

Little Oaks Community Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141754
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Inspector	Cordalee Harrison
Setting Address	Wavendon Community Centre, Walton Road, Wavendon, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 8LH
Telephone number	01908 583826
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Registered person	The Trustees of Little Oaks Community Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Oaks Community Nursery was registered in 1991 and is managed by a committee of parents voluntary. The nursery operates in a community centre in Wavendon Village on the outskirts of Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. Children from the surrounding areas attend. There are two rooms used, one a large sports hall, the second smaller with direct access to an enclosed outside play area. There are kitchen and toilet facilities and the building is adjacent to a playing field, which the group use on a regular basis.

The nursery is open term time, Monday to Friday, from 09.10 until 12.00 and Monday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 12.45 until 14.45. There are currently 101 children from aged two to under five years on roll. Of these, 46 children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 11 permanent members of staff. There are two members of staff including the manager who are qualified teachers and three other staff are qualified to Level 3 in childcare and education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children make good progress in their physical development, because they participate in a wide range of indoors and outdoors activities daily. These experiences allow them to make good use of a range of equipment and tools and to do many activities, which promote large and fine movements, coordination and balance. For example, they pedal bikes and ride scooters, dig at the allotment, run free and play group games, such as, what's the time 'Mr Wolf'. In addition, they carry out a wide range of creative activities that require them to concentrate and use fine movements, such as, cutting with scissors, threading, lacing and manipulating play dough. Children manage their bodies to create intended movement. For example, they pretend to be bulbs responding to the elements, such as, the darkness and rain. They grow from a curled position to a full stretching position to show their face and enjoy the sun.

To reduce the risks of infection to children the premises is maintained to a good standard of hygiene and children use clean resources in their play. Children are beginning to develop some good hygiene habits and self-care skills. For example, children are learning to cover their mouths when they cough and to wash their hands after using the toilet. The arrangements for children to clean their hands with wet wipes before they eat is satisfactory, however, it does reinforce the importance of hand washing before eating. Children are clean and comfortable because staff attend to their personal hygiene needs promptly. The setting is working effectively with parents to ensure that children eat and drink healthily. For example, parents provide children with healthy snacks and the setting provides drinks of milk and water. In addition, children are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water throughout the session. However, because not all children's snacks are labelled with their names, there is some reliance on children and staff recognising which children some snacks are prepared for. This presents a risk of children eating food that is not prepared for them.

The health of children with severe allergies and intolerance is safeguarded because clear procedures are in place, including step-by-step action to be taken in the event of exposure to the allergen. To further safeguard children's health, some staff are trained to administer medicine to manage serious allergic reactions for specific conditions. Sufficient staff who are qualified in first aid use appropriate first aid equipment and practice to deal with children's minor accidents. Essential written parental permission is in place to deal with children's medical emergencies. Accidents and medication records include all of the required information to safeguard children's health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The pre-school environment is secure, warm, welcoming and attractive for children. The rooms are light and bright, children are not able to leave unattended and only persons permitted are able to enter. There is ample space for children to use, children move around easily and carry out a wide range of tabletop and floor based activities. There is an excellent and extensive range of good quality, safe play resources for children to use. The resources are appealing to children, appropriate to their age and stage of development and are constructed of both man-made and natural materials. Children use the resources freely and this promotes independent learning. In addition, there are sufficient resources, such as, tables and chairs, which allows children to sit together for large group activities, such as, at snack time.

The effective use of regular risk assessments, daily safety checks and close supervision minimise the risks of harm for children; they play and learn in safe surroundings. For example, hazardous substances are stored out of children's reach and the setting is free of slipping and tipping hazards. In addition, children are learning safe behaviour because staff remind them often of the boundaries. For example, children remember to walk indoors, because staff remind them not to run. They further develop their understanding of safety because they are able to listen well. For example, children explain that it is important for the register to be taken at the start of the session because the information is useful if there is a fire. Children practise the fire drill regularly and learn how to evacuate the premises quickly and safely in an emergency.

