

The Leighs Nursery Group at Great Leighs Village Hall

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 402153

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Inspector Gill Thornton

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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 Leighs Nursery is one of two private nurseries that make up the The Leighs Nursery Group. It opened in 1992 and operates from the main hall in the village hall in Great Leighs, between Braintree and Chelmsford. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday during term time only from 08.55 to 12.10 and from 12.30 to 15.00.

There are currently 85 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 55 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and wider catchment area. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs nine staff. Seven of whom, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-established routines and planned activities. Positive steps are taken to promote children's good health and encourage them to manage their own personal needs. Children understand the need to wash their hands before snack time and staff consistently reinforce the need to wash away any germs. Appropriate nappy changing procedures are in place, during which children's privacy is respected by the use of a screen to shield them from other children using the toilets. Children receive appropriate care if they are ill or have an accident because staff are aware of children's individual health care needs and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. In addition, staff attend first aid training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a medical emergency.

Children readily help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the session. The well-organised rolling snack time enables children to take responsibility for their own needs and eat at their own pace. Children help themselves from healthy options featuring fresh fruit and vegetables and pour their own drinks of milk or water. Staff sit and support children during snack time while reinforcing the importance of healthy eating, for example, discussing how the calcium in milk gives them strong bones. Sound procedures are in place to ensure children's individual dietary needs and preferences are respected. Children attending morning sessions enjoy the social occasion of sitting with their friends while having their packed lunches before going home.

Children enjoy a range of physical play activities both indoors and outside that contribute to their health and physical fitness. They benefit from a daily period of play in the fresh air when staff escort them to the nearby enclosed tennis court. Here children develop control of their bodies in safety while enjoying various activities including playing parachute games, throwing and kicking balls and taking part in ring games. They particularly enjoy painting with brushes and water on the solid fencing when they demonstrate good early writing and mark-making skills. In fine weather they sometime walk across the playing field to the play area to use the apparatus. Indoors, children use a climbing frame and other appropriate physical equipment such as a large wooden rocker which they excitedly enjoy rocking higher and higher under staff supervision. They practise their small physical skills while taking part in threading activities, using scissors, construction kits and various mark-making tools to develop their hand to eye coordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where staff are vigilant in promoting children's safety. Staff are very safety conscious and spend considerable time preparing the premises before children's arrival to create a stimulating, child-friendly environment with appropriate facilities to promote children's independence. The premises are kept securely locked during sessions to prevent unauthorised access and staff carefully monitor children's arrival and departure to ensure they only leave with an authorised adult. The large hall is well-organised to provide children with access to a broad range of stimulating activities with space for children to move around freely and safely. Colourful posters and displays help to create an warm and inviting atmosphere in which children feel relaxed and at home.

Staff are vigilant in carrying out risk assessments on the indoor and outdoor environment and thorough safety procedures ensure that hazards to children are minimised. Detailed operational policies and procedures are well documented to promote children's safety. Children have access to a good range of safe and suitable toys and equipment that are well maintained and meet safety standards. Staff supervise children's play to ensure that toys and equipment are used appropriately. Children are provided with a good range of child-height furniture to enable them to play and learn in safety and comfort. Staff practise regular fire drills with the children to ensure that they know what to do in the event of a fire.

Sound procedures are followed when going for outdoor play and staff are vigilant in ensuring all children are safe and accounted for. Children are provided with good explanations and discussions to help them keep learn about safety. For example, during planned road safety sessions or while using a needle during a well-supervised sewing activity. Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted as staff regularly update their child protection training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern. Relevant documentation is readily available and the safeguarding children policy is shared with parents to ensure they are aware of staff's responsibilities to protect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Sound procedures are in place to help children settle and become happy in the warm and welcoming environment. Children and their families are warmly welcomed on arrival, happily exchanging news while their children seek out their friends. Children look forward to coming to nursery, they happily separate from their parents and carers and enthusiastically explore and investigate the broad range of activities set up around the room. A successful keyworker system helps children build trusting attachments with staff, who know them and their families well. Sound induction and settling-in procedures ensure staff are aware of children's starting points and regular ongoing meetings between keyworkers and parents ensures children's individual needs are effectively met.

