

Lark Lane Family Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	322461
Inspection date	31 January 2008
Inspector	Gillian Sutherland
Setting Address	St. Michaels & Lark Lane Community Centre, 80 Lark Lane, LIVERPOOL, L17 8UU
Telephone number	0151 728 7884
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Registered person	St Michael and Lark Lane Community Association
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?

Lark Lane Family Pre-School was registered as a full day care provision in 2002 and operates from a hall within the St Michaels and Lark Lane Community Centre. It is situated in the south end of Liverpool. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.15 to 15.45 during school term time only. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 26 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Some children who attend the pre-school have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs two members of staff, both of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and spacious environment and their physical development is well promoted as they access daily physical play activities. Weather permitting, children use the enclosed outdoor play space at the rear of the building, otherwise they have the spacious play area indoors. Children can use the larger play equipment indoors including a small trampoline, a large rocking horse, climbing frame plus some balancing equipment. Children's fine motor skills develop well as they competently use the mouse with the computer and small equipment, such as scissors and cutting tools which are used in creative play activities.

Children play in a well maintained and comfortable environment, where they develop a good understanding of personal hygiene as they are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the session. They understand through pictures displayed in the toilet area that they should wash their hands before going back into the playroom. Children are able to visit the toilet area independently and there is a hand drier available for them to dry their hands with.

The pre-school promotes healthy eating and children's individual dietary requirements are met. The snacks and lunches are varied and include fresh fruit and vegetables. A two week lunch menu is on display for parents to look at and discuss with the pre-school staff if necessary. Children help themselves to milk or water to drink at snack time and there is always a jug of drinking water and some cups set out on a tray, thus ensuring children can freely access a drink at any time during the day or session. A two week lunch menu is on display for parents to look at and discuss with the pre-school staff if necessary.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are relaxed and happy as they enter the pre-school. They are greeted warmly by the staff and quickly settle into the pre-school's activity programme. The areas of the community centre which are accessed by the pre-school children are decorated with their art work and a range of different posters and pictures. The available play space within the building is designed in such a way that children can move round freely and self-select the toys and resources they want to play with and the activities they want to participate in.

The pre-school room is well laid out and organised. Colourful displays of children's work help develop their sense of belonging. Information for parents is posted on the external entrance door or on the notice board. Children independently make choices from a good range of easily accessible resources which are stored in labelled trays and containers in low-level units. Clear defined play areas allow them space to be quiet, use their creativity, extend their imagination and develop their play. Fire evacuation procedures are in place ensuring children and staff know how to evacuate the building quickly and safely. Fire drill practises take place at regular intervals and a record is maintained of when these are carried out.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff are able to recognise signs of abuse and know which agencies to contact should they have any concerns about a child in their care. The pre-school have a safeguarding children policy, however, it has not yet been updated to include the revised terminology or the telephone number of the local police.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time in pre-school and are confident and engaged in purposeful play. They participate in free and structured play sessions and they establish good relationships with the staff and each other. Children enjoy and eagerly participate in registration time as they sit with the pre-school staff and greet everyone. On occasions, children themselves will lead this activity and they in turn ask other children to count how many children and adults are present.

Children actively make choices as to what activities they want to participate in and the resources they want to play with. They can freely participate in role play activities, or access a book of their choice from their low-level storage unit. There are some resources or activities that, although they are accessible to the children, are not always set out in such a way that may extend children's learning and development.

Children enjoy close contact with familiar adults although currently there is no designated key worker system in place. The pre-school staff have some understanding of the Foundation Stage and curriculum guidance and their knowledge and understanding of caring for children under three have been gained through their early years experience.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals, as staff have an awareness of the six areas of learning. The pre-school staff are aware of their responsibility to provide an educational programme and they do have some knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this during their planning to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered. Children then participate in a range of purposeful and age appropriate activities.

Children enjoy using role play equipment. In the home corner they played very happily as they dressed up and prepared meals using the play foods. Their language skills were well promoted as they chatted to each other as they played with the dressing up clothes and the play foods. They dressed their dolls and put some food into a basket, before moving to a different part of the room to enjoy 'their picnic'.

Children are able to recognise letters and their names, and some children have begun to write their own names. As the children arrive at pre-school they look for their own name card on the table. Later this card is used when their snack time operates in 'café style' and children have to put their name card in the box when they have had their snack. Children have some opportunities for mark making through pre-planned activities, but this was not observed during their free or role play activities.

Children learn about the world around them and they have a nature table which contains pine cones, chestnuts feathers and some plants. They also have a small tank with some goldfish in and they do take turns, with supervision from the staff, to feed and change the fish when required. In the outdoor area children took part in the planting of bulbs and vegetables and photographic evidence was seen of their finished produce. This produce included not only flowers and bushes but also the carrots which they grew and, after being washed, they enjoyed them as part of their snack time.

