

Little Ones - Westexe

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY319948
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Inspector	Heather Morgan

Setting Address	Westexe Children's Centre, Cowick Street, Exeter, Devon, EX4 1HL
------------------------	--

Telephone number	01392 279493
E-mail	info@littleonesnursery.co.uk
Registered person	Little Ones Childcare Ltd
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Ones at Westex forms part of a Children's Centre entitled Westex Children's Centre, located at Cowick Street, Exeter. Little Ones operates from a self contained unit within the centre and provides full day care for up to 38 children aged from birth to under eight years. Children are cared for in two adjacent play rooms and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery has been registered since January 2006 and operates from 07:45 to 18:00, Monday to Friday, all year round. There are currently 59 children enrolled at the nursery, nine of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. The nursery is owned and managed by Little Ones Childcare Limited, who also run four other settings in Exeter and East Devon. There are 14 staff working with the children, 13 of whom hold a relevant early years qualification and the other is currently working towards one.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have many opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air. They have access to a large garden where they can run around and develop their large muscle movements as they ride on wheeled toys, practise ball skills and improve their balance and climbing skills. Young babies go for walks in the fresh air and play in their own enclosed outdoor space.

Children are well nourished throughout the day as they have regular meals and snacks. Food is freshly prepared on the premises, using carefully devised menus that ensure a balance across all food groups. Great care is taken to ensure that children with special dietary requirements have their needs met in a sensitive way that does not exclude them.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene as they wash their hands carefully using liquid soap and paper towels, although they do not always remember to do this before they eat their breakfast. Staff implement strict hygiene procedures to limit the risk of cross infection during nappy changing procedures and when they assist children with their personal hygiene.

Children are well cared for in the event of an accident as all staff attend appropriate training to keep their first aid qualifications up to date. An easily accessible first aid kit is checked regularly to ensure its contents are up to date and complete. Children's continuity of care is supported effectively as records of injuries are shared with parents. Robust procedures are followed to ensure the safe administration of medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment which is carefully set out to provide clear play spaces for children of all ages. Non mobile babies and sleeping toddlers have a small area set aside for them within the baby room where they feel safe and comfortable.

Outdoors, children access a wide range of activities within the enclosed area adjacent to the nursery building. They also play in the playground and in a large grassed area which is carefully supervised to promote their safety. For example, the gates are monitored by members of staff when the grounds are accessed by other centre users. The pond is discreetly covered to enable children to safely observe the wild life within it.

Children choose from a large variety of well maintained resources that are stored at a low level so that they can safely access them. Resources include natural and man made materials and are kept in good condition. Staff supervise children well to enable them to explore different materials safely. For example, they closely observe babies as they explore resources in their treasure baskets and support older children in learning to use equipment such as knives with increasing skill and control as they help to prepare snacks. Children regularly practise their fire drill so that they are able to evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues and are able to access the support of the management team to enable them to take appropriate action in the event of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages enjoy a wide variety of exciting and challenging activities that sustain their interest and support their progress and development. They are cared for by staff who have a clear understanding of child development and who know them well. Activities are carefully planned to build on children's interests and abilities. The youngest children enjoy particularly close relationships with their carers, which enables them to confidently explore the environment and begin to make sense of the world around them. They become skilful communicators as staff respond sensitively to their early attempts at language. Babies have many opportunities to investigate natural and man made materials and are encouraged to engage all their senses. As they grow and develop, their activities are extended to encourage imaginative and co-operative play. They are supported well in accessing more play opportunities as they begin to join the older children, accompanied by their familiar carers.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making progress in all areas of the curriculum as staff carefully plan a wide range of activities that promote their learning and development. Children are supported well in initiating their own play, and staff sensitively follow children's leads, interacting appropriately to extend their learning. For example, they encourage children to use number skills to begin making simple calculations when sorting resources by size and colour and they suggest different ways to explore the properties of water when children become fascinated with rivulets and puddles.

Children's achievements are closely monitored and used to compile records of their progress towards the early learning goals. This enables staff to evaluate what children already know and can do, and what interests them. Staff have begun using this information to plan what children need to learn next. They have made a very good start in implementing these procedures, which now need to be built upon to ensure that records provide a full and clear picture of children's progress and that activities challenge and extend all children to support them in achieving their full potential.

