

# Little Learners Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	205287
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Elenora Griffin
<b>Setting Address</b>	Bayton School, Bayton, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY14 9LW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01299 832855
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<b>Registered person</b>	Judith Kathlyn Bunn
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Learners Nursery opened in 1997 and operates from a demountable building in the grounds of Bayton Church of England Primary School in the village of Bayton, close to the town of Kidderminster. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 62 children aged from two to 11 years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas and attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs eight members of staff, seven of whom work directly with the children. Of these, five hold an appropriate early years qualification and one is working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy being cared for in a very friendly, clean environment in which staff consistently follow detailed cleaning check lists on a daily basis. Children are learning about personal hygiene as they wash their hands before meals and as staff help them to blow their noses. They are effectively protected from the spread of infection because the sick child policy makes it clear that children should not attend when they are ill and a list of exclusion periods for common childhood illnesses is clearly displayed for staff to share with parents. Children are well cared for if they are unwell or have an accident. This is because parents give permission for the administration of medication and nearly all staff hold a current first aid certificate. However, children's continuity of care is potentially compromised because not all medication and accident records have been signed by parents.

Children benefit from sociable meal times when they sit together to eat and enjoy relaxed conversations with staff and each other. Children are learning appropriate table manners as staff remind them to say 'please' and 'thank you', and encourage them to try to eat with their mouths closed. Children feed themselves independently and have opportunities to develop self-help skills through planned activities such as cutting apples or buttering toast. In order to further develop children's independence, staff are planning a café style snack bar so that children have daily opportunities to pour their own drinks and prepare their own snack. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy eating. Staff take advantage of meal time to talk to children about the food that is good for them and children know that carrot and cheese are good for them and that their teeth will get 'poorly' if they eat too much sugar. Children's understanding is further developed as they help to plant and grow fruit and vegetables in the spring.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities to be active outside in the fresh air. Children have daily access to the outside area where they can climb up high wooden frames, swing, run, jump, balance and turn themselves around ropes. They ride on bikes, play football, play in the sand pit and enjoy sitting together in the play house. Children also have access to logs and planks to build with, and spades and forks to dig with. Consequently, children develop confidence using the wide range of equipment that provides appropriate levels of challenge for them. They master increasing control and coordination as they move safely around the outdoor environment showing an awareness of space, themselves and others. There are daily opportunities for children to participate in art and craft activities and they are invited on a daily basis to draw in their diaries. As children use tools and materials such as, pencils, pens, glue, scissors and play dough, they develop good dexterity and hand to eye coordination.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy being cared for in a friendly and welcoming environment. They benefit from ample space in which to move about safely and to spread out with the large scale activities that are taken out for them by staff, such as train tracks, large 'Lego' and 'Marble run' construction materials. Children's activities are well supported through the organisation of space which offers separate areas for messy play, dressing up, home corner play, table top and floor activities, and a quiet book corner where they can rest and relax on soft cushions. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe as they practise the emergency evacuation plan with staff on a

monthly basis. Their understanding of how to stay safe is further enhanced through a variety of planned activities. For example, as they talk about and make displays for 'stranger danger', practise road safety using outdoor zebra crossing equipment and talk to fire and police officers when they come to visit.

Children are generally cared for safely because of good supervision and the vigilance of staff. They benefit from the appropriate use of risk assessments, which have considered all toys, equipment and areas of the nursery. However, risk assessments for the outside area have not identified what action will be taken to minimise or manage the potential hazards identified, and not all potential hazards have been considered. For example, the broken slabs in the garden. As a result, children's safety in the outside area is not fully promoted. Children are safeguarded from harm and neglect because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. Staff are well supported to meet their responsibilities in child protection as the designated person for child protection has received extensive training, there are clear policies and procedures in place and Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are easily accessible to all staff.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the warm and friendly environment of the nursery. Children reap the benefits of their parents and carers being able to stay with them at the start of each day until they are comfortable and settled. Children are quick to engage in the activities that staff offer to them and staff encourage children make choices about what they want to have taken out. Staff have a lovely rapport with children and are actively engaged with children at all times encouraging them to get involved and to try new things. Young children are appropriately supported as they start at nursery because key workers develop a good understanding of their interests, needs and starting points through discussion with parents and carers, and the regular use of observations and assessments.

