activities stimulating, meeting the needs of the children. Children understand right and wrong, and staff use age appropriate explanations to support them to play well together. Simple rules are reinforced at registration time, such as using small voices inside and big voices outside. Children feel a strong sense of belonging as they are warmly welcomed,

they find their own name cards on their coat pegs and activities are planned around their interests.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are welcomed as they arrive and there is always at least one member of staff available to speak to them. They receive a wealth of information about the setting and the nursery education through newsletters and planning sheets. Parents are involved in their child's learning at pre-school taking regular opportunities to look at their child's assessment records. Parents complete information about their child and their interests before they start at the pre-school and have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress with their key worker. Parents are extremely happy with the care and education their children receive and comment very positively about the progress they have made. They feel involved and informed as staff let them know when they are observing their children and meet with them to discuss their child's interests and their next steps in learning.

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

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are extremely well protected and cared for by experienced and qualified staff. New staff are supported through their induction period as they are introduced to all the policies and procedures and given time to become familiar with the setting and the children.

Staff have a high regard for the well-being of the children, they speak to them with respect and value them as individuals. The high adult to child ratios positively support children's care, learning and play, ensuring they receive high levels of attention and support daily. Staff deployment contributes to the children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take part in the setting. Staff work directly with the children and all have specific roles and responsibilities to allow the sessions to run smoothly. Close links are developed with two local primary schools to enable the smooth transition of children.

Time, resources and space are used well. They make full use of all the areas available to them, using areas for snack and registration and dividing the children into smaller groups making story time and registration purposeful, engaging all the children. The outdoors is an important part of the learning environment, providing children with a wide range of play experiences.

All paperwork is organised, confidential and accessible. An operational plan contains all up-to-date information, policies and procedures and is available and shared with the parents.

Leadership and management is good. The leadership and management of the pre-school contributes to the children's good progress towards the early learning goals. Both leaders delegate roles and responsibilities extremely effectively enabling staff to develop to their full potential. All staff have opportunities to plan, lead stories, singing and activities, their ideas are encouraged and valued. Staff are well supported in their professional development, peer observations and personal evaluation sheets go towards their appraisals which help to identify areas they want to develop. Staff are trusted and their achievements recognised, consequently they are enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility and work hard to develop them. The whole of the provision is monitored and evaluated daily, and strengths and areas for developing are identified and addressed ensuring high quality reflective practice.

Overall 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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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):

- ensure plants in the outdoor area do not pose a hazard to 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):

- give consideration to how additional resources could be stored where children can access them independently, including a range of creative media.

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