

Littleuns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY272996
Inspection date	04 March 2008
Inspector	Stephanie Graves
Setting Address	Holmesdale Technology College, Malling Road, Snodland, Kent, ME6 5HS
Telephone number	01634 244460
E-mail	
Registered person	Mrs Andrea Holmes and Mr Christopher Holmes
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Littleuns Day Nursery opened in 2003 and operates from four rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated within the grounds of a technical college in Snodland, Kent. A maximum of 35 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 70 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children mainly attend from the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery employs 15 members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications, one is working towards a level 3 qualification and two are working towards a further qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have ongoing opportunities to learn about health and hygiene issues. For example, they are regularly encouraged to wash their hands at the appropriate times and dry them properly. Posters and labels help them follow the correct routines. Staff use antibacterial agents to clean surfaces and equipment, effective hygiene procedures are in place for nappy changing and serving food and sleeping babies and children are provided with individual bedding. These procedures all help to prevent the spread of infection. Children are well cared for if they have an accident because the majority of staff are first aid trained and accidents are clearly recorded and monitored regularly. Medication procedures include prior written consent to administer medicine to children, although this is not always obtained for every occasion it is required. Written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment has not been obtained, which could result in delayed action in a medical emergency. Children have opportunities to be active as well as rest or sleep in comfortable surroundings. Babies and the very young children are encouraged to follow good sleep routines and are closely monitored. This promotes their sense of wellbeing. Staff understand babies' needs and offer warm, close interaction to help them to settle and feel secure.

Children are provided with a range of meals by the nursery, which include nutritious and balanced options. For example, snacks include a selection of dried fruit, banana, apple and melon or cheese and biscuits. Older children are encouraged to help themselves and pour their own drinks wherever possible, which encourages their independence. Lunch time meals are properly prepared and served and include a range of meat and pasta dishes with cooked or raw vegetables. Alternative meals are also offered. Desserts include jelly, fruit pie and fromage frais. Children take part in activities involving food, which encourages their understanding of healthy eating. They have access to drinks at all times to help keep them hydrated.

Children enjoy physical activity through the nursery education curriculum. Although access is currently limited to the outdoor area, children can usually access a good range of resources including climbing equipment to help promote their physical skills. They have opportunities to take part in energetic action songs and circle games, which helps to ensure they get enough exercise. They access a good variety of activities that help to promote small muscle control. This includes construction, mark making, threading and using one handed tools.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for within safe and secure boundaries. For example, they are unable to leave the setting unattended and staff monitor and record visitors to the nursery, which helps to promote their ongoing safety. A risk assessment is used to identify and reduce any risks to children and daily checks help to prevent accidents. All hazardous equipment and materials are stored safely and staff make sure children are well supervised at all times. Repairs are currently taking place in the outdoor play area and children's safety is considered well, which means the risk of accidental injury is minimised. Within the setting, children can freely and safely access the toys and resources on offer. These are well stored and labelled to encourage ease of access. Children are developing an awareness of personal safety through good staff explanations and effective procedures. For example, they learn to 'walk' instead of run as they move carefully

between rooms and staff practise the emergency evacuation procedure with them regularly. This input helps to develop children's awareness of keeping themselves and others safe.

Children's welfare is considered well by staff who have an up to date knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues. Training updates have been attended by some staff and all information is shared with the rest of the team. They can access a good range of written documentation and understand the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what to do in the event of a concern. This ensures children's welfare remains the group's priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive confidently and settle into their respective rooms well. They demonstrate good relationships with staff who know them well and support their learning and development needs. They are happy and involved and their creations are beautifully displayed throughout the nursery which helps to reinforce a sense of ownership and pride in what they do. Environmental print and picture labels help children develop their early pre-reading skills and identify the resources available. Toys and resources are easily accessible and cover all areas of learning. These include construction, puzzles, mathematical resources, books, mark making, art and craft, as well as a range of developmentally appropriate outdoor play equipment. These include opportunities for climbing and using wheeled toys to develop their physical skills.

