

# Little Fishes Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108462
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Anne Jeanette Faithfull
<b>Setting Address</b>	Furze Platt Memorial Hall, Furze Platt Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 7NG
<b>Telephone number</b>	07855572336
<b>E-mail</b>	Ali@Hallissey.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Little Fishes Pre-School
<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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Fishes Pre-school is affiliated to Saint Peters Church in Maidenhead Berkshire. The group is run by a committee and opened in 1995. The pre-school is located in Furze Platt Memorial Hall and the group has use of a large and small hall, kitchen, toilets and a large outdoor area.

The pre-school is open five days a week during term times. Sessions are from 9:30 to 13:00 on Monday, 9:30 to 12:00 Tuesday and Thursday and 9:30 to 12:00 then 12:15 to 14:45 on Wednesday and Friday.

There are currently 49 children on roll, of these 38 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school has systems in place to support children with learning disabilities and difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are seven members of staff working with the children, two staff work full-time and five staff work on a part-time basis. Of these, six staff members have recognised early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a recognised early years qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very aware of personal hygiene routines. They independently wash their hands without being reminded after using the toilet and before snack time. They talk to each other about washing their hands to remove the germs after touching the worms and mud outside. Children can access tissues independently and are aware to put on their boots and coats when going outside. Staff follow excellent procedures for cleaning and other hygiene tasks for example; they use different coloured buckets and cloths. All staff are aware of the procedures to follow if a child has an accident or requires medication to be given. There are three first aid boxes available for the staff to use. Staff are trained and competent in administering first aid to ensure any children with minor injuries are treated appropriately. This promotes children's wellbeing.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities that support their physical development both indoors and outside. They thoroughly enjoy balancing on the balancing pots, logs, riding bikes, climbing and rolling hoops through the mud. Their fine motor skills are further promoted as they use a range of craft tools such as scissors and paintbrushes. Children are very confident when lifting and using the large wooden building blocks and show excellent eye and hand co-ordination as they use magnetic fishing rods to catch the fish in a bucket.

Children are developing an understanding of healthy eating habits as they choose from a range of fresh fruit at snack time, which some children have helped to prepare. Staff extend children's knowledge by asking the children to describe the texture and differences of the fruit they are helping to prepare. Snack time is a very relaxed and sociable occasion with flowers on each table, this helps to provide a homely environment. Children and staff enthusiastically talk to each other and staff use this wonderful time to increase children's knowledge of the different fruits for example, talking about where oranges come from and the different fruit trees children may have in their garden. Children help to put the plates and cups out and confidently pour their own drink. Staff encourage children's self help skills as a group of children help to clear away and wash the items used up afterwards. Children can independently access drinking water regularly throughout the session which is freely available, further promoting children's good health and overall development. Children have their health and dietary needs met very well because staff work effectively with parents, and record any allergies or specific health issues the children may have.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and stimulating environment where safety is of the highest priority. They benefit from having a large amount of space indoors which is arranged effectively to provide them with good levels of challenge, including giving the children the opportunity to choose the activities and experiences they wish to participate in. Children have access to an extensive range of toys and equipment daily. This wide range of resources supports an excellent programme of themes and activities. All equipment used is of a high standard, clean and remains safe for the children to use as staff check the equipment when they are putting it out each day. These measures ensure children's safety at all times.

Staff effectively use children's conversations with each other to further promote their understanding of safety issues. For example, a child was talking about having their hair cut at the week-end and how the hairdresser had used scissors, the member of staff and children then had a discussion on how to use scissors safely. Children also talked about going swimming and how they have to wear safety arm bands, staff effectively extended their interest to talk about water safety and safety measures to take when walking by rivers. Staff remind children of their own safety when helping to clear away resources for instance, telling them to ensure they do not trap their fingers when putting away the large wooden building blocks into the box.

Children are cared for within a safe environment as staff adhere to rigorous safety policies and procedures. A very comprehensive safety checklist is completed before each session, this includes checking the gas and carbon monoxide alarms, all checks and any action taken is recorded. A full risk assessment takes place before children participate in a cooking session; this includes informing the parents of the ingredients the children are going to use. Children and staff regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure to ensure the children know the procedure to follow in an emergency. They readily told the inspector the steps she should take in the event of a fire.

