

# St Leonards Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	221839
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Jean Goodrick
<b>Setting Address</b>	St. Leonards Hall, Brington, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 5AD
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Committee of St Leonards Pre-school
<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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Leonards Pre-school opened in 1974 and has been registered at its current premises since 1993. It operates from one main room in the community building in the grounds of Brington Church of England Primary School. The pre-school is located in the village of Brington and serves the local area.

There are currently 26 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 19 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08:45 until 11:30 with a lunch club from 11:30 to 12:30 on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. An afternoon session is available on weekday afternoons from 12:30 to 14:45.

Six staff work with the children. Half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. One staff member is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a mentor from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their independence at the 'buffet' style snack time. They help themselves from the bowls set out by staff using the spoons provided. Children are supported as they pour their own drinks with a choice of milk or water. Snack time is a social occasion when children sit together learning social skills such as saying 'please' and 'thank you' and helping to pass round biscuits or cheese. They have healthy choices in their snacks such as bananas, apples and melons. The pre-school has a healthy eating policy so that fizzy drinks are discouraged for children's packed lunches. Drinking water is available throughout the session so that children are well hydrated. Younger children receive plenty of cuddles and emotional support as they learn to deal with frustrations and upsets and they are helped to understand and express their feelings.

Children are involved in a good range of activities to promote their physical development. They regularly play outside and there is a free flow between indoor and outdoor activities so that children make their own choices. They have opportunities to practise skills in climbing and balancing on the large apparatus and they thoroughly enjoy riding their bikes. Children develop their fine motor skills well as they use a range of small tools and equipment such as paint brushes, pencils and cooking utensils.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines and they are developing independence in using the facilities provided. For example, children wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack and help themselves to tissues as needed. Children benefit from the effective measures followed by staff to minimise the risk of cross-infection, such as the provision of paper towels and disposable tissues, and tables are cleaned before snacks. Required records are kept up to date so that children receive good continuity of care. Two members of staff have current first aid certificates so that they are confident to take action for the welfare of the children.

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

The provision is good.

Children move around freely in the bright colourful environment. The main entrance to the pre-school is welcoming with posters and displays for parents and visitors to read. Space is used effectively to provide a good range of age-appropriate activities. Resources and equipment are well maintained and checked regularly for hygiene and safety. Children have easy access to resources in low-level drawers and shelves so that they can follow their own interests and develop their play.

Children benefit from high levels of supervision by the staff to make sure they are safe. For example, staff closely supervise the external door during arrival and collection times. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as, for instance they have regular fire drills so that they know what to do in an emergency. They also know to walk in the pre-school. Daily risk assessments are carried out conscientiously to identify potential risks to children both indoors and outside. Good procedures are in place for outings as, for instance children use a walking rope when they go to the local Post Office.

Children are well protected as staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and the designated staff member has attended relevant training. Parents understand the pre-school's responsibilities as they have access to the policies and procedures which are in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly in the warm and welcoming environment created by staff. They really enjoy their time at the pre-school and they have positive relationships with adults and each other. Staff are friendly and caring and respond to the children with interest, respect and humour. They are sensitive to children's individual needs and offer plenty of support and reassurance so that less confident children are able to settle. This helps children to feel secure.

Staff create a calm purposeful atmosphere where children busy themselves and make independent choices about their play. Children quickly become involved in a broad range of practical play opportunities which help them make progress in all areas of their development. They are enthusiastic about the activities saying to the inspector, for example 'Wow, that was fun painting!' A wide age range of children attend the group and staff are aware of the need to ensure that all their needs are met. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child development and use the 'Birth to three matters' framework as a reference tool. They are effectively deployed with individual children and small groups so that children are well supported. Children are also encouraged to follow their own interests and ideas and select their own resources independently so that they develop self-confidence. For example, they select jigsaw puzzles from the shelf and take them back when they have finished with them. Staff spend time talking and listening respectfully to the children so that children's self-esteem is well promoted.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The pre-school leader has a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and uses her teaching skills effectively, particularly at circle time. However, other staff show a limited understanding of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals which sometimes impacts on the learning opportunities provided for children. Children are not always encouraged to extend their thinking and develop their ideas. Assessment records are in place and planning is linked to the areas of learning. However a key worker system is not yet in operation and this impacts on the effective use of observations in building on what individual children know, understand and can do. Older children benefit from extended activities during a separate session in the week although they do not receive sufficient challenge consistently across other sessions.

