

Little Angels of Fakenham

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254168
Inspection date	23 May 2008
Inspector	Anne Walker
Setting Address	Trap Lane Pavillion, Trap Lane, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR21 9RN
Telephone number	01328 856643
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Registered person	Little Angels of Fakenham 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?

Little Angels of Fakenham (formerly Maple Pre-school) opened in 1984. It operates from one room of the Trap Lane Pavilion on the outskirts of the town of Fakenham, Norfolk. A maximum of 22 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 and Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12:15 to 14:45, during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children from two to four years on roll. Of these, 11 receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children understand the importance of washing their hands properly before eating and after using the toilet and the older children carry this out with minimal adult support. Younger children are supervised and there are photographs by the sinks to show them what they need to do. They are cared for in an environment where good daily cleaning routines take place to prevent the spread of germs amongst children. Planned activities and the seasons are used to help children widen their understanding of caring for their health. They have learnt the value of cleaning their teeth and show good understanding of wearing hats and sun cream before playing outdoors in the summer. Over half of the staff hold current first aid certificates so that there is always sufficient adults to manage any accidents appropriately. Records for accidents and medication are maintained as required and demonstrate that children's health is safeguarded.

Healthy eating is promoted through the snacks that children have at the setting. They enjoy a range of fruits with an occasional savoury biscuit. They choose water, milk or squash to drink with their snack. Drinking water is available to them throughout the session which ensures they do not dehydrate. Children frequently take drinks, recognising when they are thirsty after being active. Dietary needs are noted at the outset and staff take account of them to maintain children's health and safety.

The outdoor area is used as an integral part of the children's learning environment throughout the year. They spend large amounts of time in the fresh air in a spacious area where they can run and be energetic. There are planned activities to promote their physical skills such as an obstacle course using balance beams, tunnels to clamber through and soft play cubes to scramble over. On other occasions they have access to a climbing frame, bikes and balls. Adults also respond to child initiated interests. When a child demonstrates a forward roll on the large mat, others are keen to try and are supported to do so safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff organise the environment and themselves so that they are ready to receive children and can prioritise their attention on them. Suitable strategies are in place to ensure that children are monitored as they arrive and leave to minimise the risk of them being able to wander away at these busy periods. Risk assessments are in place and understood by adults. The door is kept locked when children are inside. The outdoor area is enclosed and a gate to the car park is secure so that children cannot leave unsupervised, however the lock does not best ensure visitors to the premises can be fully monitored. Children are well supervised at all times because staffing ratios exceed the minimum requirements and they deploy themselves effectively between the playroom and outdoors. Defined roles and responsibilities ensure that children are watched over while eating and using the toilets. They are able to cooperate with their carers if they need to evacuate the setting quickly because fire drills are practised with them.

The environment is effectively organised so that children have independence in their environment. Play is presented using child sized tables and chairs or on mats on the floor. There are storage containers with additional play materials which children can select from safely because they are at their height. Steps and seats in the toilet area fosters their independence.

Equipment and play materials are of suitable quality. They are kept clean and well maintained so that they do not pose a hazard to children.

Children's welfare and safety are promoted as their carers have a good understanding of their child protection responsibilities. They understand how children can be harmed and know who to share their concerns with, both in the setting and externally. Appropriate records are kept and parents are informed of the settings responsibilities so that they can work cooperatively with them to ensure children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive and happily settle to a chosen activity. They quickly link with friends and only new children need support from an adult to be able to leave mum or dad. The atmosphere is busy and productive with children exploring play and talking with their friends. They are secure and comfortable with the daily routine which provides them with a framework to their session. Children gather on the carpet when everyone has arrived and show confidence in responding to the register call. They take part in discussions during this time and at story-time later in the morning and are keen to share what they know and think. During these large group times children do not always show the same maturity in listening to each other as they do when working in smaller groups with or without an adult. They sometimes shout out or talk over one another in their enthusiasm to share things and adults do not use strategies to help children overcome this.

Young children find the activities stimulating and absorbing and are able to persist at activities. They wash the dolls and their clothes and peg things on the line to dry but also take time to wonder at the sponge and what happens when they squeeze it. Clay is moulded with fingers and they explore the tools and what they can do with them. They have good opportunities to develop their language skills. Adults are readily on hand and talk with them, asking relevant questions which encourages them to share their thoughts.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Adults working with children show awareness of the diverse ways in which children enjoy learning and are using indoor and outdoor environments to support this. Children have a wide range of play outdoors including imaginative and creative. Adults plan activities across the six areas of learning and show increasing ability to recognise and respond to things that children suggest or bring to the group. There are opportunities for children to take part in small and large group activities as well as on their own or with their peers. Consequently, children are motivated learners who engage fully in the learning opportunities.

Their language is developing well and they use this to negotiate play ideas and scenarios with their friends in the role play area. Children taking part in box modelling talk about what they wish to make, such as robots and binoculars. They find suitable materials and talk through what they need to do to attach pieces or to describe what they have done. They are interested in mark making and use paint, sand and other materials as well as pencils to practice their emerging writing skills. There are some simple activities that help the children discriminate sound as a pre-cursor to learning letter sounds. Currently there is little variety in this area or a systematic way of moving children on to learning letter sounds if they are ready.

