

Little Buddies Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY350350
Inspection date	17 April 2008
Inspector	Emily Alderson
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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Buddies Pre-School operates from the premises of St. Luke's Church in Lowestoft, Suffolk. The setting has the use of the large hall and adjoining facilities. A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. The playgroup is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 09.15 to 11.45 during term time only. Children have access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 26 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 11 children are receiving funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and come from the local catchment area. The playgroup currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs four members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications with two members currently working towards a Foundation Degree. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children attend a setting which has good health and hygiene practices. Two members of staff have completed a food hygiene course and the setting have set procedures in place which all staff follow. Children are fully involved in the preparation of snack with one child chosen each day to help. Prior to handling food both staff and children clean their hands with anti-bacterial gel and staff clean the table with an anti-bacterial spray. Children learn simple good health and living and gain a good understanding about healthy foods through discussions with staff whilst they help to prepare the food. Food is correctly stored in the kitchen and is purchased weekly. Cross-infection is minimised as staff use anti-bacterial spray to clean the kitchen surfaces, the nappy mat in-between each use and they regularly wash their hands.

Children receive good care when they are ill or had an accident because all staff have completed first aid training. In addition the setting have a well-equipped first aid box readily accessible. Should children have an accident it is recorded in the accident book which parents sign. Staff ensure that parents give prior written permission for the administration of medicine. In addition the setting also asks for parents' permission to seek medical advice or for them to contact medical experts in an emergency. However, this consent does not completely cover situations when the setting may need to seek both emergency medical advice and treatment. Consequently, children's well-being in a medical emergency is potentially compromised. If a child is unwell at the setting parents are called and asked to collect their child; they are informed of the length of time they should keep their child at home via the setting's policy.

Children's physical play experiences are very well promoted. Staff promote the outdoors by allowing the children free-flow inside and outdoors enabling them to make choices about where they want to spend their time. The children have plenty of space to freely move around and enjoy the equipment and resources on offer. Prior to the children arriving the staff very invitingly set up the garden in preparation for them. They provide the children with fun, enjoyable activities such as coloured water, cardboard boxes for them to hide in and dressing-up clothes. As a result the children very much enjoy being in the garden and some choose to spend the majority of the session outside. Children are developing their physical skills through the activities provided and demonstrate these as they proficiently use bikes and cars either pedalling, pushing or pulling. Children carefully balance on the stepping stones and enjoy jumping in and out of boxes. They negotiate the space well both indoors and outside being careful not to bump into one another when they run or are in cars. Children's hand to eye co-ordination is improving through using pencils, utensils when preparing snack and using scissors.

Children have their health and dietary needs very well met and increase their understanding of healthy living at the setting. Children enjoy preparing snack, taking turns daily. Each session they enjoy a wide variety of foods including cucumber sticks, tuna sandwiches, cheese, crackers, apple and grapes. In addition topics and themes are taken into consideration for example, this term theme is pirates and so children have enjoyed fish fingers in addition to the other foods. Children have free access to water throughout the session. Children's dietary needs are known through the information on their registration forms. The staff have a list in the kitchen to refer to when choosing foods to ensure that all food provided meets children's individual needs and is according to parents' wishes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The environment is very warm and welcoming for children, staff, parents and carers because staff make the hall an inviting setting for all. Staff warmly greet parents and children on arrival. They decorate the setting with photographs, posters and children's art work. The space is well organised and divided into different sections using chairs and boards. The room includes a book area, messy area and a space to ride bicycles and cars. Resources are stored accessibly to all children in low level boxes or shelves so that they can help themselves. The setting has a wide range of resources catering for the children who attend and their abilities. Children use very safe and suitable toys and equipment. Staff carry out regular checks on all resources as part of the daily risk assessment, anything deemed unsuitable is removed. Toys are regularly washed with anti-bacterial spray.

The setting's arrangements meet all health and safety guidelines because all staff are aware of the procedures in place. Daily risk assessments are carried out prior to the children arriving. The assessment includes checking that the fire escapes are clear, the kitchen is clean and that the chairs are stacked and out of children's reach. Daily checks are also carried out outside to ensure that the garden is safe for the children. The staff cordon off part of the garden by using fencing. The setting have good systems in place to manage entry into the setting. Parents wait in the lobby and are welcomed into the setting by a member of staff. The front door is locked during registration, then opened to allow children free-flow to the outside during the session. The garden has two gates both of which are padlocked. If someone other than the named contacts collect children they are issued with individual passwords which staff will ask for before allowing them entry. Children are learning to keep themselves safe through discussions with the staff for example, not running indoors and how to safely use scissors.

