

Little Foxes (Wigan) Ltd-Iona House

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY297752
Inspection date	11 January 2008
Inspector	Angela Rowley
Setting Address	Iona, Billinge Road, Wigan, Lancashire, WN3 6BL
Telephone number	01942 227972
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Registered person	Little Foxes (Wigan) Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Foxes (Wigan) Ltd. operates from Iona House which is situated in the Highfield area of Wigan. It originally opened in 1984 and changed ownership in October 2004. The present owners also operate two other nurseries and employ an operations manager to oversee the individual management of all three provisions.

The nursery operates from a detached house which has been converted and extended to provide nursery accommodation for a maximum of 80 children under five years. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round, excluding Bank Holidays.

There are currently 91 children on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The nursery employs 18 staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery liaises with Wigan SureStart for advice and support.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Many clear and consistent practices help prevent the spread of infection. Staff use disposable protective wear when serving food and changing nappies and they follow routine procedures which ensure that the premises and the equipment are kept clean. Some interesting activities help raise children's awareness of good hygiene and consequently children in the nursery are managing their own personal hygiene well. They know that they are washing the germs away before they eat lunch and that they are brushing the sugar off their teeth afterwards. Children's health and medical needs are met. A sufficient number of staff hold current first aid certificates and mostly they follow the clearly established procedures for medication. All medicines are given after obtaining parental consent and records are kept, although not always in the formal documentation, which hinders the safe management of the provision.

A healthy lifestyle is positively encouraged. Children access fresh air in the developing outdoor play area each day and are regularly taken out into the local community. Children are making some good progress in their physical development. Staff use activity theme cards to provide planned sessions to extend children's physical skill. They negotiate obstacle courses and skilfully co-ordinate the wheeled toys accessible to them in the outside area. They balance on the tyres that they use as stepping stones. Their fine motor skills are developing well as they continually access some well planned provision to encourage the use of small tools and equipment.

Children are very well nourished. Home cooked meals derive from a very well informed and planned menu which is rich in healthy ingredients. A good range of fresh fruit and vegetables are provided on a daily basis. Children learn what is good for them through routine discussions and interesting activities, such as a dentists role play area and sports hero workouts.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and safe environment. Bright displays of artwork, colourful furnishings and some attractive information displays provide a welcome for children and their parents. Mostly, rooms are appropriately organised to meet children's needs, they are generally well decorated and furnished. However, the organisation of space in some of the children's rooms, does not meet National standards as the space available is not sufficient for the numbers of children registered to provide care for in those areas. Additionally, numbers within some rooms do not comply with the conditions of registration. Maximum numbers of children are not currently being achieved in the nursery and so children's care is not being compromised.

Safe and sufficient resources are available throughout the nursery many of which are freely accessible to children and enables them to make independent choices. In some areas, however, the range of toys is limited. The baby unit has a good selection of sound and activity toys, although few resources that promote physical skills and imaginative play and some of the toys are not in working order. Some areas in preschool do not challenge children's thinking because resources are not available for them to extend their ideas, for example, role play. Continuous provision is developing in all areas and in some it is used well to enhance children's experiences, for example, the provision of a soft play and tumble area in the 'tiddlers' room promotes their developing physical skills well.

Safety is mostly given high priority. Close circuit television cameras allow the manager to monitor the entrance area as well as each room. Staff are very vigilant regarding security and headcount routinely. A good range of risk assessment systems are in place although some hazards with regard to children's safety remain, including, a blocked external emergency evacuation route, damp and peeling walls in toddler room and safety restraints not being properly used in highchairs. Some good steps are taken to increase children's awareness of staying safe as they regularly practice emergency evacuations in the setting, and undertake planned experiences such as meeting the crossing patrol and using the pelican crossing when practising road safety.

Children welfare is suitably protected. Staff are aware of the settings procedures and know what to do if they are concerned about a child in their care. There is a child protection policy although aspects of it are outdated. The nursery uses more recent and relevant guidance to ensure proper procedures are followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and enjoy coming to nursery. They are eager to participate in a good range of activities which promote their development. Consistent key staff enable children to form secure attachments and develop confidence in their relationships, which is a key strength of the provision. Children and staff interact naturally with each other and spend time each day looking at books, reading stories and singing songs. As a result many children are becoming skilful communicators.

Staff are using and are further developing their knowledge of guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help them plan and provide interesting activities, for example, exploring different textures using shaving foam, cornflakes and basic treasure baskets. Informally they know the children well. They make written observations of children's abilities although they are not consistently and effectively evaluating what they see to make assessments of what children can do in order to plan the next steps for their individual development.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Planning for learning is mostly comprehensive and covers a good range. Staff's knowledge of how to plan linked to the foundation stage curriculum and using stepping stones as a focus for learning is clear and is developing. Activities are effectively linked which reinforces children's learning, although their delivery lacks clear differentiation because staff are not yet consistently using their observations of what children can do in their planning. This sometimes leads to more able children lacking challenge and occasionally being overly directed, for example, during creative activities. Continuous provision allows children to freely access and use resources which promote all areas of learning. Many children are becoming very confident in their use of technology as they negotiate their way through familiar educational websites knowing where to find the menu and how to get on their favourite game. Their independence is fostered well as staff allow children to try things out for themselves whilst being on hand to provide support when needed.