Children are interested in number. They count how many children there are at the group, take part in number games that uses a dice and recognise numbers one to ten on a large hopscotch

mat outside. Staff support older children to begin to compare groups of items and identify which has more. They are curious and keen to investigate whether this is finding worms in the soil or how to operate their digital camera and putting the results on the computer. Planned activities support their knowledge of the world around them, including the natural world. The children have enjoyed using dough made by a local baker, growing cress and observing and discussing some small animals brought to the group.

Staff carry out focussed activities which have clear learning intentions. They observe and evaluate these activities well. However, they tend to plan for several weeks at a time and this means that their planning is not immediate enough to use the information gained to best advantage by responding quickly to what they find out about children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are recorded on entry and good dialogues with parents ensure these are kept updated so that children are valued and respected. Adults looking after children take time to talk with them and their parents and know what is happening in their lives. Important events, such as a family wedding become something that the pre-school community shows interest in. Children's significant experiences are acknowledged providing sound links between different parts of their lives, helping them to feel secure. There are appropriate measures in place to support children with disabilities or additional learning needs. Children are the pre-school learn about peoples similarities and differences through a broad range of experiences including planned activities, discussion and their play materials.

The atmosphere in the group is calm and happy. Children get on very well with each other and their carers who are good role models, treating the children respectfully. Consequently the children reflect this in how they interact with each other. The older children show good skills at negotiating turn-taking without adult help. They understand strategies such as using egg timers to give everyone a fair turn, but rarely have to turn to this as they use language and patience to resolve issues. They form friendships and show care and concern for others in the pre-school community. A child enquires if another is alright, in a comforting voice, when their friend has bumped herself. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents are able to influence the running of the setting by being on the committee. There are good systems for them to exchange information with the adults looking after their children and their consent is obtained for a range of things such as taking photographs and outings, to ensure that they are kept up to date with what is happening at the pre-school.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Significant events in children's development or concerns that may impact on their ability to participate fully in what the setting has to offer, are discussed swiftly so that the setting and parents can work together. A newsletter with a week-by-week outline of the main intentions for a half-term, is provided for parents. This enables them to contribute items for activities and talk more easily with their children about what has been happening at pre-school. However, there is no initial information when children start at the setting, or when they reach three-years-old, that provides parents with a guide to the curriculum and the value of play to their learning. Currently parents do not contribute to the 'Learning Stories' in order to ensure challenges for children are optimised.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare is promoted because the people running and working in the pre-school have been submitted to checks to ensure they are suitable to do so. There are appropriate strategies in place to monitor and demonstrate this. Good numbers of staff at each session ensure that children receive the required attention for their learning needs and safety. Over half the staff hold a relevant early years qualification while others are training. All staff have a positive attitude to undertaking short courses to develop their skills. A range of training has been attended and others are booked for the coming months. There are suitable tracking systems to prioritise training according to staffs' current skills and the needs of the setting.

Required documentation is in place for children and staff. It is suitably organised and readily available to demonstrate that registration conditions are being met. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is good. The management committee meet regularly to discuss how to support the needs of staff and children. There is regular communication between the manager and committee, providing opportunities to share issues and resolve concerns. The committee have been fully involved in securing improvements to the setting over the past year. They have continued to secure funds and liaise with the staff team to ensure that the children have sufficient equipment and play materials and a stimulating environment. The manager deploys staff effectively to ensure children have support in their learning. Staff contribute to planning and overall have a sound understanding of what they need to do to support children at each activity.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was required to ensure that the manager completed an early years qualification suitable for her post. Take measures to ensure that adults looking after children were suitable to do so and develop systems to demonstrate the staff's suitability. Keep Ofsted informed of changes to the management committee so that necessary checks can be carried out.

In March 2008 the manager achieved an appropriate level 3 qualification in Childcare, Learning and Development. The committee have carried out the necessary checks and organised staff files which demonstrate that staff are suitable to care for children. The systems are now in place to monitor and maintain this. All committee members have been notified to Ofsted and relevant checks undertaken to determine their suitability for their role.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to develop staff's knowledge of the link between planning and assessment, encourage children's use of imaginative role play by using adults to introduce and extend ideas and develop opportunities for parents to contribute to and be involved in their child's learning and the assessment process.

The staff and managers have worked to develop their knowledge of the link between planning and assessment and suitable progress has been made that has impacted on the quality of nursery education being provided. Some aspects require refining to ensure they use the information they gather to best effect. Adults are deployed to observe and support in the role play area and show awareness of when children need their help to extend their games and when productive play is happening without them. Adults plan and set up a broad range of role play from bakers to shops, home and transport. The children enjoy the adults involvement and use the area well.

Some steps have been taken to inform parents about what their children are doing at the pre-school so that they can be more involved. A summary of the half-terms planning improves the opportunities for parents to understand what is happening and talk with their children about their morning or to contribute things for the interest table. However, there remains limited information about the curriculum available to them at the outset, or ways for them to contribute to their child's 'Learning Story'. This area has been raised again as a recommendation for improvement.

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.

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 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 that the outside gate is fully secure
- review the organisation of circle time to encourage children to listen and share discussion when in a larger group.

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):

- use the evaluative information gained from focused activities to inform the planning for the following weeks activities and to record information about children's progress
- increase the opportunities for children to learn to discriminate sounds and provide suitable challenges for children
- continue to extend the opportunities for parents to contribute and to be involved in their child's learning and the assessment process.

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