

# Little Treasures Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	204015
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 December 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Marie Cozzi
<b>Setting Address</b>	Church Leys, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6BY
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<b>Registered person</b>	Beryl Coleman
<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 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?

Little Treasures pre-school opened in 1996 and operates from a large hall and rooms at the Friends Meeting House. It is situated in Harlow, Essex. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.30 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from both the local and wider catchment area. The pre-school currently supports one child with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and one child who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six staff. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene through their daily routines. For example, they wash their hands at appropriate times and receive support in order to participate in regular hygiene routines. Consequently, many children know they need to wash their hands after using the toilet or messy play. However, the cleaning routine in place for play provision is not effective and as a result, children access resources which are dirty, this poses a potential risk to their health. Children's health and wellbeing is promoted through the effective procedures followed by staff such as administration of medication. Most staff are appropriately qualified in emergency first aid, this enables them to care for children appropriately in an emergency situation.

The importance of eating healthy foods is promoted through offering children nutritious snacks such as cheese, fresh fruit and vegetables. Children's individual needs are met well through the records kept and that particular dietary needs and preferences are catered for. Snack time is considered to be a sociable occasion and children are able to eat at their own pace without feeling rushed. There is access to fresh drinking water at all times which assists in ensuring that children remain hydrated. The pre-school operates a free-flow system between the indoor and outdoor play areas for most of the session. This means that there are opportunities for children to receive fresh air and engage in vigorous play should they wish to. The planned indoor activities incorporate some opportunities for children to develop and practice their large muscle skills, for example, during water play, painting and sticking.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

There are systems in place for managing access to the pre-school, for example, high levels of adult supervision and the effective use of a visitors book. There is a registration system for staff and children which records each child's time of arrival and departure. This ensures staff are able to account for children at all times. Safety is discussed with children and they demonstrate an awareness of potential danger, for example, 'you must not touch a hot kettle, because it burns'

There are some systems in place to check the safety of toys and equipment on a daily basis, for example, staff check resources when they are put out each morning. However, there are no written risk assessments in place. As a consequence, some hazards in the playschool have not been identified in order to protect children from harm. For example, the large accessible area used for storage of toys and equipment and the kitchen. As a result, children's safety is compromised. Fire drills are conducted each term and staff ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to practice this and are familiar with the process.

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of issues surrounding child protection procedures. There are written procedures for staff to follow if they have concerns about a child. They include a procedure to follow if any allegations are made against a member of staff.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and confident as they participate enthusiastically in a satisfactory range of planned and spontaneous activities. As a result, they are busy enjoying resources such as bikes, role play, construction, cars and the garage. Malleable resources such as craft and play dough promotes their imagination and senses. Some staff working with children under three years have a developing knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Therefore children's attainment on entry, observations and assessments are not yet secure. As a consequence, activities do not always effectively support their individual development in order to help them make progress across all areas.

Children benefit from the use of the key worker systems, for example, they are supported and encouraged to participate in activities throughout the session. Interaction between the children and staff is caring and positive as they move around the pre-school, independently choosing activities. Children play freely either by themselves, with staff or alongside their peers. The free-flow system and organisation of the environment encourages children to make decisions about what they would like to do next. Their achievements are valued and recognised and they receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff, for example, when a child helps at snack time 'well done, good boy'. The use of reward stickers further supports children's achievements. As a result, children develop positive attitudes to future learning.

During activities children demonstrate their curiosity as learners, sharing ideas and asking questions such as why? when? and how? There are some opportunities for children to develop their vocabulary as staff give time for them to practise their thinking and listening skills. However, books are not consistently used to promote language development. This is because there is no planned story time each day and the organisation of the book corner does not encourage its use.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They enjoy an environment where staff are attentive to their basic needs and use a satisfactory range of teaching techniques to extend their thinking and learning. Children are on the whole occupied, engaged and interested in what is on offer, however, planning is not fully effective in re-sourcing an environment which allows children to constantly access the six areas of learning. For example, children mainly access information technology on the day it is planned for. Staff have an adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, however, their knowledge and understanding of learning intentions is developing and activities are not always effectively planned to support children's individual learning needs.

Children's achievements are linked to the stepping stones and there are some systems in place for planning and assessment. However, observations and assessments are yet to be completed consistently and used effectively for future planning and identifying children's individual next steps for learning. Information about children's educational development within the pre-school is shared with parents and carers through verbal feedback and open access to key worker files.

Children receive some opportunities for singing, and music and movement. There are chances to mimic the world around them whilst playing with small world toys such as the dolls house or garage. Children are frequent visitors to the role play area where they are able to express

themselves freely. Some children are encouraged to participate in a range of number and problem solving activities through and the daily routine, for example, during group time as they calculate how many children are here today. However, this does not always consistently match children's individual progress and what they can realistically achieve. There are posters in some areas of the nursery which are labelled in the English written language, this promotes an awareness in children that in their environment text carries meaning, however, children rarely access the book corner. Some children recognise their name card and independently put it into the post box in the entry hall before each session. However, there is no differentiation for less able children.