Children are protected because staff are totally committed to safeguarding them and take measures to keep them safe at all times. Staff have a very good understanding of the child protection policies in place and the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Staff attend regular training to ensure they are aware of the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards procedures. They have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, and their duty of care.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children arrive enthusiastically and ready to participate in and choose from the excellent activities and experiences which await them both indoors and outside. Warm and caring relationships are formed between the children and staff and all children are very happy and settled in the setting. Children achieve extremely well because the staff are highly skilled and use their knowledge and understanding of Birth to three matters and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to provide high quality care and education for the children.

All children receive excellent levels of support from the staff, who skilfully know when to involve themselves in children's play and when to allow them the freedom to explore and learn at their own pace. Children are given time to develop their own ideas and explain their thinking, enabling them to expand their knowledge and understanding. Each child has their own play plan, which includes photographs, samples of their work and observations made by staff on how the children decide and choose the activities they wish to participate in. Children are keen to share their news and staff listen carefully, show interest and respond appropriately. Children gain confidence and self-esteem as staff praise their efforts and achievements. Staff respond superbly to spontaneous events to support children's development and learning for example, talking about worms when a child found a worm in the outdoor area.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff know each child very well and they plan interesting and challenging activities and experiences that support children's progress,

along the stepping stones in each of the six areas of learning. Staff are very aware of how children learn through play and by having fun. Children have the opportunity to explore their environment and choose the activities they wish to participate in during the free play sessions. A range of focussed activities also provide the children with an opportunity to participate in small groups in activities linked to their own level of development and learning. This means children are always fully engaged in worthwhile and challenging activities and that there is an excellent balance between adult led and child initiated learning.

Staff plan together and key workers are responsible for implementing appropriate activities for the children in their group. All focussed activities are evaluated to ensure they were suitable to meet the development and learning needs of the children in the group. An excellent system is also in place called 'snowballing' this is where any spontaneous event or ideas from the children are extended and developed either during the session or the next day so staff capture children's enthusiasm and interest. For example, the children had found some worms in the outdoor area, so the next day staff talked about worms and what the children had found and other children started to look for worms and talk about what they eat and how they move.

Children are independent, confident, highly motivated and very happy. They have a superb relationship with each other and the staff. They enthusiastically welcome visitors and inform them of their imaginative games they are playing and ask them to join in. Children concentrate well and show delight when they take on individual responsibilities such as helping to wash up or clear away the toys they have been using. Children's behaviour is excellent. They negotiate with others, show care and concern and take responsibility for their actions.

Children are developing an excellent awareness of their local and wider environment. Themed activities support them in learning about the changing seasons and features of the natural world for example, the pond theme looked at the various stages of tadpoles before they turn into frogs, the different colours of fish and children had the opportunity to name the different animals they may find in a pond. Labels around the hall in French and Polish encourage children to begin to recognise familiar items and resources in different languages.

Children are confident speakers, during circle time they talk about events in their lives and the items they have brought in linked to the theme or are of some interest to them. They enjoy looking at books together and explain stories by confidently describing what is happening in the pictures. Their early writing skills are enhanced due to the numerous opportunities for mark making in everyday activities both inside and outside for example, they use sticks to mark make in the mud, chalk to draw on the tarmac and water and paintbrushes to write their name and make marks on the wooden fence.

Staff support children's understanding of number in everyday routines and activities such as, children count how many bananas they have cut up for snack time and how many fishes are in the bucket. Children calculate and measure as they play with the lentils and check to see if each plate at snack time has the same amount of fruit on it. Their understanding of number is further promoted in circle time as they sing a range of action and number songs such as, five little monkeys. Children are provided with a range of excellent ways for them to begin to recognise shapes for example, they look around the hall and draw the shapes they can see. Children thoroughly enjoyed creating their own pictures out of one shape for instance, they turned a square into a robot.

