

Little Angels Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	403611
Inspection date	16 January 2008
Inspector	Elizabeth Patricia Edmond
Setting Address	Elim Hall, Fredora Avenue, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY3 9NL
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Registered person	Sarah Louise Carney
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 good. 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 Angels Nursery was registered in 2001. It is a privately owned and managed full day care facility. The provider also owns two other nurseries in the Blackpool area. It operates from 3 rooms of a single storey building situated in a residential area of Marton, close to the M55. It serves the local area and children; collected by minibus from nearby schools. The premises are divided to create separate areas for the age groups of children attending. Toilet facilities and the outdoor area are shared by all groups of children. Opening hours are from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday throughout the year, closing for bank holidays and the Christmas period only. Children attend for a variety of full time or part time sessions.

The setting is registered with the local education authority to provide funded nursery education to those children of eligible age and is supported by their early years department. Of the 86 children currently on roll, 28 are in receipt of such funding. The setting currently supports very few children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The owner employs 11 part time and full time staff to work with the children. Approximately half of the staff have appropriate early years qualifications, others are working towards a recognised early years qualification. Extra staff are used for additional duties such as cooking, cleaning and driving the minibus.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment where they learn to follow effective procedures to maintain their good health. For example, pre-school children know about washing their hands before they eat and after using the toilet. They confidently use hand wipes before snack. Babies' health is promoted through the clear nappy changing procedures which are followed by staff at all times.

Most of the children's health benefits from the daily access to the outdoor area. Pre-school children and toddlers generally have free access to the outdoors; despite the slightly awkward layout of the building, staff make sure that children can choose when they want to play out. Babies do not access the outdoors on a daily basis but staff take them out in the buggy when this is practical and they can crawl around on the mats in the yard in better weather. Toddlers and pre-school children develop their physical skills and strength by pedalling the tricycles around the yard, and some children demonstrate considerable strength as they push the play house along as part of their game. They have great fun as they feel the wind under the parachute and they learn to listen to the instructions of the game. There are some opportunities for children to develop their climbing and balancing skills; this is better in the summer months. Older children attending after school also benefit from the access to the outdoors, for example, they enjoy the range of playground games organised by the staff.

The nursery provides good quality meals which are freshly cooked on the premises on a daily basis; children can smell the food cooking which stimulates their appetite. The menus which are generally followed at all times show ample portions of fresh fruit and vegetables. The cook plays an important part in the children's lives; they enjoy her cooking and greet her warmly when she arrives with the trolley. Well nourished after their lunch, the babies and toddlers sleep or rest contentedly; older children join enthusiastically with music and movement activities and concentrate well at their play. Staff are proactive in reminding the children throughout the nursery to drink water frequently. This also promotes their health and development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The highly professional approach to identifying and minimising risks means that children can play freely in their respective areas and they can enjoy exploring their surroundings. This means that older children can have free access to the outdoor area and babies can crawl freely around their room to access the interesting resources. All aspects of the provision, for example the premises, the activities and minibuss transport, are carefully risk assessed, and procedures are understood by staff. Children begin to take responsibility for their own safety in a sensible way; staff remind them to steer the bikes carefully and to check that there is no one in the way. This means that children learn to play safely without their choice of activity being limited.

There is a good range of play equipment and furniture throughout the nursery. It is presented on low level storage so that children can access it freely and safely. The equipment is in good safe condition. In addition to the range of commercial baby toys, the youngest children have access to an interesting range of natural materials and household items. These are arranged invitingly which actively encourages exploration. Whilst there is a good range of child sized

furniture throughout the nursery, there is no domestic style furniture for the children aged under two to aid their mobility and to continue normal life experiences.

Children are protected and their well-being safeguarded. The policy shows the provider's commitment to protecting the children in their care. Staff changes have meant that those with lead responsibility have not yet attended a higher level of child protection training, but a rolling programme of training means that staff continue to update their skills and knowledge in this and other areas. All national and local guidance is kept on hand should advice be needed by staff or management; support from the wider management team is also an asset should difficult situations present themselves.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily at nursery and they enjoy their time there. They develop warm and trusting relationships with the staff and their peers. Babies snuggle happily with their key worker as they wake from their nap and they are soon reassured after a minor bump. Similarly, toddlers and pre-school children enjoy the closeness of sharing a book and they are confident to make their wishes known, for example, when they want to play out or if they do not want to join in with a particular activity. Older children attending after school are also happy and relaxed with the adults and they enjoy the range of leisure or creative activities provided.

