

Launceston Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	102822
Inspection date	14 January 2008
Inspector	Christine Powlesland
Setting Address	3 St. Thomas Hill, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 8BL
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Registered person	The Trustees of Launceston Pre-School
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 good. 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?

Launceston preschool has been operational for over 30 years. It operates from the ground floor of a large townhouse, owned by the group, with the upstairs of the premises occupied by two tenants. The house is situated in the middle of the town. The children have access to a playroom, kitchen, toilets and adjacent secure outdoor area, which has both grassed and hard surfaced areas. The group also owns the adjacent car park. The playgroup serves the local area with the majority of the children attending from the town.

The playgroup is registered to provide places for 24 children. There are 60 children currently on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for early years education. Children aged from two and a half to five years attend the group. The preschool currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The preschool opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions on a Monday to Thursday last from 09:15 to 11:45 and from 12:45 to 15:15. On Fridays, sessions are from 10:00 to 12:00 and from 13:00 to 15:00.

The group employs eight members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by staff who have a thorough understanding of health and hygiene procedures. Children learn the importance of taking care of themselves through well-organised routines as they are expected to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Children's health is safeguarded by staff who hold current first-aid qualifications. A comprehensive record-keeping system for the administration of medication ensures that children's welfare is promoted. However, although incidents are recorded and are acknowledged by parents these do not always correspond with entries in the accident file. There are clear records of any injury a child arrives at the preschool with and these are countersigned by parents.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. Staff promote healthy eating well by offering children a variety of healthy foods at snack time, for example slices of apple, banana or raisins, and children help themselves to cheese spread on crackers. They are offered choices of milk or water to drink. Children are encouraged to develop an understanding of their needs. For example, they confidently help themselves to water throughout the session to keep themselves hydrated.

Children have good opportunities to engage in a variety of physical play experiences. They begin the morning with physical exercises, well organised by enthusiastic staff who interact well with the children and encourage them all to participate. Children have ample opportunity for fresh air and vigorous exercise as they play outdoors with the parachute. They develop their large muscles as they learn to jump from large soft play equipment and crawl through tunnels which are part of an indoor obstacle course.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an orderly and spacious environment, which is carefully planned by adults to maximise children's free movement and use of space. They use toys and resources that are in good condition and the majority are stored at low level for independent access. Children can access the adjacent toilets freely. The book area is comfortable and is enjoyed by the children in small groups throughout the session. Children benefit from being looked after in a safe and secure environment. The main door has a buzzer that sounds when it is opened to help keep children safe and staff are vigilant in their supervision of children. A high ratio of adults to children is maintained at all times and staff are well deployed to ensure children are safe at arrival and departure times.

A written risk assessment is completed termly and each day staff arrive early and make daily checks before the session begins, to ensure the safety of the children. Children are encouraged to keep themselves safe by understanding the need for, and taking part in, regular fire drills.

Staff have a good knowledge of child protection issues and procedures, which would enable them to seek appropriate support for children if necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children show high levels of confidence and self-esteem as they participate in a very good range of activities designed to promote learning and development. They settle quickly upon arrival, responding to the warm welcome they receive. Staff work hard at getting to know each child well and make good use of the Birth to three matters framework to ensure that the care all children enjoy closely matches their individual needs. Children are becoming increasingly independent, self-selecting activities with ease and asking for help when needed. For example, children ask staff to help them set the farm out on the floor.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have a positive attitude to their learning, concentrating well and persisting with tasks. Children are making good progress in all of the six areas of learning. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to plan a stimulating learning environment for the children. Clear weekly plans are set out linking activities to the early learning goals. Four key worker groups are in place and the observation and assessment systems allow adults to become very familiar with children's achievements in the six areas of learning. Staff use this good information to inform the next steps in each child's learning. Children respond well to the teaching strategies employed by staff. Space and resources are well organised, and staff are effectively deployed to ensure that children access support for their learning.

Children are eager and willing to learn. There is a good balance between adult directed and child initiated activities, allowing children to independently select and become engaged in their play. Children are developing strong communication skills and confidently reply to their name at circle time, when they listen well to each other and to adults. Children enjoy group story time, as well as using the attractive book area during free playtimes. Their reading skills are further developed through daily routines, such as finding their name to self-register on arrival and at snack time. Children make good use of the readily available writing materials and enjoying using the paint easel to create pictures. However, each side is limited to two pots of paint only and children keep walking around the easel to the other side to get a wider range of colours. Children are learning to be independent and take themselves to the toilet and to wash their hands before snack time. They take off their shoes before large physical play and enjoy jumping from the large soft play cube and crawling through the tunnel and play tent filled with balls. Children take responsibility, tidying away the chairs after circle time. However, older and more able children do not always make use of everyday situations to extend their learning and develop independence. For example, they do not help set the tables or pour out their own drinks at snack time. Children show confidence in their understanding of mathematical concepts. They count meaningfully and enjoy a game of 3-D shapes, discussing the shapes and taking turns to match these with those shown on their card. Children help each other without prompting, one child showing another how to switch on the radio controlled caterpillar when there were problems starting it and another child fetching her friend's shoes as well as her own when getting ready to go home. Children are developing a strong sense of right from wrong; they generally behave well and are fully aware of what is expected of them. They respond well when given instructions to complete activities, or to line up to take turns on the large physical apparatus. Children enjoy craft activities, developing small muscles as they roll and shape play dough. They take pleasure from the sensory experience of washing dolls' clothes in very bubbly water and learn the skill of wringing the clothes out to remove the water before putting them on the clotheshorse to dry. Children's imaginations are allowed to flourish in well-resourced

