

North Leigh Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134443
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Inspector	Jenny Read
Setting Address	Park Road, North Leigh, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX29 6SS
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Registered person	The Trustees of North Leigh Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

North Leigh Pre-School has been operating for approximately 30 years. It is located in an Elliott building within the grounds North Leigh Primary School. The pre-school operates from one large playroom, with kitchen and integrated toilet facilities with wheelchair access. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding villages.

A maximum of 20 children from two years six months to five years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 29 children on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school is open each weekday during school terms from 08.45 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00. Additional wrap around care is available including breakfast club from 07.45 to 08.45 and lunch club from 11.30 to 12.30. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school employs four staff to work with the children. The play leader holds the Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies and is currently working towards a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Early Years Childhood Studies. One staff member holds the National Vocational Qualification in Playwork at Level 3. One staff member is currently working towards

a Level 3 qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and reception class teacher from the school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing sound awareness of how to take care of their personal care needs. They know the very good hand washing routines and describe with clarity how they need to wash their hands because their 'hands have dirty bits'. Staff set a very good example and are on hand to offer sensitive reminders about hand washing, for instance, after blowing their nose. They use the liquid soap and paper towels independently and dispense of tissues in the bin after wiping their nose to limit cross infection. There are good nappy changing and toileting procedures, for example, staff wear disposable gloves and bag all nappies and take them immediately to the outside bins to prevent cross contamination.

Each child has a separate page for the recording of any accidents or administration of medication. These are signed and shared with parents to show they have been informed and are able to provide appropriate care at home. Staff have attended first aid training and follow sound procedures when children are ill, for instance, snuggling them up on the sofa and restricting the other children from the area to minimise the spreading of infection.

Children benefit from a healthy diet, enjoying different cereals and toast at breakfast and fresh fruit, crumpets and occasional biscuits at snack time. Children discuss which fruits they like to eat and take part in occasional discussion about healthy eating. Children's lunch boxes are stored within the room and parents are encouraged to provide healthy contents in suitable cool containers. Children choose which table they would like to sit on at meal times and chat happily with their peers and staff. However, children are not involved in helping to prepare their snack or the table to support counting and discussion and promote their enjoyment of food. Some parents provide drinks in a bottle, which children access when they are thirsty to ensure they are well hydrated. However, there are no facilities for other children to help themselves to a drink when they wish, needing to wait for meal times.

Children have adequate opportunities for fresh air and exercise and begin to gain some awareness of the affect it has on their body and how they can protect themselves from the sun by making sunglasses. They release lots of energy as they frantically run around and play games, such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf' or 'Farmers in the Den' on the schools astro turf before they have to go back inside because of school break times. This restricts the range of activities and outdoor learning available to the children. Although children participate in the school sports day, they enjoy few challenges to build on their fitness because the outdoor environment is not planned for to develop their strength, agility and large physical skills. There is very little access to the pre-school garden because areas are water logged and building work is not complete, providing no opportunity for free flowing indoor and outdoor play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a bright, cheerful and comfortable environment where staff give good emphasis to creating well defined spaces that are clean, intimate and well resourced. Children use the spaces well and freely move around the room to activities of their choice. Mobile decorations,

posters, murals and children's pictures decorate the walls. Numerous cushions and a sofa provide areas for children to sit and relax in comfort. Low-level storage cupboards and drawer units enable children to access a number of resources for themselves. However, a large selection of toys and play materials are hidden behind material screens making it difficult to see what is available.

The staff maintain generally good levels of safety to safeguard and protect the children. Staff are vigilant ensuring someone is on the main door at key times to monitor the exit carefully and ensure the internal door remains shut. A door bell on the main door and buzzer alarm on the external door to the garden notifies staff and ensures any person entering the building are supervised. All visitors are requested to sign in and detailed records are kept of children's attendance in the breakfast club. However, times are not recorded for children or staff in the pre-school to show clearly who is present at any one time in the event of a fire or child protection concern. The staff supervise the children closely at all times and quickly wipe up any spillages on the floor providing clear explanations to children about how someone might slip or fall.

Even though children do not contribute to the acceptable risk assessments they show generally good awareness of the boundaries for safe play, for example putting their chairs under the table when finished. Effective questioning and clear explanations are encouraging children's understanding of potential hazards. They explain with clarity how they will fall over and hurt themselves if they run inside and are repeatedly shown how to use scissors and tools safely. Some children gain awareness of appropriate action to take in the event of a fire emergency through termly practise of the escape plan in line with the school. However, a number of children attend different days, meaning many do not learn the procedure to take to keep themselves safe.

