

# The Lantern Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107085
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 December 2007
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Lantern Playschool
<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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Lantern Playschool was established in 1989 by the Redland Parish Church. It provides a resource to all children in the local community, while operating within a Christian ethos. Sessions operate Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 09.15 to 12.15 hours during term time. The group is based in a room within the Parish hall but has use of other areas of the building. Children also have access to an enclosed outside area to the rear of the hall.

A team of four staff work with the children, three of whom have appropriate early years qualifications. There is additional support available each session from parents on a rota and regular volunteers. The setting has experience of working with children who have additional needs and English as an additional language. The playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee which includes church and parent representatives. There are 27 children currently on roll, 24 of whom receive nursery education funding. The playgroup is registered to care for up to 25 children aged two to under five years.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children develop a good understanding of hygiene as clear routines are reinforced throughout the session. They independently wash their hands during cooking activities and receive praise for covering their mouths when coughing. Initial information and ongoing dialogue with parents ensures children's individual health and dietary requirements are met. This includes additional staff training where appropriate to meet specific needs. Accident and medication records are generally well maintained to promote children's wellbeing.

Children learn about healthy eating and where their food comes from during regular topic work. They investigate growth cycles and are involved in fun, practical activities. They become familiar with a range of different foods as they prepare fruit salad, pizza and sandwiches and healthy snacks are promoted within the session. In addition, spontaneous discussion throughout the session promotes children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle. Planning consistently includes use of the outdoor area to provide fresh air and a wide range of experiences for children, which promotes their health and physical development. Children enjoy chasing bubbles around the garden in the open space and develop strength and coordination using the climbing frame and bikes.

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

The provision is good.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe through everyday routines and gentle reinforcement of staff expectations. They recall rules for the garden before going out each day and children helpfully remind each other about safety within the setting. Children become aware of evacuation procedures through fire drills each term and learn about road safety during fun, role play activities. A suitable range of policies and procedures promote staff and children's awareness of health and safety issues, to keep children safe from harm; for example, the checking of the outdoor area before use and children boarding the 'Lantern train', to be counted before leaving the garden. Children are further protected as staff are involved in the church's programme of regular child protection training and first aid certificates are routinely updated. The setting regularly reviews safety arrangements and occasional work parties involve parents and staff, to ensure the outdoor area is safe and suitable for children.

Children play in a bright and colourful environment where activities are attractively set up for them each day. The premises are secured and children are monitored effectively when using the shared toilet facilities within the building. Children benefit from a wide range of equipment which is organised to support their welfare; for example, to enable an appropriate combination of physical and less active play within the same room. Children are encouraged to draw additional resources from different areas of the room during the extended free play session. These are well organised in low level, labelled drawer units to support children's independent use. Children learn to safely access scissors and use them responsibly before putting them away. Additional storage space is well organised to support the rotation of a wide range of equipment by staff.

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

The provision is good.

Children appear secure within the relaxed atmosphere and are well occupied. They are familiar with the regular routine as they come together for circle time on arrival. Children's thoughts and ideas are skilfully accommodated by the playleader during group time to make discussions meaningful for children; for example, they compare aspects of life in Africa with their own, such as the weather, housing and different kinds of trees. Children are good listeners and contribute well. A helpful outline of available resources is discussed each day. This provides children with interesting ideas and encouragement to develop their own. Children also share with others how they used materials the previous day. The lengthy free play session ensures children have sufficient time to develop their own ideas while structured activities are used to provide a range of purposeful experiences for all children.

Children play cooperatively with one another during imaginary play. They offer to 'get my ladder' to fight the fire or take turns to drive the train. Children's creative development is fostered well as they independently access materials, such as metallic paints, in addition to those put out for them by staff. They comment on the colour and texture of pastry as they roll it out with care. They recognise the circle shape of a pastry cutter and comment that a window they made in a large box is 'like a rectangle'. Children benefit from spontaneous staff support which promotes their development across a wide range of stimulating activities; for example, they investigate which materials sink or float in water, what happens to ice when it melts and how things work using wheels and ramps. They also have fun as they spontaneously consider the different uses for a large cone - a hat, megaphone or trumpet.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A framework of long, medium and short term planning ensures children benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum across all areas of the Foundation Stage. Topic work throughout the year provides ongoing interest for children and adult led group work offers directed activities to effectively support their progress. Weekly team meetings provide good opportunities to adjust the adult led activities to take into account children's interests and individual children's needs. Staff make regular observations of all children which impact on planning as staff informally discuss individual children's needs. However, these are not effectively coordinated to support an ongoing record of children's development or to ensure they systematically cover all aspects of children's learning.