The children are developing friendships with their peers. Children are keen to save seats next to them for their friends at registration or story time. They approach visitors confidently, showing their ability to initiate relationships and communicate with adults.

All children are provided with many opportunities to develop their creativity and their personal self-esteem is raised as they proudly display and talk about their art and craft work. During the inspection children were able to freely paint a picture, and by using resources on the next table, they created a collage picture using shapes of either paper, cardboard or different coloured and textured materials.

The planning of the activity programme is undertaken by the pre-school staff and activities are planned on a long and short term basis. Staff observe children at play and use post-it notes to record children's achievements reached during their play. Staff record children's progress and link this information to the stepping stones and also use this to identify the next steps in children's learning. However, during this inspection there were very few profiles available, as the children whose profiles were completed at the end of the summer term had left and taken theirs with them. The staff team have the appropriate knowledge to prepare and complete these documents, however, due to personal circumstances they have yet to be completed for the children currently attending.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children access the range of resources and equipment, providing they are appropriate for their age and ability. Staff are knowledgeable about children's individual needs and they are fully discussed with parents prior to care commencing. These are well met in practice as children are cared for by familiar, consistent and caring staff.

The children are developing a good understanding of their local community and the wider world through planned activities. They celebrate a range of different festivals, and staff ensure that these celebrations are celebrated over a period of time to ensure that all children gain an understanding of their meaning. Children attending the pre-school are also made aware of the differing needs of our society and this has been achieved as people in the community with differing needs have visited the pre-school to share their experiences.

Children attending the pre-school are also made aware of the differing needs of our society. For example, they have received a visit from a person who had little or no sight and her guide dog. The pre-school also has some resources including a range of posters which help to promote an awareness of our diverse society.

Children's behaviour is generally good. They understand the need for safe boundaries and have an understanding of basic rules. This is supported by the behaviour management policy and the systems implemented by the staff. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff for their efforts and achievements. They are polite, share the resources and take turns easily, showing consideration for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Clear communication is established from the outset with parents as they can, if requested, have a copy of the pre-school's policies and procedures. In addition, they receive regular newsletters and the informative notice board keeps them informed of any developments. Parents also receive information on their child, as staff

share with them daily verbal handovers on children's interests and achievements. However, there is little evidence given to parents about the educational provision and how it links to the progress their children are making towards the early learning goals. Parents are aware that their children's development and progress is observed, monitored and recorded, and that they have access to these records at any time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe because the majority of staff working with children have had satisfactory clearances, whilst others are currently in the process of undergoing those clearances. Appropriate information was not however readily available at the inspection relating to the staff clearances. Staff to child ratios ensure children are cared for appropriately. The majority of staff hold a childcare qualification and continue to access relevant training to support children's learning and development. However, children's welfare is compromised and conditions of registration not met when a qualified first aid person is not available at every session.

Policies, procedures, consents and records which detail children's needs and inform staff of procedures to follow in situations, such as a child not being collected are maintained. The provision is effectively organised to enable all children to move freely around and choose from the interesting and good range of activities available. They settle well into a familiar routine, made possible by staff who work well together and ensure the smooth running of the session.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff work very well together to support children's learning and development. Space, resources, time and grouping are well organised to promote children's enjoyment and achievement. The staff work together to ensure the planned activities have met the learning outcomes and ensure that all areas of learning are fully covered. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection for care the pre-school setting has improved children's safety by ensuring that facilities in the bathroom area ensure that children do not use a shared towel. Children now use a hand dryer to dry their hands. The setting have also revised their lost and uncollected children policy to include the procedure that would be followed in the event of a child getting lost.

Since the last integrated nursery education inspection the pre-school staff have provided more opportunities both indoors and outdoors for children to play with large apparatus. They have also implemented an assessment system which is closely linked to statements from the Stepping Stones and they are still in the process of ensuring the setting moves forward. They do this by attending any relevant training that is accessible and are keen to explore the new Early Years Foundation Stage framework to ensure they continue to work within the required framework.

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.

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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):

- review and revise current policies and practices to ensure they comply with current requirements and legislation, and where required, contain contact details of relevant agencies
- ensure that the required details re staff clearances and suitability are available for inspection at any time
- make certain there is a person qualified in first aid at every session.

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):

- ensure that the following areas (book, role play and writing area) are made not only accessible but also interesting and inviting to the children present
- continue to implement the planning systems for children's learning and development through the stepping stones, and the children's records of achievement to evidence the progress and identify their next steps in learning
- improve the quality and accessibility of information given to parents about the educational provision and how it links to the progress their children are making towards the early learning goals.

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