In the event of a fire children are very well protected. All staff are aware of the fire procedures which are also displayed on the wall to act as a reminder. Children participate in fire drills so that they are familiar with the routine. These are documented with comments written to allow staff to make improvements. In addition the setting has smoke alarms which are regularly tested, fire extinguisher and a fire blanket in the kitchen. Children are very safe on outings because staff ensure that children understand the need to hold hands and walk sensibly beside them. Children are well protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. The staff have an incident book and literature to guide them though the process should they need to make a referral.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the provision happy, confidently waving goodbye to their parents and joining their friends. Staff provide the children with a wide range of fun and meaningful activities both indoors and outdoors making it an appealing setting for the children. The setting is inviting and provides children with the opportunity to play, learn and develop at their own pace by making their own choices about their day. The staff offer lots of praise and support enabling children to develop their confidence. Children know they have done well when they are told that they have been a good girl or boy as their faces light up and they smile. Staff deploy themselves very well which enables them to sit with a group of children offering support and guidance when they try new activities joining in with their play. Children under three years are supported as staff have a good understanding of the needs of younger children. Each child has

a special book which includes observations and examples of children's work. The current planning, however, does not reflect activities specifically offered to the younger children.

The Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff responsible for planning the Foundation Stage have a sound knowledge and understanding of it. Children's starting points are identified through observation. However, parents are not consulted on their child's abilities and therefore children's starting points are unknown when they begin at the setting which impacts on the activities offered. Staff select themes as a team choosing four per term; activities and ideas are linked with the theme under the six areas of learning and a list compiled for each week. The short-term planning mainly derives from the past week's observations on the children taking into consideration children's interests. Staff observe and make notes throughout the sessions listing what children have enjoyed playing with and what they have achieved. Every week the staff meet to discuss the observations and plan the provision for the following week. This is shown on the short-term plan which identifies the area of learning, the stepping stone and the activity or resource selected. It does not however, identify the adults role in the activity, explain how the resource is to be used, grouping of children and any extension offered to challenge more able children. This compromises children's learning as the plan does not give staff enough information on what they are expected to provide for the children. Staff very occasionally carry out adult-focussed activities which clearly lists all of the above and includes an evaluation section clearly showing what the children got out of the activity, however, these are not consistently completed. Staff have some effective systems to evaluate children's learning. Detailed written observations are noted daily which inform the following week's short-term plan and used to complete children's assessment records. Each child has a step by step achievement record which is regularly completed by staff. However, staff do not use the record to identify gaps in children's learning and to guide their planning therefore the information learned from observation is not used to its fullest.

Staff use effective teaching methods to engage children, challenge and motivate them so that they are keen to learn. Staff encourage children to be involved in activities as they join in with their play, role modelling activities to encourage children to join in. Staff spontaneously ask the children open-ended questions often starting with why, how and what with the emphasis on getting the children to think about their responses and in turn ask questions. Staff are effective in knowing when to intervene in children's play and when to allow them time on their own. They provide the children with a wide range of interesting resources and activities to capture their imaginations and help them to learn.

Children are progressing through the stepping stones in relation to their starting points. They develop their self-esteem as staff listen to their ideas. All resources are in low-level boxes for children to help themselves. As children self-select their activity they maintain an interest for long periods of time. They are learning to take turns and wait patiently for their turn on the bikes and cars. Children demonstrate their ability to concentrate as they sit quietly at registration joining with the discussions and listening for their name to be called. Children have made friends at the setting and play well together particularly during role play assigning different roles to one another. Children equally enjoy adults' company and seek them out to play or give them a cuddle. Children use language to communicate and understand the rules of conversation listening to each other and engaging in conversations. They use language to engage in group discussions during snack time where they talk about what they are eating. Children are able to recognise letters especially those in their name. They are encouraged to do so through daily activities such as choosing their name card upon arrival and collecting their place mat at snack

time. Children enjoy looking at books both alone and with an adult. They have the opportunity to mark-make at the equipped writing table.

Children are encouraged to count during daily activities such as registration where children count the number of children present or at snack time when they count the amount of plates needed. There are number lines in the garden so that children become familiar with seeing the numbers written. Children use simple calculation at snack time as the child that helps prepare snack is asked to calculate how many of each type of food the children can have. For example, tuna sandwiches, the child looks on the plate to see how many sandwich pieces there are and decides that the children can have one piece each for there to be enough for all of them. The child chooses the card with one dot and places it on the sandwiches so that the others know to take one piece. Children are provided with fun and exciting resources to explore and investigate. They particular enjoyed playing in the red water using funnels, different-sized tubes and watering cans to transfer water from one bowl to another. They enjoy exploring the beans in the cornflour feeling the different textures pushing their hands into it to see their hand prints. They have lots of natural resources available to them to explore and investigate, these include pine cones, wooden blocks, nets and tins amongst others. Children enjoy making collages selecting and combining from the range of materials available, often accessing the painting easel throughout the day. They have an active imagination and enjoy make believe in the role play area dressing up in different clothes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are all included and their differences acknowledged because staff value each child's individuality. Children are given the opportunity to share their experiences either as a group at snack time or individually throughout the session. Children have a sense of belonging at the setting as their art work is displayed, their birthdays are celebrated and they have individual name cards and snack mats. Children are often praised by staff and are involved in daily routines such as registration, helping them to feel valued. They are told daily what resources are available for them so that they can choose what they want to play with and whether they want to be indoors or out. The setting have some resources and have some discussions with children to promote diversity however, do not actively plan activities to promote diversity and therefore children's understanding is not developing. Children's individual needs are being met as staff know each child well. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They have a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) whose responsibility is to observe the children, working closely with them to meet their needs. She has completed all the SENCO training modules and has also completed training in Makaton, Portage, challenging behaviour amongst others which equips her to carry out her role. Individual education plans are used to help children to progress. They have clear aims and set target dates which are regularly reviewed. Children understand appropriate behaviour through observing staff as they act as good role models to the children. Positive strategies are used with praise offered to the children so that they know they have done well. Staff sometimes explain the consequences of behaviour so that the children learn to understand the reasons why particular behaviour is not acceptable.