Through discussion, senior staff demonstrate sound understanding of their role to safeguard children's welfare. They are aware of the lines of communication to follow if there are concerns about children's well-being and welfare. For example, they know that the local social services and parents are to be informed of concerns about children's welfare. However, some staff have insecure knowledge of child protection issues. They are not clear about lines of communication for dealing with issues of concerns and they are not familiar with the setting's child protection policy. In addition, the child protection policy does not include all of the relevant details to enable staff and parents to act immediately to safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Most of the younger children and all of the older ones separate easily from their parents. Staff give children who have not yet gone through the separation process good levels of support including, personal attention and activities that are familiar and of specific interest to them. This warm and personal interaction serves well to distract these children and help to support their emotional development. Children make choices about play and occupy themselves with purposeful activities throughout the session. They settle quickly, move freely between stimulating activities and enjoy play that is appropriate to their stage of development. They enjoy and achieve well because activities are sufficiently differentiated for older and younger children. Children are clearly very familiar with the routine; they enjoy their time in the setting, they speak freely and converse openly with staff and their peers.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. To help children to make good progress towards the early learning goals, staff skilfully link their plans and activities securely to the Foundation Stage curriculum and the stepping stones. This ensures that they plan well and consistently cover all aspects of the areas of learning. Children enjoy a very wide range of exciting and interesting activities. They are eager to learn and they take part in group activities enthusiastically. For example, most of the children are keen to practise their part in the nativity play. Most children remain focused and wait to take their turn, they are developing their listening and communication skills well. Staff skilfully extend children's learning and provide many opportunities for them to consolidate what they know through open questions. For example, children explain that the precious load that the donkey is carrying is Mary who is expecting a baby.

Topics and themes, such as 'Harvest and Autumn' and 'Spring and Insects and Mini beast' are linked to the areas of learning and presented to offer the children many first hand experiences. For example, they provide gifts of food for people in the community and to extend their learning they group the items of food together and learn about the importance of eating a balanced

diet. They further extend their learning through harvest and autumn, with the preparation and cooking of food, such as, making apple crumbles. They test their senses, explore change and progress their mathematical thinking and reading skills, as they read recipes, weigh and measure the ingredients in the cooking activities. The study of spring and insects provides the opportunity for children to create environments which attract insects and mini-beasts, such as, placing a damp piece of carpet in the outside area. They extend their understating of nature and the natural world with familiar stories, such as, the 'Hungry Caterpillar' and promote their creative and physical development with relevant and fun activities. For example, they explore the pre-school allotment to find other insects, and consolidate their learning in their artwork and with music and movements, such as, pretending to be bulbs growing.

Children use a variety of mark-making implements including pencils, chalk and glue sticks. They practise making marks frequently, because they use these resources daily. They make shapes and pattern in the sands and some children are beginning to write their names to label their work. Clear writing, labels and letters are highly visible to children, which helps them to learn that words carry meanings. They further develop their recognition and pronunciation of letters as they repeat the phonic sounds of letters and link them to familiar and attractive pictures. A wide selection of good quality books is easily accessible to the children; they sit comfortable and explore them independently and with the support of staff. Children have many opportunities to count in their daily activities. They sequence numbers forwards and backwards as they sing number rhymes, they use positional language, develop their understanding of shapes, and learn how make connections with the use of various construction resources. Children are making good relationships with their peers and staff. For example, they join with their peers to initiate play and entertain themselves, particularly in pretend play. They practise what they know and show that they are learning to care for others as they play in the home corner. Children show their independence and set their own challenges as they sit and concentrate at activities, such as, doing jigsaw puzzles and putting the construction sets together. Staff carry out regular observation of children. However, they do not consistently identify the next step in individual children's learning, to be confident that sufficient challenges are identified for individual children. Children are learning about modern technology, they use many resources that are programmable, such as the computer, and realistic resources in their pretend play as a washing machine and microwave.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's profiles provide sufficient good quality information to enable staff to meet their health, care and welfare needs. To ensure that children's learning needs are met staff plan and deliver a wide range of age and developmentally appropriate activities in the setting. Children's achievements are recorded regularly. However, the records do not consistently identify the next step in individual children to ensure that all individual learning needs are met consistently.

Children promote their understanding of the wider society including cultural diverse society well, because they use good quality resources, such as, non-gender specific resources, books, dolls and photographs, which provide them with positive information and images. Topics such as, 'Harvest' are used effectively to involve children in community activities, for example, they prepare harvest baskets for senior citizens in the local area. In addition, they acknowledge and celebrate many other cultural festivals. To ensure that children get good quality information, the setting involves parents with particular knowledge and expertise to share their experiences in the setting and this extends children's learning. Children are learning to value their own culture and that of others. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are learning the boundaries that are in place for behaviour, because staff let them know when behaviour is unacceptable. For example, children know that if they push others, whilst they are lining-up they will have to go to the back of the line. Children know when they have done well because staff praise and acknowledge their achievements; they behave well and the atmosphere in the setting is busy and purposeful. There is a clear and informative behaviour policy in place. To achieve consistently in behaviour management for children, staff apply the rules consistently. This helps children to know what to expect and to learn to behave well.