There are opportunities for mark-making such as painting during a craft activity and drawing round stencils. Children are developing their skills using a range of tools such as paint brushes, pencils and dough cutters. However, there are fewer chances for children to consistently engage in writing through play, for example, through role play or to write for a purpose such as consistently attempting to label their own work. Children are sometimes able to discover, explore and investigate living things through planned topics such as growing sunflowers and mushrooms. They have opportunities to problem solve as they work out that if they press a button on a toy it makes a sound. However, their access to everyday technology and programmable toys to support their learning is not consistent and somewhat limited. Children have opportunities to develop physical skills, for example, as they, use glue sticks and dough cutters with increasing control. They enjoy opportunities to develop their sense of balance and coordination during outdoor play, for example, as they peddle and manoeuvre wheeled toys. Although, indoor play opportunities are not always consistent in facilitating vigorous play in order to promote children's physical development.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Resources reflecting positive images form a part of children's play and learning experiences. This assists in promoting an appreciation of diversity and assists children in valuing each others similarities and differences. There is a member of staff who has completed the relevant training to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there are strategies in place to support children and their families.

On the whole children respond well to staff instructions to tidy up and wash their hands before snack time. This is in part due to the warm and positive interaction they receive, which is in line with their level of maturity and understanding. For example, when given a request for 'good sitting' at group time many children express their delight at the praise they receive for their achievement.

They are beginning to develop their understanding about emotions such as being kind or taking turns and sharing with others. For example, when a member of staff intervened in a dispute to help a group of children resolve their issue; she helps them to problem solve by providing them with options to either share or take turns, as a result, some of the children decide to engage in alternative activities.

Parents receive some verbal feedback which is given each day at drop off and pick up times. A small notice board, a display of photographs depicting each area of learning, and news letters are used to provide some early years information and an information booklet is provided for all parents and carers, however, information available regarding the provision of systems in place to support the development of children under three years is developing. Parents share

information prior to placement regarding children's individual care needs. This helps to promote continuity of care with regard to managing any individual medical or dietary needs.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funded nursery education is satisfactory. Parents and carers benefit from open access to their child's files and the colourful display in the lobby area which depicts the six areas of learning. This assists in supporting parent and carers understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The key worker system is developing to ensure information regarding children's progress and development is continually exchanged and shared. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

All regulatory policies and procedures are in place and updated as required. There is an operational plan in place which is shared with parents and carers and is currently being updated and reorganised. The vetting systems in place are appropriate to ensure that children are protected.

Children are cared for by experienced and qualified staff who are deployed effectively to ensure their welfare and development. All staff working with children are using the Foundation Stage curriculum, although, some have a developing knowledge and understanding. The pre-school are yet to implement a system in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning for the needs of younger children. The majority of staff hold relevant early years qualifications. Staff induction procedures are in place and monitoring systems such as appraisals and regular staff meetings support staff. Most policies and procedures are implemented in practice to promote positive outcomes for children.

The leadership and management of funded children is satisfactory. There is a strong commitment to improvement throughout the team which is instigated by the manager. Staff are supported by regular meetings and training such as promoting equality of opportunity and promoting positive behaviour. This assists in developing their confidence, knowledge and understanding. The manager works along side staff which assists her in monitoring the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The provider has identified some areas for improvement such as the further development of planning. However, monitoring systems are not yet effective in identifying all areas for improvement. The manager works with other professional organisations such as the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA) to develop the quality of nursery education.

Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last care inspection the provider has improved outcomes for children. The required consents are in place to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. This assists in ensuring that children receive appropriate attention. All required policies and procedures have been updated which improves the safe management of the provision. In addition the majority of staff now hold appropriate early years qualifications.

Since the last nursery education inspection the provider has met in part most of the key issues. Planning has been developed to include learning intentions related to all six areas of learning. However, these are not yet linked to children's individual needs. Children's assessment records show what they have done although they are not yet linked to planning. Opportunities in

mathematical and creative development have been increased enabling children to explore simple calculation and repeating sound patterns.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been 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 the 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 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 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):

- review hygiene procedures to ensure that children access play provision that is always clean
- develop planning systems to include activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- develop current safety systems to include a risk assessment of the premises which includes an action plan which identifies action to be taken to minimise identified risks
- further develop monitoring systems in order to effectively identify areas for improvement, this also applies to nursery education.

#### **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):

- develop the current planning system to provide a balanced curriculum across all six areas of learning, ensure that children experience activities which offer appropriate challenge and learning, this also applies to care
- enhance the systems in place for the recording of children observations and assessments in order that they accurately identify children's individual next steps in learning, this also applies to care
- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage learning intentions, ensure this information is used by key workers in order for them to identify children's starting points and plan their next steps for learning based on clear observations of what the children know and can do, this also applies to care.

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