All children are happy and involved throughout the session, they play purposefully together, interacting well and sharing ideas, particularly during role play activities. Staff join in well with children's play to encourage their interest and perseverance, for example, while helping them to see how tall they could build a tower of bricks. Staff make regular meaningful observations of children's play to enable them to plan activities based on children's interests to develop their existing skills. For example, extending children's own ideas of using the play dough to make 'birthday cakes' and providing them with resources such as candles and cake decorations to develop their play.

Staff reflect 'Birth to three matters' in their good practice with the younger children in the nursery. They create individual folders to show parents how their child is progressing in relation to different aspects of the framework. Younger children are becoming confident to approach staff for comfort and support and they are familiar with the clear routines of the nursery which helps them develop their independence and self-esteem. They take part in whole group activities such as songs and rhymes with staff providing them with appropriate support to maintain their attention. They enjoy creative activities, and freely access the painting easels, particularly delighting in experimenting with making hand prints.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching successfully meet the needs and interests of the children attending to help them make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn and they use this knowledge to provide a broad range of activities balanced across the six areas of learning. Children benefit from a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play and learning opportunities. Staff use a good range of teaching methods to extend children's learning and develop their thinking skills. They make good use of open-ended questions and learning opportunities during everyday activities such as snack time and within the environment. For example, encouraging the children to think about why the rain water was pouring out of the guttering.

Long term planning is based around appropriate themes and includes seasonal festivals and celebrations. Short term plans reflects observations of children's play and comments from parents, although links to children's next steps in learning from their assessment records are not clearly identified on a routine basis. Staff plan and evaluate focused activities based upon daily objectives although activities are not always fully adapted to reflect children's differing stages of development. Keyworkers maintain meaningful assessment records based upon observations to record children's progress through the stepping stones and identify next steps in their learning. They encourage children to share their views on the nursery by helping them to record their views and ideas in their 'My Nursery Book' which forms part of their assessment folders.

Staff are calm and consistent in managing children and their behaviour. They use sound strategies appropriate to children's level of understanding and reinforce acceptable behaviour through reminders and simple explanations. Staff make good use of praise and encouragement, to which children respond well, to promote their understanding of good behaviour.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery. They have a positive attitude to learning and are self-assured in their play, negotiating and interacting with their peers to share ideas and experiences, for example, when deciding whose turn it is to be the shopkeeper. Children are confident and can play well on their own or with others. Staff encourage children to develop their self-care skills such as putting on their own coats and clearing their dishes after snack time. Children are becoming confident communicators and freely initiate conversation with their peers and adults. They have many opportunities to recognise their own names as they self-register on arrival and use their name cards to reserve their place at snack time. Some children competently write their own names and they all have many opportunities to develop their early writing and mark-making skills. They develop their understanding of using writing for a purpose during their play, using resources such as clipboards, notepads and envelopes.

Children enjoy spontaneously acting out their favourite stories and they borrow books to share at home with their parents. Most children can confidently count to 10 and beyond and demonstrate this skill spontaneously during their play. They enjoy number rhymes when staff encourage them to work out how many left or which is the bigger number, which the more able children do so confidently. Staff encourage their simple problem solving skills, for example, while playing shops to work out who has the most money. Children confidently name and recognise shapes and older children are beginning to recognise and recreate simple patterns. Regular opportunities for sand and water play enable children to explore and compare capacity.

Children examine different materials and investigate change such as when trying to free plastic dinosaurs frozen in a block of ice. Children enjoy visitors into the group which gives them an understanding of their place in the community and they learn to show concern and care for

living things. For example, during a visit from a vet listening to a dog's heartbeat and helping to bandage it's paw. They confidently use a computer while demonstrating good mouse control skills and use everyday technology during their play. For example, pretending to take their friends' photographs with a mobile phone as they a pose for the picture.