The setting is experienced in providing for children with English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The inclusion officer is well trained and knowledgeable about putting the correct strategies in place for children who are identified with learning difficulties, as well as, to assess children when there is concern about their progress. There is a policy and systematic procedures specifically for dealing with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and some parents are aware of them. The setting is experienced at working with parents and other health and educational professionals to implement the policy and procedures. This ensures that the right strategies and resources are in place to meet the needs of children as identified. The setting uses suitable strategies and resources and involves parents and the appropriate professionals effectively to meet the care and educational needs of children with learning difficulties and or disabilities.

Partnership with parents is good. To keep parents involved in their children's care and learning the setting shares good quality information with them. The effective use of written materials, such as, the newsletters, up-to-date notices and reports, along with daily verbal communication keep parents fully informed about the setting's activities. Parents get advance notice about pre-school activities, which helps them to prepare their children for pre-school and encourages them to extend their children's learning when they are away from the setting. For example, children regularly take books home from the pre-school to share with their parents.

Parents have high confidence in the setting's ability to meet their children's care and learning needs. They state that they have sufficient opportunities to discuss their child's progress with staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into an appropriately organised setting where they are safe and secure. The setting operates with sufficient staff who are appropriately qualified and ample good quality age and stage appropriate resources that are safe, attractive and easily accessible to children. Children progress their learning and development well because staff plan well and this ensures that children receive appropriate levels of play and stimulation. The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. The setting's recruitment procedure is sound. It safeguards children's welfare, because it ensures that only staff who are cleared through the vetting procedure are alone with children.

All documentation that is required to safeguard children's health and welfare is in place. However, a number of these documents do not afford children the properly level of protection because they do not contain all of the necessary information. For example, the register does not provide accurate information about the hours children are present and the record of staff's attendance is not always completed timely to be confident that the information is always accurate. In addition, some key policies, such as, child protection and the uncollected child

policy does not contain all of the necessary information to provide clear guidance for staff and parents. The setting's policies are not readily available to parents and some of them are not familiar to staff, to ensure that they are confident about their role in the setting.

Leadership and management are good. For the benefit of the children the setting maintains a stable team of core staff; this ensures consistency for children. In addition, it ensures a wide range of very good quality resources and makes sure that staff are knowledgeable about the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones. Staff use their knowledge creatively and effectively to support and promote children's learning across all areas of learning and towards the early learning goals. Staff plan activities well, they clearly identify learning intentions, evaluate the effectiveness of activities and observe children regularly. However they do not use the records to maximise children's learning because they do not consistently identify the next step in individual children's learning. In addition, there is no system in place to evaluate the setting's overall performance to ensure that weaknesses are identified.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection, the provider was asked to keep a written record, signed by parents, of medicines given to children and to maintain a record of persons visiting the premises.

To safeguard children's welfare the medication records now include all of the required information, it is accurate and up-to-date. To ensure children's safety there is a record of all visitors to the setting.

At the last nursery education inspection, there were no significant weaknesses to report, however, the provider was asked to consider improving opportunity for children to practise counting and number recognition through focused, practical activities and to regularly record children's observations against the Foundation Stage stepping stones.

There are now many opportunities for children to practise counting and number recognition in their daily and focused activities. For example, children count the number of children present at registration, they count as they sort by number and colour and sequence numbers and they add and subtract as they sing action and nursery rhymes. The setting now carries out regular observations of children and keeps achievement records which are linked to the stepping stones. However, the setting currently does not identify the next step for children's learning consistently to be confident that individual children's learning is always maximised.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 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):

- make sure that all children's snacks are labelled with their names
- develop staff's knowledge of child protection and ensure that they are all familiar with the setting's child protection policy
- develop staff's knowledge of the setting's policies and make the policies available to parents
- make sure that registers contain the necessary information.

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):

- continue to develop children's achievement records to consistently identify the next step for individual children's learning and put in place a system to evaluate the setting's performance (also applies to care).

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