Children enjoy pressing, twisting and rolling play dough and piecing inset puzzles together, which helps develop their creative skills and small muscle control. Staff understand the needs of the children and support them well. For instance, they have attended Birth to three matters training and ensure the principles are applied effectively. As a result, children are interested and motivated by the experiences provided. Babies enjoy stimulating sensory experiences, such as, playing with interactive toys that they can manipulate themselves. They are fascinated by a bubble lamp that encourages them to observe and change the colours of the bubbles as they move up the lamp. They enjoy looking at, touching and listening to a range of other stimulating and decorative resources. The more mobile babies and very young children enjoy treasure basket resources, which encourage them to investigate and explore by using all the senses. These promote interest and excitement as children investigate the different textures, colours and sounds. Children in the toddler room enjoy good, ongoing staff interaction, which helps them develop their communication skills. They enjoy regular opportunities to join in with their favourite songs and stories. They learn to make connections, for example, through small world play and by 'patting' baby dolls off to sleep. This means they are making links between their own experiences and their play.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and their progress is charted well. Their learning and achievements are good in relation to their starting abilities, which are completed in initial profiles. Staff implement the Foundation Stage requirements effectively. They observe and assess children's learning throughout their time at the nursery then complete a transfer document to help with transitions into school. The next steps needed in children's learning are identified and inform future planning. The curriculum planning is well documented and displayed, covers all areas of learning and is differentiated to ensure the learning needs of all children are addressed. Activity plans have clear aims and these are evaluated well. This help to ensure the

learning objectives and experiences provided are based on children's interests and build on their achievements.

Children are settled and take pleasure in contributing to the activities and routines provided. They enjoy circle activities where they discuss many different concepts together. For instance, they confidently work out what the day was 'yesterday' and what 'tomorrow' will be and learn to sequence the days of the week. Effective staff input means children are only prompted where necessary, which helps to promote a sense of achievement when they identify the correct answers. Children are friendly and sociable, for instance, as they welcome children new to the setting. This helps them feel comfortable and included as they take part in the experiences provided. Children move around confidently and choose their preferred activities and resources, which means they are becoming independent learners.

Children have opportunities to explore initial sounds during every day activities, for instance, as staff explain that the day today begins with a 't' sound. This helps them develop a natural awareness as they play and learn together. Children enjoy books and stories and talk about their favourite characters. They can access a well resourced book area where they are able to sit comfortably and share a range of books, including those carrying information as well as their favourite stories. Themes are extended with wall displays of children's favourite story characters and the current topic on transport. Children are good communicators and enjoy talking about their favourite activities, which currently include, playing with Barbie dolls and the computer. They happily seek staff support as they follow routines and play experiences. This helps them move forward in their learning.

Children are gaining confidence with numbers and a good range of mathematical resources are available. These help them to learn about different concepts, such as, shape, space and measure. They use numbers in a range of different situations, for instance, as they put their hands up during circle time to tell staff they are aged 'three' or 'four.' They recognise and use numbers in familiar context, including counting 'fish' or 'bones' on a computer programme up to ten. Staff help to develop their understanding by asking questions, including whether there are more or less objects on either side of the screen. This develops children's counting skills and helps them learn about quantity.

Children learn about the natural world, for instance, through discussions about the weather and talking about it being cold on the way to nursery. They currently have limited opportunities to explore the outdoor environment, although staff give them every opportunity to talk about concepts, such as, blossom on the trees in spring time. This helps children develop colour recognition as they talk about this being pink and then go on to identify other objects that are the same colour within the setting.

Children enjoy learning through themes, such as transport. They develop their own displays and staff encourage them to think about modes of transport and how they get to nursery. Answers include in a 'car' and 'I walk.' Staff imaginatively extend concepts by telling children they came on the bus and talk about having to pay for their ticket. They talk about helicopters, rockets, aeroplanes, 'hot air balloons' and other modes of transport that go 'up in the air.' As a result children's interests are extended as they talk about visiting different places around the world by aeroplane, such as, Lapland, Ireland, Poland and Denmark. Staff talk about their own experiences, which encourages children to ask questions. This helps children learn about the wider world and develop their communication and language skills.

Children enjoy music and movement activities, action songs and circle games, which help to ensure they are regularly active. They are creative and have access to a range of resources that enable them to explore texture, shape and form. These include malleable materials, such as, play dough and art and craft resources, which encourage them to make their own creations. They can access a range of role play resources, including those used in a shop, travel agents and doctor's surgery. These help children represent real life scenarios through their play.