Children receive some concrete learning opportunities which make new concepts relating to their knowledge and understanding of the world more meaningful for them. During a winter theme children experience 'melting' as they play with ice and use real clothes to 'dress up' warmly. They enjoy a Diwali party when they taste Indian foods, dress in colourful clothes and

bring lights from home. Children are developing their understanding of print as they have some good opportunities to recognise, select and use their own name cards and they show interest in 'writing' as they use the well planned mark making area.

Children's progress in mathematics is developing steadily. Some good opportunities are provided to encourage 'matching' and children use language associated with size during their play. They use number less frequently and staff miss opportunities to encourage number matching and counting during natural activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are recognised and met. Consistent key staff ensure that the personal routines of babies are followed and that their health and learning needs are known and met. Staff work positively to plan for and provide support to children with learning difficulties and work closely with external agencies. Opportunities for children to experience diversity are good. Staff are increasing the planning of opportunities to raise children's awareness of the wider world by displaying posters in different languages, celebrating a range of festivals and tasting multi-cultural foods.

Behaviour within the nursery is good. Children are dealt with sensitively and so in turn they show care and concern for each other. Clear boundaries and expectations for behaviour are set and so children know about the 'golden rules' and know that there are limits for the number of children allowed in each play area at any time. Their self esteem is boosted when they are given responsibilities for example, setting the dinner table and when they receive recognition and rewards when they have done well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnerships with parents and carers of children receiving funded nursery education are satisfactory. Parents receive sufficient information about the educational provision. Some very valuable links have been made when parents have been able to contribute their knowledge and skills to broaden children's experiences. Parents are less well informed of the progress their children are making and how they can contribute to it, although the setting is already developing ways that they can improve this.

All parents receive some useful information about how the setting operates and about child development issues using notice boards throughout the nursery. Detailed daily diaries ensure that the needs of very young children are shared.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All required documents which contribute to children's health, safety and well-being are in place, although a small number of procedures need to be reviewed. Registration procedures for children and staff are rigorously maintained, although it is not always clear when staff have provided cover in other areas. Additionally, when the setting provides care for children in reception class after they have moved on from nursery, they do not have a rigorous enough procedure in ensuring that the care arrangements end before children turn five, and so on one occasion the setting has operated in breach of its conditions of registration. Clear recruitment and vetting procedures are in place and determine the suitability of staff. Suitable appraisal and development opportunities are in place although they have not been maintained.

Leadership and management is good. A relatively new management team is in place. The operations manager has had an immediate and positive effect on the quality of the childcare and education. Along with her assistant managers she is providing good leadership. The settings evaluation of its previous and current quality of practice reflects improvements made. Consequently, areas for development, such as improving resources, documentation, the use of space, the outside area and partnerships with parents are already an integral part of the settings future plans. The management team spend direct time within children's rooms and so are able to check the quality of teaching and see children make progress. They are actively working with external agencies and are committed to making further and continual improvements.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection three recommendations were raised for improvement. The setting was asked to consider increasing the resources available to promote diversity and also soft furnishings and textures in toddler areas. They were also asked to undertake a risk assessment of the outdoor play area and address identified hazards.

The setting has made some good progress with all three recommendations. Children are seeing and experiencing diversity within an increased range of resources and display items which promote diversity. They are able to relax using soft furnishings and benefit from some heuristic play throughout the nursery. Staff are vigilant when using the outside area to ensure children's safety as they check for hazards each time it is used. As a result of the action that the setting has taken to address these issues, the quality of children's care has been improved.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required Ofsted to take action in order to ensure that the provision continued to meet the National Standards. The concerns related to the organisation of baby care, the supervision of babies and the way in which the provision dealt with the concerns from a parent. An Ofsted inspector visited the setting on 12/01/2006 and raised three actions. The provider met the actions raised and remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- reorganise and evaluate the space and care arrangements within the setting to ensure that space standards and the conditions of registration are met at all times
- review the resources available throughout the nursery to ensure that a broad range are provided for babies, provide sufficient challenge in pre-school and are all in working order
- evaluate risks to children in relation to the use of safety restraints in highchairs, the evacuation procedures in case of emergency and the damp and peeling walls in toddler room
- further develop the systems for observation, assessment and planning to ensure that individual next steps are promoted using clear differentiation (also applies to nursery education)
- further develop documentation in relation to records of attendance and child protection procedures, and ensure that the nursery's medication procedures are consistently followed.

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):

- further develop children's opportunities for learning and challenge in mathematics and creativity
- improve the methods used to promote partnerships with parents to keep them informed of children's progress and be able to contribute to children's learning.

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