Children's imagination is exceptionally well fostered. Staff are very effective in supporting their imagined ideas for example, when playing in the role-play area they all pretend to have a picnic

together. Children enjoy fishing in the themed role play area and have great delight in playing with the life sized heron. Children have extensive opportunities to be creative. They freely access a wide range of materials and textures for example, using tissue paper to make an Easter chick. Children explore paint using straws to create their own individual picture. Children participate enthusiastically in the music, miming and singing sessions, they are very aware to listen to the sounds being made on the instruments and to copy them on their instrument giving them a sense of rhythm.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's equality of opportunity is given a very high priority and is very well addressed. All children are included in the activities provided and staff are very aware of their individual needs. Children play and learn in an environment where their good behaviour is promoted through lots of praise and encouragement. Children display an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They continually showed good manners and consideration for others throughout the session. Very effective strategies are used such as the golden book and reward system where staff write positive comments about the children in the book daily and children can then choose a reward such as choosing the fruit for snack time. Children are very aware when staff put their hands on their heads or shake a tambourine they have to stop what they are doing and listen. Staff continually offer praise and encouragement to build on children's self-esteem and speak to the children in a kind, gentle and reassuring way.

Children have a very positive self image, they are able to share their ideas and staff take time to listen to all children, valuing each child's contribution. Children access to a rich and varied range of resources, play opportunities and activities which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. They have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through a range of planned activities and visitors to the setting. Children attend the local church for the Christmas, harvest and Easter service and enjoy making Easter bonnets which they wear to the service. All other festivals are celebrated and staff support parents' requests if they do not wish their child to participate in certain festivals and celebrations. Staff listen with interest to children's contributions at circle time as they talk about other members of their family and events in their lives for example, talking about their grandparents and going swimming at the local pool. This gives children the sense of belonging. Staff make excellent use of an expression board where children can look at pictures related to different feelings and moods and talk to the staff about how they are feeling. Staff effectively use puppets in circle time to encourage children to talk about their morning at the pre-school or any other news they have. This is an excellent way of building children's confidence. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Through very close liaison and communication, staff and parents share information, which contributes significantly to children's well being in the setting. Parent welcome packs which include the Little Fishes parents' charter outline the pre-school's responsibilities and contain a copy of all the policies and procedures. Notice boards provide high-quality information for parents, including the planning system used and any other relevant information. A home/school communication book enables parents to comment on their child's progress at home or any other events. Parents can attend open days which inform them of the activities and experiences their child participates in and each term their child's file is given to them to take home and have a look at. The parents can speak to their child's key worker at anytime if they have any concerns about their child's progress and development. A parent's evaluation sheet which the parents complete is used effectively to ensure the needs

and concerns of the parents are met. Parents comment on how supportive and understanding the staff are and the friendly and nurturing environment the staff provide. Comments from parents on the day of the inspection were very positive about the care and education provided for their children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for by a dedicated, well organised, skilful team who meet their individual needs superbly. It is evident children benefit from playing in an extremely well planned environment that allows them to gain fully from all the activities and experiences provided both inside and outdoors. Effective staff deployment ensures all children receive a very high level of support at all times. The staff team are very experienced, caring and knowledgeable. They are all committed to continue to update their skills and knowledge by attending relevant training. The training matrix in place ensures all courses and training attended by staff is recorded and staff share the knowledge and ideas gained from courses they attend with each other. Regular appraisals, fortnightly staff meetings and one to one meetings support staff in developing their skills, sharing concerns, ideas and pursuing a particular area of interest. This commitment has also helped the pre-school achieve an investors in people award. There are excellent recruitment and induction procedures in place this means that suitable, experienced and caring staff look after the children. All required records, policies and procedures are in place and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the safe and effective running of the pre-school.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The supervisor and committee are very well organised and have an excellent working relationship, this means they can fully meet the needs of the children and staff. The supervisor ensures staff fully understand their role in the pre-school and she regularly observes the staff working with the children to ensure they are meeting the needs of all the children at their own individual level of development. All staff are enthusiastic and are very aware of children's interests and use this information gained from the children to plan activities that are based on what children enjoy as well as meeting their development needs. The pre-school already completes the dimension of quality evaluation system to ensure they meet the local authority requirements and are also participating in the effective early learning pilot scheme. This continual evaluation of the educational provision means that all activities and experiences provided fully support children's development. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the pre-school was asked to increase the number of staff who have attended recent child protection training. All staff have now attended child protection training and are aware of the local safeguarding procedures. This further promotes the welfare and safety of the children.

At the last education inspection there were no recommendations given, only a point of consideration, this was to increase the regularity of the use of large equipment and climbing opportunities for the children. The pre-school now have re-organised the storage of the outside equipment so all the large outdoor and climbing equipment is put away in the shed last. This means it is put out first by the staff daily to ensure all children have the opportunity to use the equipment and helps to promote their physical development and skills.

## **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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)