Children are developing an understanding of health and bodily awareness and staff encourage them to observe the effects of exercise on their bodies while discussing how running around makes them hot and thirsty. Children enjoy planned and spontaneous role play opportunities supported by various props to extend their ideas. They take part in many planned craft activities, supported by a range of media and materials. Overall, children make good progress in their learning and achieve well given their capabilities and starting points

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have a strong sense of belonging and their own identity within the group. They build strong relationships with their keyworker, helping them feel settled and secure. Photographs of the children at play form an important part of the nursery and add to children's sense of community. 'Barney Bear' is valued by the children as an important member of the nursery, children take him on visits home to share in important events in their lives such as birthday parties. All children have equal access to toys and equipment which meet their individual needs so they can become confident and independent.

Children participate in a wide range of activities that help them develop their appreciation of the wider world. They explore festivals such as Divali, Chinese New Year, Christmas and Hanukkah through art work, books and religious artefacts. They can see posters and photographs of people from around the world and have access to toys and resources promoting a positive view of diversity. Children are learning to show concern and respect for the needs of others and they develop an understanding of those less fortunate than themselves. For example, by supporting the 'Harvest for the Hungry Appeal' and collecting and packing food boxes to send to Bulgaria.

The nursery has a very positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The experienced and qualified Special Educational Needs Coordinator follows clear and effective procedures which are shared with all staff to ensure children with additional needs receive high levels of support to help them reach their full potential. Staff work in very close partnership with parents and other professional to ensure all children are able to fully participate within the nursery environment. All staff regularly access further training to ensure children's specific needs are met.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are learning right from wrong and to understand responsible behaviour. They show care and concern for each other and respond well to staff's use of sound strategies to remind them of the nursery rules. For example, sharing photographs of the children demonstrating good behaviour such as sharing or lining up. Staff are good role models and their sensitive interventions and calm explanations teach children how to reason and negotiate with each other to enable them to manage their own behaviour.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is outstanding. Children benefit from the excellent relationships that staff foster with their parents. The very friendly exchange of information on arrival and collection ensures children's changing needs

are met and promotes continuity of care. All the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes.

The comprehensive prospectus is full of useful information about the running of the nursery and includes detailed information about the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' to ensure parents are fully informed about the curriculum. They receive further information to keep them up to date with the running of the nursery via regular newsletters and information displayed in the entrance lobby. Bound copies of the nursery's extensive operational policies and procedures are available for parents to share.

Staff are proactive in involving parents in their children's learning and sharing in their children's achievements. Open evenings and formal meetings between keyworkers and parents provide meaningful opportunities to discuss children's progress and identify area for development. Parents' views are sought and acted upon via questionnaires. Parents are highly complementary of the friendly and approachable staff, the stimulating range of activities and the good progress made by their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective staff deployment and good adult to child ratios positively contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Staff work well together as a successful team, they have a high regard for the well-being of the children and follow clear routines to which the children respond well. The good organisation of time, space and resources positively supports children's care, learning and play.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure children are protected and cared for by experienced staff with a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Comprehensive operational policies and procedures are in place to support the successful running of the nursery, however some documentation does not fully reflect current requirements. A daily attendance record is maintained of children, staff and visitors to the nursery. However, the system for recording which children are present is somewhat unclear. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The manager and staff work well together as a strong team who are committed to providing high quality care and education. The manager encourages all staff to review and monitor their practice, through regular staff meetings and discussions about children's progress. Job descriptions and induction procedures ensure staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Effective staff appraisals provide opportunities to acknowledge staff strengths and interests and identify areas for professional development. The nursery supports staff in attending ongoing training to update their knowledge and skills. The nursery has close links with the local primary school and works with them to ease children's transition into school. Improvements since the last inspection have enhanced the quality of nursery education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered provider was asked to update the child protection policy. This has been reviewed and updated to include current contact numbers. To improve the quality of nursery education the provision was asked to develop strategies for supporting children with English as an additional language and develop strategies to enable parents to share in their

children's learning. The manager has attended training to develop her knowledge of supporting children with English as an additional language to improve her practice. Parents are now provided with more formal opportunities to share their knowledge and observations of their children's progress at home. Keyworkers record details of these observations in children's records of assessment and include them as a guide to inform future planning. Consequently, enhancing the provision of nursery education.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- continue to review documentation to reflect current requirements.

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):

- continue to develop the system of using children's next steps in learning to inform future planning.

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