

Little Bowden Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 226431

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Inspector Sarah Measures

Setting Address St Nicholas Church Hall, Rectory Lane, Little Bowden, Market
Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 8AS

Telephone number 01858 431627

E-mail traceyhobbs1@aol.com

Registered person Tracey Hobbs

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 satisfactory. 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?

Little Bowden Pre-School was established in 1971 but was taken over by the current proprietor in 1999. It opens during term time for 38 weeks each year. Opening times are from 9:15am until 11:45am on weekday mornings. The pre-school also runs a holiday play-scheme during the summer holidays for three days a week over a four week period, sessions are from 09:30 to 12:30. The pre-school operates from a church hall situated in the village of Little Bowden on the edge of Market Harborough, in Leicestershire. Children are grouped together in one large hall. They also have access to an adjoining smaller room and other associated facilities. The pre-school serves mainly Little Bowden although places are available for children from the surrounding area.

The pre-school may care for up to 24 children at any one time. At present there are 41 children on roll, including 15 funded four-year-olds and 13 funded three-year-olds. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs seven staff, including the proprietor. The proprietor and two full-time staff hold recognised early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic setting. Their health is further promoted because staff follow careful hygiene routines. For example, staff take care to prevent the spread of infection when preparing foods and changing children and take care to ensure the snack area is kept clean at all times. Children are in good independent hygiene routines, demonstrated as they confidently go to wash their hands before eating, pour their own drinks and help to clear away after themselves. Children's health is potentially jeopardised because not all staff have an appropriate knowledge of their individual health and dietary needs. Children make healthy choices at snack time, for example they enjoy crackers with cucumber and cubes of cheese.

All children benefit from regular physical play as this is planned for within daily sessions. They have some outdoor experiences as staff take them out within the local area to complete activities linked to themes of learning. For example, they go on walks to look for insects or to post letters. All staff have completed training in first aid that is kept up to date on a rolling programme in order to ensure children are always protected in the event of an accident.

Children in receipt of funded nursery education make satisfactory progress in their physical development because this is appropriately planned for alongside the other developmental areas. Children have regular opportunities to use large play equipment and to develop their physical control and spatial awareness by taking part in group games and action songs. For example, children take part in parachute games, use bikes, balls, a balancing beam and move forwards and backwards to the pirate song, which is one of their favourites.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure setting and their arrival and departure is closely monitored by staff in order to maintain their safety during busy times. Staff are appropriately deployed across the setting in order to ensure children are supervised at all times. Space, equipment and play resources are effectively organised to create a welcoming and accessible environment for children.

Children choose freely from a range of toys, books and games that meet their developmental needs. Risk assessments of the premises and outings are regularly completed in order to promote children's safety in and out of the setting. However, these assessments have not fully addressed children's safety with regard to possible risks due to access to tables and chairs that are not securely stacked at the rear of the main play area, and due to children's access to fire doors that are easily opened by children presenting access to hazards outside of the setting.

Children are protected in the event of a fire because regular fire practices are carried out by staff and recorded. They are not fully safeguarded because although secure written child protection policies and guidelines are available, not all staff are confident with their knowledge of child protection issues and referral procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally settled and have secure relationships with staff who are caring and offer them appropriate support. All children choose freely from a suitable range of activities that meet their developmental needs. Children arrive, part easily from their parents and carers and are ready to participate. Staff generally support the younger children effectively. For example, staff show an appropriate awareness of their needs and provide sufficient equipment for them to be able to take part in activities. Staff sit with the younger children on their knee during group activities offering them reassurance and enabling them to participate.

The quality of teaching and learning for children in receipt of funded nursery education is satisfactory. Long and medium term plans thoroughly cover all development areas and offer children a balanced program of learning whilst working towards the early learning goals. However, short term plans are not effectively linked to the longer term plans in order to help staff make the most of children's learning opportunities across the setting and in order for them to ensure the older and more able children are sufficiently challenged. Staff observe and assess children in their key worker groups in order to help plan for their individual progression. However, the quality of children's observation records varies and records do not necessarily give a clear picture of where all children are at in order for staff to plan effectively for the next steps in their learning.

Staff use appropriate praise and encouragement in order to develop children's confidence and self-esteem. Children make secure friendships amongst themselves and have some good opportunities to socialise and negotiate in small groups. For example, as they sit and chat at snack time and as they take part in role play. Children enjoy role play and have fun as they use their imagination and learn from each other, making sense of everyday situations. Children generally have suitable opportunities to engage in large group discussions, although staff's management of their behaviour can affect their ability to concentrate and to enjoy such opportunities. Staff sometimes use open-ended questions in order to make children think. Children show good enjoyment and appreciation of books as they choose books to share with their friends from the welcoming and well-organised book corner. They treat books with care and talk fondly about their favourite stories. Children have suitable opportunities to learn to recognise their own names as they register themselves into the setting and choose their name at snack times. Staff offer them appropriate support and help them to identify the sounds in their name.