role-play areas where they have recently made a washing machine from a large cardboard box. They enjoy playing together in the sand, sharing conversation as they bury treasure and then dig to find this. Although children participate in activities that develop their awareness of other people's cultures, festivals and customs, those from children attending the preschool are not always included. Children freely access technology toys and a large group of children play on the floor with the radio operated bee on a game mat. They enjoy counting the squares as they move the bee around, learning how to programme the toy. All children particularly enjoy the early morning exercise session. They know the actions and rhymes well and are very aware of space as they move around pretending to be trains and aeroplanes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the preschool. Staff use information provided by parents at the time of registration to ensure that all children are included. Children have access to a range of resources to learn about the wider world. However, although there are limited resources reflecting disability children with learning difficulties or disabilities received good support. The preschool works closely alongside parents and other professionals to ensure children are receiving appropriate support and help. A written complaints procedure is in place but this does not include the address and telephone number of the regulator for parents to access.

Children's behaviour is good as they are constantly occupied during their time in the preschool. Good manners are praised and children are encouraged to share. Children are caring towards each other. For example, one child brings her friend shoes to be put on after physical play. Children enjoy the company of staff and each other. They develop confidence and self-esteem through the positive attitude shown to them by members of staff. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are warmly welcomed as they enter the building. They can chat to the staff in the playroom to exchange information daily and they are involved in the group by helping on a rota basis. This contributes to the continuity of care between home and preschool that children enjoy. Parents are aware they can see detailed observations of their child at any time but not all parents make use of this opportunity. Sessions for younger children run on Fridays and this helps familiarise them with the premises and the staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children enjoy good levels of care as a result of high staff ratios and effective staff deployment. There are effective recruitment procedures in place to ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. Staff work very well together as a team and a key worker system is in place to ensure children's well-being is met on a daily basis. Documentation is in place to meet legal requirements. However, some records lack sufficient detail, for example the register gives details of all adults and children present but times of arrival and departure for children are not recorded.

The leadership and management of the group is good. The whole team is motivated to give of their best and there is a commitment to develop the preschool. Staff regularly attend training to develop their existing knowledge and skills. They have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to effectively plan activities. They are supported in their work through weekly staff meetings. The preschool meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the preschool was asked to ensure the staff attendance record showed times of arrival and departure. Ivy in the outdoor area was not to be a hazard to children and water was to be accessible to children at all times. The preschool were to review the organisation of snack time to ensure children did not have to sit and wait for long periods.

The register now records times arrival and departure of staff and the committee ensures ivy in the outdoor area is removed so it is not hazardous to children, this is an ongoing task. These measures help promote children's safety. Fresh drinking water is freely accessible to children at all times to ensure they remain hydrated. When a cafe system is used at snack time the morning is not disrupted and children do not have to wait for long periods. The preschool is considering the use of the cafe system every day to ensure children may eat when they are individually hungry and the flow of the morning activities are not interrupted.

At the last nursery education inspection the key issues raised were to devise a system to monitor children's use of the programme provided for them, in order to ensure that, at every session, all children follow a balanced curriculum and make good use a variety of activities provided to foster their development in all six learning areas. They were to make better use of good assessments of children's learning to influence planning for those at different stages of development. They were to ensure that children are challenged and making ongoing progress in all six areas of learning and they were to devise a system to demonstrate that all parents and carers have regular sight of written records and are able to contribute to them.

The key worker system now in place ensures all children are known well and their individual progress is monitored to ensure they follow a balanced curriculum, which includes the six areas of learning. Records show children are making progress in all the areas of learning and assessments made by key workers direct the planning for the next week. These improvements have ensured children's learning is supported effectively. However, planning is to be further developed to ensure there is a system of sharing written records with all parents and ensuring parents contribute to these. This will encourage parents to be involved in their child's development and help develop continuity for their children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 1st April 2004 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):

- ensure a record is maintained, signed by the parent, of any accident
- include the address and telephone number of the regulator in the complaints procedure
- continue to increase resources reflecting diversity, in particular disability
- ensure the register shows hours of attendance of the children.

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):

- make sure older and more able children can extend their learning, in particular by making use of everyday situations such as snack time
- devise a system to demonstrate that all parents and carers have regular sight of written records and are able to contribute to them.

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