There is a cheerful nursery environment where children become confident, motivated learners. Children engage confidently with all the activities. For example, the toddlers have great fun with the musical instruments and they join in confidently with action rhymes, they also rush to join in with the parachute games. There are also periods of calm, purposeful play when children can concentrate at their self-chosen activity for some time. This is particularly good in the baby room; calmed by the soothing music and staff's gentle voices, babies concentrate for prolonged periods as they examine the various interesting sensory items on the floor tray or they coo gently to themselves in the low level mirror. This means that they develop their natural curiosity as learners to a very high level. There are times, however, when toddlers' or pre-school children's over-exuberance very occasionally spills over, staff then also become a little louder and the period of calm is lost and sometimes difficult to retrieve. The rest period after lunch is also sometimes difficult to manage because not all the children are tired at the same time.

Young children develop good language skills. Babies are fascinated by the adult's face shapes as they chat to them and the babies try to mimic the sounds; as well as developing important language skills, young children know that their early communications are valued by the adults. Children also develop an interest in books. Books in the toddler room in particular are accessible and inviting. Children often choose to look at books alone as they rest and some rush to an adult when they notice her reading to other children.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Nursery education is a relatively new venture for the nursery and this is the first inspection of this aspect of the provision. Planning documents and discussions with staff suggest that they understand the principles of the Foundation Stage for children's learning and the six areas of learning. Staff plan a range of related activities which children can access freely. A system for observing children to plan for their individual learning is developing appropriately, however, staff changes have meant a change in the children's

key-worker; current staff are just becoming familiar with individual children's learning needs and how to incorporate this into the plans.

Key staff are becoming confident in engaging and challenging the children to promote their learning. For example, staff encourage the children to think about the colours they are using and sometimes they help them to count the pictures on the cards. The premises are bright and cheerful and the resources presented generally in an inviting way; part of the room is set out in inviting bays. This on the whole means that children are motivated to explore the equipment and they concentrate at their play. However, the creative and messy area is less inviting and is sometimes out of bounds because of lunch preparation. Children are happy to play there when invited by an adult but do not regularly access this area independently.

Children are confident in the regular routines. For example, they confidently tell the staff when they need to leave the room for the toilet or for outdoor play and they help to tidy up to make space for snacks. Whilst these routines are on the whole necessary and mostly useful, there are some missed opportunities for children to promote their development in other areas of learning within the routines, for example by posting their name to say they have had their snack, counting how many chairs are needed for lunch or using child sized mops and brooms for the messy area. The daily routine for completing the calendar is a useful group-time activity because children learn the days of the week and their attention is drawn towards the weather and also to larger numbers.

Children develop an interest in books and stories and sometimes help themselves to a picture book. They handle them well, turning the pages correctly, and sometimes they chat about the well known characters such as the three little pigs. A strength of the setting is in the staff's ability to engage the more able children in a more complicated story. Some remember what happened in the previous chapter and listen carefully to find out what happens next. Children enjoy the mark-making area and make use of it regularly throughout the day. They develop good skills but do not often use these skills for a purpose, such as to label their own work, to make lists as they play in the home corner or to enhance their small world play. Children develop a keen interest in music. They enjoy the weekly visits from a musician and join in enthusiastically with all the songs and action rhymes. This session is used successfully to engage the children in other areas of learning. For example, they correctly work out how many are left when singing familiar number songs and they often correctly guess the missing word at the end of a line because, for example, they begin to recognise that 'knee' rhymes with 'three'. Children learn to use the computer well; they confidently ask to have the computer switched on and they use the mouse with increasing skill to move the characters around and navigate from screen to screen. Children enjoy exploring and investigating in the sand and water, for example, observing how different sand wheels work. They use tools with increasing skill as they dig in the sand or snip with scissors at the mark making table.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff get to know the children in their care very well and they liaise with parents carefully about young children's care. This high level of working with parents in relation to children's individual care needs means that children settle very well and have their individual needs effectively met. There is a cheerful atmosphere throughout the nursery and children are generally well behaved and play cooperatively together. On the whole children are polite and they develop pleasant manners, although there are times when some staff forget to remind the children to say 'please' and 'thank you,' for example at snack and meal time. Most staff are confident in using positive