Children have regular opportunities to count and compare and to recognise numbers as they take part in mathematical games and activities. For example, they take part in number lotto games matching pictures to numbers and they look at different numbers as they decide what the date is during group activities. However, there are missed opportunities for children to use practical maths in order to reinforce their understanding of number during pre-school routines and across other activities offered across the setting. Staff talk to children about events from their home life. This helps children to develop an appropriate sense of belonging and an understanding of time and place. Children have relevant opportunities to learn about the natural world as they take part in activities under themes of learning that look at insects and the signs of spring and other seasons. Children regularly choose from a range of construction equipment so they are able to construct their own designs.

Children routinely take part in planned creative activities, although these can offer limited opportunity for them to make the most of their own imagination and ideas and can therefore

lack challenge, particularly for the older and more able children. Children enjoy developing their own ideas as they experiment with play dough and use varied tools available. Children take part in an appropriate range of activities that allow them to express themselves in different ways. For example, they use musical instruments and take part in action songs and rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children generally develop a secure sense of belonging as they are appropriately valued by staff. They generally have opportunities to learn to appreciate those that are different from themselves because an appropriate range of toys, books and dressing up items that represent diversity are integrated into their play environment. Equality of opportunity for boys and girls is promoted as all children choose freely from all activities available. The provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is secure because staff follow appropriate procedures to ensure children gain support. Staff adapt activities and routines to meet children's needs in order to effectively promote inclusion for children.

Children are not consistently well behaved and accident records show a high number of incidents involving unwanted behaviour. Overall, staff use a good range of positive methods to encourage and reward good behaviour in children, but do not always have the confidence to challenge unwanted behaviour effectively as it occurs. Staff are friendly and approachable and secure systems are in place to enable key workers to work with parents in order to meet children's needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers for children in receipt of funded nursery education is satisfactory. The pre-school provides parents with clear written information regarding how their child will be learning and parents are aware of the educational programme that their child is following. This helps parents to support their children appropriately at home. Informal discussions and formal meetings offer suitable opportunities for parents to share what they know about their child and for key workers to keep parents up to date with children's progress. This helps to promote relevant continuity of children's care and education.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Policies and procedures generally promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and their ability to make a positive contribution. Secure systems are in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children, although there is no formal procedure used to assess staff's medical suitability. A key worker system is used to help staff develop secure working relationships with parents in order to get to know children and offer them appropriate support. The premises are welcoming and organised so that children can choose freely from a suitable range of activities.

There is a clear training plan in place to help staff update their knowledge and improve the provision for children by attending local training opportunities. Systems for keeping children's records meet requirements and are used effectively and confidentially in order to promote children's welfare and to protect them and their families. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. There is a clear management structure in place to support the appropriate running of the setting. However,

constraints upon time available means it is difficult for the provider to spend as much time as she would like in the setting in order for her to fully monitor and evaluate the provision for children. The provider is committed to improvement and addresses weaknesses positively with clear action plans to ensure improvement for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group agreed to ensure that furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment, and review the equal opportunities policy to ensure that it is consistent with current legislation and guidance and to ensure that this is understood and implemented by all staff and shared with parents. All children now choose from an appropriate range of toys and suitable equipment and furniture is used to create an accessible and appropriately stimulating environment for children. The equality of opportunity policy has been updated to reflect current legislation and is available to share with parents and staff who offer children appropriate opportunities and activities to demonstrate how it is implemented.

At the last nursery education inspection the group agreed to increase children's experiences of rhymes, alliteration and phonic knowledge, increase the opportunities for mark-making in role play and other everyday situations, develop the use of resources to promote children's understanding of information and communication technology, and the environment around them, and review staff's knowledge of planning to ensure that they are able to plan for children to make progress. Pre-school routines now offer children appropriate experiences to develop their communication language and literacy by taking part in rhymes and appropriate activities that encourage alliteration and the use of phonics. Daily opportunities are offered for children to take part in mark-making activities and children are offered opportunities to write for a purpose during role play, however this does not happen on a routine basis which has the potential to improve further as staff make better use of the stepping stones with the recommendation agreed following this inspection. Children now use information and communication technology to support their learning routinely. They have appropriate opportunities to explore their local community as staff take them on walks within the area to carry out activities linked to themes of learning. Procedures now ensure that staff are aware of planned learning intentions for specific activities, however improved links between longer and short term plans have the potential to offer staff more support and opportunities to challenge children and ensure they make progress throughout other activities across the setting.

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 upon request. The complaints 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):

- improve staff's awareness of children's individual health needs
- improve the risk assessment to include children's access to the fire doors and to the table and chairs stacked insecurely at the rear of the main play area
- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and Local Safeguarding Children Board referral procedures
- improve staff's confidence when dealing with difficult and challenging behaviour.

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 observation and assessment system so that a clear record is kept of where all children are at in order to help staff plan effectively for the next steps in their learning
- improve links between medium and short term plans in order to help staff make better use of the stepping stones to ensure all children especially the more able are sufficiently challenged across the development areas.

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