Overall the nursery plans and provides a good range of learning experiences that help to develop children's intellectual, physical, emotional and social abilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed equally by caring staff who support them well. They are cared for according to their individual needs and with equal concern, which helps them to develop a sense of belonging. Babies and the very young children are regularly acknowledged and affirmed, which enables them to develop self assurance and a good sense of security. Children learn about the differences between themselves and others through a range of positive images of diversity. These include toys and resources, such as, posters and books that naturally enhance children's awareness. Planning also includes acknowledging different festivals and beliefs, which enhances their understanding of diversity. Children with disabilities and learning difficulties are very well supported by knowledgeable staff who ensure the play environment is accessible and stimulating. They work together with parents and outside agencies to ensure children's specific needs are addressed.

Children are well behaved and respectful towards staff and one another, because behaviour management measures promote their positive behaviour. Staff are good role models who promote good manners. Even very young children share toys and can be heard to remind others to say 'thank you' as they hand over a toy and then look to staff for affirmation. Staff regularly praise children for their achievements and good behaviour, which promotes their welfare and self-esteem. Children benefit from an effective partnership with parents because staff work closely with them to meet their needs. A good range of information is provided and parents are encouraged into the setting to speak with staff at any time. They believe their children receive the best possible care and feel included and involved in nursery life. The provider takes positive steps to ensure that parents are kept well informed about all relevant policies and procedures. These are clearly labelled and offer much information. The effective communication between parents and staff helps to maintain effective support for children between home and the nursery environment.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education receive good quality information about the curriculum and have ongoing opportunities to share their children's progress records, which are taken home monthly and offer parents the opportunity to contribute if they wish to. They feel they are welcome to visit the nursery at any time and are invited to play a part in nursery life. Planning is displayed and daily feedback is given to parents, as they come into the nursery to collect their children. As a result children benefit from consistent input between parents and staff to help meet their learning and developmental needs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are happy and involved, play well together and become excited at the different experiences provided. They are sociable and friendly and can share and take turns well. They have ongoing opportunities

to acknowledge and take part in special events and enjoy talking about their home news and favourite activities. They become engaged in meaningful experiences, which help them to learn and enjoy their time at the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are settled and feel secure within a well organised and caring environment. They demonstrate close relationships with key staff and have access to a suitable range of play and learning experiences. Effective systems have been implemented to ensure the adults working with children are suitable and staff training needs are addressed. Improvements are required in relation to medication and emergency advice and treatment procedures, although all regulatory records are in place and help to promote children's welfare. The registration certificate is displayed clearly and the required records are all in place. Daily attendance records include clear arrival and departure times for children and staff and visitors to the setting are also recorded. The range of policies and procedures underpin the group's professional practice and help to promote children's welfare, care and learning.

The leadership and management is good. Staff implement the Foundation Stage principles well and there are clear aims in place to promote the personal development of the children. Although some improvement is required regarding opportunities to develop and learn in the outdoor environment, a full range of experiences cover all areas of learning and development. All children are observed and assessed against the stepping stones and their good progress is charted well. Curriculum plans include all areas of learning and these are displayed for parents. Staff are dedicated to meeting the children's needs and integrate care and nursery education well to promote successful outcomes for the children attending. The provision of toys, equipment and resources is good and help children remain interested and focussed. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated and the setting strives to maintain links with local primary schools, which helps with transitions into school.

The group is committed towards ongoing improvement. This is evident through reflective practice, regular self-evaluation exercises and working towards accreditation status. As a result children receive good quality care and education. The nursery provides a professional service. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider received two actions and three recommendations. These included developing an action plan to show how at least half of the staff will obtain a relevant qualification, implementing relevant deputising procedures and addressing the grouping of children. The provider was also asked to devise and implement a procedure to be followed in the event of allegations of abuse being made against staff and students, a system for planning and implementing a suitable range of activities to meet the needs of individual children and to ensure that their privacy is respected at all times.

Improvements have been made. The provider has ensured that staff qualifications meet with requirements, improved deputising procedures and the grouping of children and has developed a procedure to be followed in the event of allegations of abuse being made against staff. The group has also implemented a system for planning and providing a suitable range of activities to meet the needs of all children and effective procedures ensure their privacy is respected.

The provider has taken positive steps towards improving the service provided and ensuring children are safe and well cared for at all times.

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

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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):

- ensure prior written consent is recorded for each occasion medication is required and obtain written consent to seek medical advice or treatment
- continue to risk assess and ensure children's safety when playing outside.

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):

- encourage regular use of the outdoor environment to develop children's physical skills and develop a range of play and learning opportunities.

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