Children are enthusiastic and interested in the activities provided. They concentrate well and persevere with tasks showing high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Children confidently communicate with adults and each other, for instance contributing to discussions and listening to each other at 'show and tell' time. They demonstrate pride in their achievements showing the inspector the models they have made. They cooperate and negotiate roles, for example when acting out their imagined ideas in role play and they value one another's ideas, showing respect for each other. They receive sensitive support as they express their feelings and learn to respect the needs of others.

Children listen very carefully as they whisper 'good morning' to each other and choose whether to sing their 'Welcome' song loud or soft and fast or slow. Children handle books with great care and thoroughly enjoy stories such as 'The Bear Hunt' gleefully joining in with the 'squelch, squelch' and 'splish, splash' sounds in the story. They have fun with sounds and rhyming words and predict what will happen next in stories. Children recognise their names at registration and write their names on their creations. They have limited opportunities to write for a variety of purposes, such as in the role play area.

Children recognise numbers and have good opportunities to count, for example at circle time. Older and more able children talk about which numbers add up to seven. They develop early calculation skills in rhymes such as 'Five speckled frogs' and 'Ten little men in a flying saucer'. However, problem solving and early calculation skills are not consistently supported in everyday practical activities and routines. Children develop an understanding of nature, patterns and change as they talk about the weather and days of the week and they have some opportunities to observe and investigate. They enjoy cookery activities and observe the changes as they mix the ingredients for their buns. Effective use is made of the computer. Children build and construct using a satisfactory variety of resources.

Children have some opportunities use their imagination in the role play area and in small world activities. However staff are aware that the role play area has the potential to be used more creatively. Children enjoy painting and exploring sand, water and play dough. They express themselves using a satisfactory variety of media and materials and they have some opportunities to listen to music and express themselves through music and movement. However children select from a limited range of resources to develop their creativity and art work is often adult-led.

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

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued as individuals. Staff get to know children and their families well so that children have a good sense of belonging. Consideration is given to children's individual needs and staff ensure that all children have opportunities to take part in the activities obtaining new resources as necessary. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported. The staff attend training to continue to update their knowledge and understanding. They identify when children need additional support and work alongside parents and other professionals to ensure that children's needs are met. Children learn about their local community, for example they enjoy posting cards at the Post Office for Mother's Day. They have a limited range of resources and activities which help them to respect cultural and linguistic differences.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are well supported as they learn about the expectations of behaviour. They eagerly join in tidying up and enjoy helping each other. Children are learning to share and take turns as, for instance they negotiate over use of the toaster in the role play area. Staff provide good role models and children benefit from their regular praise and encouragement. This helps to build their self-esteem and promote good behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are involved in all areas of the pre-school including the management committee. Staff share information informally with parents on a regular basis and parents give appreciative feedback on the availability of staff and the way their children are treated as individuals. Staff seek parents' views about their children's needs, interests and achievements before children start at the pre-school and there is a flexible settling-in process for the benefit of the children. Parents receive newsletters, and information

about the Foundation Stage and core activities is attractively displayed. However parents have limited opportunities to contribute to activities and to contribute to their children's progress reports. Good liaison with the school benefits children as they make the transition from the pre-school.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children enjoy a friendly and welcoming environment. Staff work well together as a team. They make effective use of time, space and resources to ensure that children participate in a good range of age-appropriate activities with time to be active and to rest. Children are able to move around freely and safely in the well-prepared environment. Staff are deployed effectively so that children receive individual support and encouragement. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated and this contributes to children's welfare. Confidentiality is respected and records are kept up to date so that children receive good continuity of care. The pre-school has an effective employment procedure and children are never left with anyone who has not been vetted. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The new management committee and staff team have a strong commitment to the continuous improvement of the provision. They have identified areas for development including training opportunities for the staff team and a new system of key working for the benefit of the children. Staff have regular meetings to share information and discuss the planning of activities. An appraisal system is in place and there is some provision for the monitoring and evaluation of the nursery education.

Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection it was agreed that the child protection policy would include more information about procedures to be followed in the event that an allegation is made against a staff member. The pre-school has improved the child protection policy in relation to allegations against staff and the procedures are clearly displayed for the information of parents and carers.

## **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:

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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):

- provide a range of resources and activities which help children to understand and value their differences and similarities and learn about a diverse society.

### **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):

- develop assessment and key working so that activities build on what individual children know, understand and can do
- provide parents with opportunities to contribute to their children's progress reports.

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)