Children have a positive disposition towards learning and participate enthusiastically in the activities of their choice as well as those that are led by adults. For example, they become absorbed in listening to a visiting musician and excitedly respond by moving in different ways and joining in when she sings her songs. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories and are beginning to develop skills such as recognising and predicting rhyming sounds. They are able to count confidently and solve simple problems such as working out how many forks are needed at the lunch table. Children have a keen interest in the world around them and enjoy regular outings such as a walk in the local forest. They recreate maps of places they have been and their route to the nursery. Outdoors, they make the most of their opportunities to explore the natural world as they nurture plants and observe the life cycle of frogs. They are very interested in the building works going on within the grounds of their nursery and made their own contribution by helping to make cob bricks for the play house being built in their garden.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are supported very well in settling in to the nursery and in making the transition from one room to another. They have opportunities to socialise with each other as they get together at meal times, and also develop close attachments to their carers and friends in their particular peer group.

Children with specific needs are supported well in participating in the full range of activities available. Staff access appropriate training to enable them to meet individual needs and work closely with parents and external agencies to identify achievable targets to support children's progress. Children learning English as an additional language are supported well and quickly develop their communication skills. All children learn about diversity by accessing resources that reflect different cultures and tasting foods that introduce them to international cuisines.

Children's behaviour is good. They are learning how to negotiate turn taking and sharing resources to support them in playing harmoniously together. Staff are calm, consistent and use a range of strategies to promote and reinforce good behaviour.

Children's individual needs are met well as there is very good communication between parents and staff. They regularly exchange information at pick up and drop off times, and parents highly value the daily diaries that provide specific information about care of the youngest children. Policies and procedures are clearly displayed to ensure that parents are well informed about how the nursery operates, although information included in the complaints log does not always detail what actions are taken to resolve issues and does not protect parents' confidentiality.

The partnership with parents and carers in relation to the nursery education is good. They are well informed about the activities their children are offered and how these support learning. Regular events provide opportunities for them to discuss their children's progress and they are also encouraged to participate in recording children's achievements, all of which enables them to take an active role in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Staff work well together to implement the policies and procedures of the nursery that promote positive outcomes for children. Daily sessions are well organised to ensure that children are well supported by familiar carers and the high adult ratios have a very positive impact on their care and well-being. Familiar routines provide a reassuring structure for children, but also allow sufficient flexibility to meet their individual needs. The staff team's commitment to providing positive experiences for children is highly valued by the senior management team, who provide effective support, guidance and encouragement.

All regulatory documentation is in place and key policies are clearly displayed for parents. However, some forms relating to accidents and the administration of medication contain personal details and are not always stored with due regard for confidentiality. Nevertheless, the clear and comprehensive documentation is used to underpin the nursery's good practice and provides useful information for both staff and parents.

Leadership and management of the nursery education curriculum is good. The nursery manager and qualified teacher work well together to monitor and evaluate the success of the systems that are implemented to support children's progress and development. Staff have a very strong commitment to improvement and enthusiastically access training to support them in developing children's play and learning experiences.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection recommendations were made to support children's good health by making drinking water more readily available and to maintain their safety and continuity of care by improving systems for completing documentation relating to the recording of accidents and visitors to the setting. Older children are now able to help themselves to drinks of water from an easily accessible water dispenser. Younger children are offered regular drinks throughout the day, particularly at key times such as when they wake from a nap. Accident forms are now dated and countersigned by parents and the visitors book provides a clear record of who is on the premises at all times.

Recommendations were also made to improve children's learning by providing more opportunities for them to use mark making for different purposes and to ensure that more able children are appropriately challenged. Children freely access a range of mark making materials, which are presented close to the role play area, encouraging children to use them to enhance their imaginative play. Each child has an individual learning plan that identifies how activities build on what they already now and can do, which supports staff in identifying how to extend their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received one complaint that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standard 3: Care, learning and play and National Standard 6: Safety. The concerns were regarding the safety and supervisor of children in the outside play area and a lack of staff to child interaction. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit and found that the provider was meeting National Standards 3 and 6. Ofsted did however issue two actions under National Standard 13 and National Standard 14 to ensure that child protection procedures are implemented effectively and that Ofsted are kept informed of significant events. A suitable response to these actions was received which confirmed that the provider had addressed the issues appropriately in order to meet National Standards. In view of this no further action was taken and the registered person remains qualified for registration.

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 all records containing personal details are stored with due regard to confidentiality and that the complaints log includes all required information

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):

- continue to develop procedures for planning activities that build specifically on each child's identified next steps for learning; ensure that assessment records contain sufficient information to fully support this

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