Children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet their individual needs and ensure that the child is fully included in the setting. Initially parents receive a welcome pack which gives them information about the setting, staff and routines. It includes an 'all about me' book which parents complete with their child, giving staff information about the child's likes and dislikes amongst other things. They are also asked to complete a registration form along with other paperwork giving the setting vital information about their child. In addition they also

help their child to make their place mat for snack. The setting have a positive approach to settling in as parents are welcome and encouraged to stay with their child until they feel comfortable to leave them and the child is happy. Parents are kept informed via the equipped notice board in the hall. Parents are involved in the setting as they take turns to volunteer to help during the session getting involved in the daily tasks. Parents are made aware of the complaint procedure through the written policy.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are provided with some information about the Foundation Stage through the welcome pack. There are displays around the room which gives parents information about the different areas of learning. Newsletters and the notice board provides parents with information on the planned activities and current and future themes. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child through discussions with staff although they are not specifically asked to provide information about their child's starting points when they begin at the setting. Consequently, planning cannot be tailored to meet individual children's needs as these are unknown when the child begins. Parents are invited to one to one meetings with their key worker so that they can view and discuss their child's step by step record of achievements.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children are developing their self-esteem, have formed positive relationships with staff and children. Children generally behave well and are developing an awareness of different cultures through discussions and planned activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are safe as they are cared for by individuals who have been vetted and are cared for by staff with a good knowledge and understanding of child development. Children are safe as there are robust procedures in place when recruiting staff to ensure that they are suitable to work in the setting. Children are well looked after as the setting has a good understanding of the National Standards and their responsibility to comply. The setting maintains the correct adult to child ratio and staff deploy themselves very well to benefit all children. The setting places great emphasis on training. All but one member of staff is trained to a minimum of Level 3 in childcare with two members currently working towards a Foundation Degree in Early Years. The untrained member of staff has enrolled to start a NVQ Level 3. All staff hold a first aid certificate and have undertaken safeguarding children training. In addition individual members of staff are trained in specific areas such as maths through play, food safety, learning outdoors, positive approach to behaviour and Portage. Any training completed is shared amongst all staff at team meetings so that everyone can benefit and use what they have learnt in practice.

Children's well-being is promoted by the well-organised records and policies. The setting has a professional operational plan in place providing the reader with a useful insight into the setting. An accurate daily register is maintained however, the actual times of arrival and departure are not recorded. Policies and procedures are in place and are reflected in practice. Policies are shared with parents who can access them at the setting. Parents are asked to give the setting information about their child through completing a range of paperwork. These documents are stored accessibly and confidentially on the premises. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff are supported in their roles at the setting as they have an induction procedure in place, clear job description, regular team meetings and

annual appraisals which all contribute to their professional development. Staff work as a team; they communicate throughout the day ensuring that tasks are completed and that they share information about the children. Staff review their practice at team meetings. The time is used to discuss activities offered, forthcoming activities and any changes that can be made to improve what is offered. The setting has completed a detailed self-evaluation form clearly stating the strengths and areas of improvement for the setting which sets clear aims for the future. In addition the setting are currently undertaking the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme which also involves assessing the setting's strengths and weaknesses and making improvements to the care and education offered. The staff regularly attend network meetings held by the local authority and in addition work closely with the local authority receiving support and guidance.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 satisfactory.

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):

- request parental permission for medical emergency advice and treatment
- further plan activities to broaden children's knowledge and understanding of diversity
- ensure the register reflects the children's actual times of arrival and departure.

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):

- indicate within short term planning the role of the adult, grouping of children and how activities can be extended to meet the needs of individual children (also applies to care)
- introduce regular planned adult-focussed activities

- use the assessment records to inform planning
- use parents' knowledge of their child to support the learning opportunities provided by the setting.

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