Children are adequately protected because staff attend child protection training and show generally good awareness of the signs and indicators of abuse and line management process to take. The child protection procedure is informative but does not provide staff with current referral procedures should they have any concerns that a child may be at risk of abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are busy, happy and talk freely with their peers and staff. The pre-school and breakfast club children enjoy a range of activities and resources that engage their interests and actively encourage their imagination. The older children chose games for themselves and spend much time chatting and sharing news together.

In the pre-school, staff skilfully engage in the children's play and provide resources to facilitate and extend their play further. For example, the children prod, squeeze and roll the dough to make balls. The imaginative use of recyclable fruit packaging prompts the children to make cakes and use the trays to represent cake tins. The inventive children use their own real life experiences well, taking their cakes to the home corner oven before sharing them around the room when they believe they are 'cooked'.

The younger children integrate generally well with the pre-school children forging good relationships with their peers. The small group enables the staff to get to know the children generally well. They have satisfactory awareness of the Birth to three matters framework and link it to the Foundation Stage to provide suitable integration. Staff adapt activities and resources appropriately depending on the children present to ensure sufficient differentiation

to meet individual needs. However, tracking and recording of the younger children's progress is not clear.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. The children are making sufficient progress in their learning because staff have generally good awareness of the Foundation Stage and provide a pleasing range of activities. Staff integrate children from the reception class, who attend in afternoon, well. The children know the staff and link in with the younger children successfully. Children are developing autonomy in their play because staff are useful facilitators and are confident to go with the children's ideas once play has been initiated. Leaving a number of tables bare each day allows the children to choose freely for themselves.

However, the current planning cycle does not link to the children's interests or next steps because observations are not completed routinely and do not inform assessments. Consequently, there are a number of gaps in the children's learning, such as physical development, sense of time and place, letters and letter sounds. In addition, assessments do not show an accurate record of attainment to track carefully children's progress against the stepping stones and help them build on what they already know and can do. Staff focus and rely too much on formal teaching methods, such as numerous worksheets to assess children's knowledge of number, colour, shape and pencil control instead of observing and assessing children's learning through play.

Children enjoy a range of core activities each day, including, sand, water, creative, role play, computer and construction. Staff plan topics based around times of the year, such as holidays, and implement a broad range of activities to extend and help children recall their experiences. For example, they make passports, tickets for the airport, look at money from around the world and set up a plane to use the passports and tickets they have made. However, children have little involvement in helping to contribute to the planning of topics and their activities. Valuable daily evaluations of key adult-led activities include extension and improvement ideas along with observation of the children. However, these are not utilised to guide children's play and learning.

Children know the routines well, finding their name card with their parent on arrival before sitting on the carpet for registration time. They respond well to balanced support and adult involvement in their play and are keen to include them. For example, setting up their own picnic using blankets, play food and utensils and inviting the inspector to join them. Staff empower the children to become independent in learning to manage their own behaviour by allowing them to decide when they wish to adhere to the very clear and consistent boundaries for acceptable behaviour during key times. The frequent positive praise and effective strategies very quickly help the children to express themselves appropriately and recognise the consequences of their actions.

Staff create an environment conducive to learning, organising the space and many resources well to promote children's independence. They introduce the activities each day to aid their decision making skills. Children excitedly dress up in their favourite outfit, showing pleasure and amazement as they look in the mirror at themselves. The children maximise the computers as an excellent learning resource using the mouse with great skill and competence to complete a wide range of games, including numbers, matching and positioning. Although timers to aid turn taking and a sense of time and natural resources and equipment to allow children to explore and investigate their surroundings are not readily available. Useful questioning from staff, such

as 'what number comes after two?' during computer games helps children's reasoning skills. However, opportunities to count during daily routines, for example, the number of children present each day and compare number of boys, girls and adults present does not take place consistently.

Most children recognise their written name and refer to these when finding their name card at snack time or hanging up their coats. They have many opportunities to practise mark making and emergent writing skills, making lists in the post office, taking orders in the Chinese restaurant and using their name card to write their name on their passport. However, discussion about letters and letter sounds rarely takes place. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories during circle time. However, some younger children lack concentration, causing some disruption to the group, hindering participation and learning for children that are more able.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a wide selection of planned activities and resources that help them value diversity and gain awareness of their own and other cultures. Photographs show they celebrate festivals from around the world, making lanterns and eating prawn crackers with chopsticks for Chinese New Year. Although no children currently attend, staff are proactive in extending their knowledge and understanding of any child with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, previous records show regular communication with parents and other professionals involved with the child. They attend briefings and strategy meetings and implement individual educational plans to help guide and support the children's learning at the appropriate time.