methods to keep the children cheerful and to forge positive relationships. This is particularly effective in the baby room where babies flourish on the warm praise and encouragement and the attention lavished on them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents in relation to the nursery education is satisfactory; relationships are very good. Because of the effective settling-in process, the younger children develop positive three-way relationships with their key worker and their parents. They are happy to snuggle with either of their familiar adults whilst they chat about arrangements and routines. The nursery has a professional approach to surveying the parents regularly to make sure that the quality of care provided is meeting their expectations; management are proud to act on parents' suggestions where this is practical. There is a good range of information about the children's daily routines and the care provided. A daily feedback sheet means that parents are very well informed about what their children have eaten or how well they have slept; it also gives parents a pleasing insight as to how their children spend their time; parents comment very favourably on this feedback. There is a good level of information for parents about the general running of the nursery and the types of activities offered. Most liaison with parents is in relation to the children's care although a formalised sharing of the children's attainment takes place at times of transition; for example, as they transfer to the next room or move on to school. Activity plans are displayed for parents should they want to be more involved in their children's learning. Parents are very pleased with the nursery and feel, in particular, that the staff are very welcoming and friendly.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are clear recruitment policies and procedures which are followed by the provider to ensure that children are cared for by suitable adults. A system for appraisal ensures that staff's continued suitability is also addressed. Staff have a positive approach to their training and development; they continue to attend a range of short training courses in relation to their role and they continue to up-grade their qualifications. There have been some staff changes, particularly in the pre-school room, but they are beginning to work well as a team with leadership in each of the rooms beginning to be very effective. Induction processes mean that new staff are clear about their role and responsibilities. Management and staff have a positive approach to monitoring the provision and making improvements. Clear evaluation systems show how health and safety issues are identified and action plans drawn up. It is very clear, for example, when work to the premises is needed, who will remedy this, and when this will be done. Improvements to menus are also discussed with staff and parents to further benefit children. There is less emphasis on evaluating the educational provision but the nursery works with the local authority on ways to make improvements. Regular advisory visits mean that various areas for development can be suggested and tried out for practicality. Leadership and management of the educational provision is satisfactory.

All aspects of documentation are clear, up to date and very well organised; office systems are very effective, which means that administrative information is quickly accessed when needed. All records such as those of accidents, medication and children's details are kept up to date and signed by parents where appropriate. Staff are vigilant in maintaining daily records of children's care routines so that parents have good information on a daily basis. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection four recommendations were raised to improve outcomes for children. The group was asked to add to the children's play equipment and plan a suitable range of activities for children aged from two to three years. Throughout the nursery, there is a rolling programme of replacing and adding to the resources to make sure that the children have a good range of play equipment to choose from. Overall, there is a good range which children can access freely. The range of activities in the toddler room is planned in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children enjoy the various sensory and creative activities.

A further recommendation asked the group to develop staff's knowledge of equal opportunities and special needs. The training programme ensures that all staff have a basic knowledge of the related topics and that senior staff are able to take their training to the next level. The group were also asked to review positive behaviour management strategies. The policy has now been reviewed and sweets are no longer used for rewards. Staff are becoming confident in the use of praise and encouragement to keep children's self-esteem high and their behaviour positive.

Nursery education

Not applicable. This is the first inspection of the funded nursery education.

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):

- provide the youngest children with some domestic style furniture to assist their mobility and continue their normal life experiences
- develop ways of promoting and extending the periods of calm, purposeful play
- improve consistency amongst staff about reminding children to say 'please' and 'thank you'.

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 pre-school routines to further promote the children's development in all areas of learning
- work with the children to develop a well stocked creative area that they will be motivated to use independently and frequently
- develop a system for evaluating the effectiveness of the educational provision.

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