Children who attend before and after school enjoy being cared for in a relaxed atmosphere in which they are free to choose between playing quietly with resources, participating in active group games or just spending time chatting with their friends and members of staff. Children construct with 'Lego', make dens with pillows, chairs and blankets, play on the computer, explore the dark evenings with torches, play football and join in games such as, 'Duck, duck, goose'. Staff deploy themselves well to ensure that children of all ages and abilities receive appropriate support and are able to fully participate. Children of different ages enjoy one another's company and they play harmoniously together, pretending in the home corner, exploring computer programmes and enjoying games of football.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the early learning goals and have started to implement the Early Years Foundation Stage, which they will be required to follow from September 2008. Children benefit from accessing an interesting range of activities and resources that are provided by staff. Staff reflect on daily activities, noting the areas of learning that activities have covered and ensuring that all areas are covered over the week. Staff take their lead from children in order to ensure that activities appeal to and interest them. As a result, children become engaged and enjoy what they do. However, outcomes for all children are not always fully maximised. This is because planning does not clearly identify objectives for children's next steps in learning or how all children will experience

a wide range of activities across all areas of learning. As staff are continuing to develop their planning, children continue to make good progress because key workers make effective use of observations and assessments to identify at least one objective for each child, which they work with children to achieve.

Children have lots of fun accessing the resources and activities that staff provide for them and staff ensure that over time children experience a good variety of activities. Staff use a good range of methods to support children in their learning. They talk to children about what they are doing, asking questions and taking advantage of spontaneous learning opportunities. For example, staff utilise children's spontaneous interest in acting out parts of the 'Snow White' story to look at and cut apples and to explore the effects of mixing water, corn flour and food dyes to make, 'magic potions'. Children develop positive attitudes and dispositions toward learning because of the strong emphasis staff have towards following children's interests and play ideas. However, opportunities for children to develop their decision making skills and to solve problems for themselves as they self-select from a wide range of tools, materials and activities are limited. This is because the range of tools, materials and activities that are easily accessible to children are limited. Staff endeavour to encourage children to begin to make decisions about the activities that they would like to have taken out and confident children who have a very good understanding of what is available in storage are quick to ask for their favoured activity.

Children form good relationships with staff and eagerly engage adults in conversation, confidently talking to them about what they are doing and involving them in their play. Children work harmoniously together and enjoy one another's company. They work together to roll up and carry the car mat to the storage room and are excited to sit beside their friends as they join in messy play activities and sit together for meals. Children speak clearly and show awareness of the listener as they negotiate roles in play. They enjoy stories and songs, and they like to relax in the book corner making up stories as they flick through pages in familiar books. Children understand that print carries meaning and each day they find their printed names as they register their attendance. Older children are beginning to write recognisable letters with the support of staff and younger children are developing pre-writing skills as they draw pictures and participate in a variety of art and craft activities. Children enjoy opportunities to explore shape, size, measure and patterns through a variety of practical activities, which include exploring sand, play dough, constructing with resources such as 'Lego', recreating patterns as they thread beads and participating in cooking activities.

Children use appropriate language as they describe and compare size, shape and quantity. They count reliably to 10 and beyond, and are beginning to make the connection between quantities and numerals. Children have opportunities to explore the concepts of addition and subtraction through interesting, fun activities. For example, with the help of staff children use puppets to act out, 'Four little ducks' as they sing the song. Children have excellent opportunities to explore the natural world around them as they play in the garden, experiencing first hand the changing seasons and looking into neighbouring fields where they see horses, hens and sheep with their lambs. Attractive natural resources that include logs and planks of wood provide children with opportunities build and construct dens outside. Children are creative and they have great fun exploring art, music, role and imaginative play. They have regular opportunities to explore musical instruments and enjoy singing familiar songs from memory such as 'Wind the bobbin up' and 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'. Children enjoy bathing 'babies' and are developing their understanding of the needs of others as they take care not to get soap in the dolls eyes. They like to dress up and role play as they act out preparing meals and going to the doctor.