Children are mostly well behaved and respond positively to the staff's consistent attitude and calm, positive approach to managing unacceptable behaviour. They are occasionally encouraged to review the 'Children's Charter' displayed on the wall, which encourages them to be kind and talk nicely to their peers. They readily help with tidying away their toys and use 'please' and 'thank you' with minimal reminders. The children are developing a strong sense of themselves and as part of a community, eagerly joining in the pre-school prayer.

Children benefit from the friendly and informal contact between their parents and the staff. Parents receive informative and colourful termly newsletters, a helpful prospectus and access to useful notice boards that include posters of information, notices and several policies and procedures. Although information displayed is not updated or reviewed regularly to ensure it contains accurate details. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the setting through joining the committee. Parents value the staff's friendliness and welcoming nature, and feel their children are very happy at the setting.

The partnership with parents of children receiving funding for nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive adequate information about the education provision through a brief synopsis of the six areas of learning in the parent prospectus and notice board articles. These include details about some learning intentions and a small weekly sheet that is hidden amongst other notices summarising what their children will be learning and includes suggestions for activities. However, the useful individual diary books that staff stick the innovative weekly summary sheets to are not utilised effectively as they only go home to parents at the end of each year. This hinders parents from being able to take an active part in supporting their children's learning each week. The annual evening for parents enables them to speak informally to the staff and their child's key worker and to view displays and other aspects of the setting. However, because

assessments are not up-to-date, parents receive little information about their children's ongoing progress against the stepping stones.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are committed, enthusiastic and work very well as a team to provide a relaxed, happy and generally well organised setting. This is reflected in the fact staff have been working at the setting for many years. Staff are well qualified and feel they have good opportunities to attend additional training to extend their skills and update their knowledge. Staff contribute to their yearly appraisals outlining their own performance and highlighting areas for their own professional development. Effective deployment throughout the day ensures ratios in the breakfast club and pre-school are well met and children are safe and receive purposeful support during play. The setting meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Organisation of the operational plan is random because policies, procedures, records and documentation for the efficient and safe management of the pre-school, are stored in numerous files around the setting. This is making it difficult to track and find information. As a result, a number of policies have not been reviewed since 2006 and contain inaccurate details. In addition a number of procedures are not rigorous or in written form. For example, the recruitment and vetting procedures are not robust enough to include an assessment of new applicants practice, health declarations and thorough checking of referees. In addition, induction procedures are carried out informally meaning systems for checking new staff's knowledge of the settings policies are not secure. Most records contain sufficient detail and children's confidential information is stored alphabetically to maintain confidentiality.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. Children's learning is of a satisfactory standard and they are making sufficient progress from their individual starting points. The six areas of learning are given acceptable emphasis although there are several gaps within aspects of each area and some teaching methods do not focus on learning through play. Children are happy and relaxed and engage purposefully in a range of activities of their choice. Staff plan their specific activities well and show clear understanding of the purpose of the activities and what children are learning. However, links between the observation, assessments and planning to children's individual next steps are currently not secure.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection recommended the provider reviewed procedures for serving hot drinks to adults and ensured the accident book is always signed by parents. Staff use thermos cups for hot drinks at all times and follow the clearly displayed procedures vigilantly. Any accident to a child is recorded immediately and all entries are shared and signed by parents at the end of each session to ensure parents are well informed to provide appropriate care.

The last nursery education inspection recommended the "news" time was reviewed and children were encouraged to make good use of the computer. Staff select only a few children each day to talk about their favourite toy brought in from home to ensure time on the carpet is not prolonged and children do not become bored and restless. All children enjoy the computer and make excellent use of the different programmes to aid their learning.

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 complains, which parents may see on request. The 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):

- ensure the daily record of children's and staff's attendance includes accurate times of arrival and departure
- review organisation of the operational plan to ensure all policies and procedures are in place, contain sufficient detail and are to hand.

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):

- devise a system for the observation and assessments of children's progress towards the early learning goals and ensure these link closely to the planning and show more clearly children's progress and next steps so that they may reach their full potential
- provide opportunities for children to contribute to the planning of topics and their activities and ensure teaching methods are appropriate to support their learning through play
- further develop the methods to inform parents of the Foundation Stage, stepping stones and their children's on-going progress
- improve systems for monitoring the quality of the nursery education provision and evaluating its impact, especially in relation to assessing children's progress and planning for the outdoor environment.

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