While learning intentions are not consistently detailed in planning and assessments, staff are familiar with individual children's needs and offer spontaneous reinforcement and extension during the session. An effective combination of well supported free play and small group, adult led activities ensures children make good progress. Children are grouped effectively during adult led activities, to support children of different abilities. As a result younger children develop self confidence in small groups as they contribute to discussion and predict what happens next in stories. Older children have opportunities to weigh their own ingredients during cooking activities and make thoughtful assessments such as, 'I don't think that will work'.

Everyday routines reinforce children's linking of sounds and letters and an appreciation of number and simple calculations at circle time; for example, they consider whether the number of children attending is less or more than the previous day and count the difference between the two numbers. They learn that print carries meaning through the many labels in the room and many recognise letters in their names. There is good linking of resources during topic work

to reinforce children's learning across the Foundation Stage; for example, opportunities for music and movement are regularly linked to themes and creative, problem solving and mark making tables are resourced each day.

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

The provision is good.

Home visits prior to children's admission supports their sense of security with key staff and ensures their individual needs are discussed effectively with parents. They are welcomed by staff on arrival and are familiar with the daily routine which adds to their sense of belonging. Children's self esteem is fostered by colourful displays of themed collages and individual work around the setting. They proudly share the contents of their individual folders with their families at the end of each session. The setting liaises well with parents and other agencies to ensure the needs of all children are met; for example, helpful aids to communication are available which promotes children's inclusion within the setting.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They begin and end each session with a simple prayer of thanks and children and their families are welcome at church services during the year. Topic work and attractive resources, such as books, dolls and puzzles support children's understanding of diversity and disability. Children develop an awareness of the world around them as they meet interesting visitors from the local community, such as a nurse and firefighters. They enjoy walks in the local area to compare different buildings and to do traffic tallies. Children behave well and are sensitively encouraged to resolve conflicts between one another. Staff offer helpful strategies and children approach them readily for advice and support. Children respond appropriately to staff and understand the expectations of their behaviour as these are calmly reinforced. Children are regularly praised for their achievements and for showing consideration to others.

Partnership with parents is good. Useful information about planned activities is displayed on a prominent noticeboard, alongside key information about the setting. A programme of social events promotes positive links between parents and staff and offers informative speakers on a range of topics. Parent's comment positively on the care their children receive, especially the warm and caring atmosphere. End of year reports are supplemented by regular informal feedback on their children's development.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

High adult to child ratios are available as parents on a rota and regular volunteers are used effectively. As a result, children receive individual attention and parents are directly involved in their children's care and education. Children benefit from consistency of care from the stable staff team who are familiar with their needs and interests. The close working team have clear roles and responsibilities which they share on a regular rota basis. Ongoing, informal exchanges within the well organised session further promote effective support for all children's care. An appropriate range of policies and procedures are in place, though some are not fully developed; for example, to reflect practice within the setting and further promote parent's understanding of the complaints and child protection policies. Documentation including registers are generally well maintained and suitable recruitment procedures are in place to safeguard children.

Leadership and management is good. The setting demonstrates a positive commitment to strengthening the provision for children. This includes ongoing staff development and

identification of areas for improvement. Planning for nursery education is monitored well with support from the local authority, although the assessment system is not yet fully developed. The playleader provides a positive role model for other staff in her interaction with children which ensures children make good progress. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Progress has been made towards the two recommendations made at the last inspection. Records of medication administered are shared appropriately with parents to promote children's health, although there are still some minor inconsistencies in record keeping. Children's opportunities to develop their creative skills have been extended well. Staff have discussed new ideas and useful literature together which has had a positive impact on planning and children's use of resources. This has enabled children to become more independent in their selection and combination of resources and develop useful skills across all areas of the Foundation Stage.

### **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):

- continue to review the effectiveness of policies and procedures to reflect practice within the setting and further impact on children's care

#### **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):

- consolidate children's assessments to provide a more effective, ongoing record of children's progress.

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)