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

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and are developing a good sense of belonging. This is because staff ensure that children's individual needs are met and that they have their achievements acknowledged through praise and displays of their work. Each child has a box for their own possessions and their own name card. Consequently, children feel included and they are beginning to develop their understanding of diversity in the world around them. Children meet different people from the local community such as the vicar, parents, police and fire officers who come into visit. Staff are keen to share their cultural traditions with children and planned activities explore a range cultural festivals such as Diwali and Christmas. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs effectively met and are well supported to participate alongside their peers. This is because staff acknowledge the importance of working with parents and make good use of outside agencies for support and advice in helping to meet children's needs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are developing a good awareness of their own needs and the needs of others. They are keen to help one another and they play harmoniously, side by side throughout the day. Children say 'thank you' spontaneously when they are helped to get the pencils out and happily sit together as they create angels. Each day, when children come together to share their lunch, they give thanks for all that they have. Children learn right from wrong through careful explanation and consistency, and the praise and support that they continually receive from staff helps them to develop their self-esteem. Consequently, children behave very well in proportion to their age and level of understanding.

Children enjoy continuity of care because staff work closely with parents and carers to ensure that individual needs are met. Good quality written and verbal information is given to parents when they first start and the flexible settling-in procedure ensures that the needs of the family are met. Parents spend time with their children in the setting ensuring that they are happy and develop a sense of trust in the people who care for them, who in turn recognise the importance of children's comforters in helping them to make the transition from home. Staff take time to talk to parents about their children, gaining a clear understanding of children's starting points, interests, likes and dislikes and this enables them to provide meaningful support for children as they begin to explore and interact with others in their new environment.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children reap the benefits of the positive partnerships that staff have developed with parents. Parents know who their child's key worker is and are able to talk to them on a daily basis about their child's needs, interests and progress. This forms the basis for effective two way sharing of information between parents and staff in order to enhance children's enjoyment and achievement in the setting. Information sharing is further enhanced through the use of home link books that staff complete for each child on a daily basis and regular parent evenings provide an opportunity for parents to talk to staff more formally about their child's progress. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in their children's learning in meaningful ways. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about the topics their children will be exploring, staff are beginning to plan and hold evening family events, and families are encouraged to take the nursery's 'Barnaby Bear' on holiday with them. Families record Barnaby's adventures with them in a scrap book for their child to share when they return to nursery, which strengthens the links between home and nursery.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the good organisation of care. They are safeguarded because there are robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place. Children receive good quality care because staff are suitably qualified and they receive a well-planned induction. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place and are effectively implemented in order to promote outcomes for children. The regular use of appraisals ensures that practice remains of a high standard and that staff training needs are effectively identified and planned for. Staff are well deployed and good ratios are maintained. This enables staff to be actively engaged with the children, ensuring that they have a stimulating day in a caring environment.

The leadership and management is good. There is a clear vision for the provision of early education with a strong emphasis on starting with the children and following their lead. Staff are reflective about what they provide and regular staff meetings are used effectively in order to identify strengths to build upon and areas for improvements. Therefore, staff are clear about the areas that they want to develop such as the planning and forest schools. Staff are enthusiastic, well motivated and committed to continual improvement. They participate in regular and ongoing professional development training and use the knowledge and skills that they gain to build upon good practice. Consequently, children are effectively supported as they develop positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning.

Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that the first aid box is appropriately stocked, that the flooring in the playroom is made safe and that there is a member of staff responsible for behaviour management. The provider now ensures that the first aid box is checked on a weekly basis, flooring in the play room has been replaced and there is named member of staff responsible for behaviour management.

At the last inspection the provider was asked to improve the provision for nursery education through reviewing the planning to ensure that the length of time that children are expected to sit and concentrate is appropriate to their age and ability. The provider was also asked to improve arrangements to allow staff to maximise the opportunities to sit and socialise with the children. Activities that staff provide and plan for children are highly flexible so that staff may take their lead from the children, ensuring that the activities appeal to children's interests. Therefore, children are not expected to sit and concentrate for any longer than they want to, and they have the freedom to leave group activities so that children who do wish to continue to concentrate may do so undisturbed. Staff socialise with children throughout the day. They welcome children into the nursery each morning and actively interact with them throughout the day talking to children and finding out more about them through conversation. Staff ensure that they take advantage of every meal time as a time to sit and socialise with the children.

## **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:

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 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 that all medication and accident records are signed by parents
- review risk assessments for the outside area in order to ensure that appropriate action is taken to minimise any potential hazards.

#### **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):

- review the organisation of resources and equipment in order to increase opportunities for children to self-select from a wider range of tools, materials and activities (also applies to care)
- continue to develop planning to ensure that all children experience a wide range of activities across all areas of learning.

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)