

The Pelican at the Methodist

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY362428
Inspection date	07 May 2008
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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 satisfactory. 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?

The Pelican at the Methodist registered in 2007. It is one of two privately-owned settings in Earl Shilton in south west Leicestershire that are run by the same individual proprietor. It operates from the Methodist Church Hall and provides sessional day care to children from the local area. Sessions run from 09:15 to 12:15 from Monday to Friday during school terms. A maximum of 24 children aged from two to under eight years may attend at any one time. The setting offers nursery education to funded three and four-year-olds. There are currently 37 children on roll, including 26 children in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children are based in the main hall. They also use the side hall and lounge for play, with access to adjacent cloakroom facilities. There is no enclosed outdoor play space on the premises. Including the proprietor there are six childcare staff. Of these, four hold recognised qualifications at Level 3 and one at Level 2.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and well-lit environment, so helping to promote their well-being. They develop personal hygiene skills within their daily routines. For example, they are actively encouraged to understand that washing their hands using liquid soap and paper towels after using the toilet and before eating helps them to get rid of germs and stay healthy. With adult encouragement, they readily fetch accessible paper tissues to wipe their own noses and know how to dispose of the used tissues in a bin. There are effective arrangements to take account of children's individual health needs. For example, relevant records of children's personal and health details are readily accessible and known to staff, so enabling them to ensure that issues such as allergies or chronic medical conditions are managed in children's best interests. First aid supplies are readily accessible and staffing is organised to ensure at least one adult with a paediatric first aid qualification is always present. Parents are asked to provide written consent to enable staff to obtain medical treatment for children in an emergency. These arrangements help to ensure that minor or more serious accidents and sudden illnesses can be effectively managed.

Children show growing hand-eye coordination in a wide range of free choice activities. For example, they show sustained interest in purposefully selecting and fitting construction pieces together to make models and show pride when creating their own paintings and drawings. However, some adult-led craft activities are not planned and organised to best effect to actively encourage children's dexterity and use of small tools such as scissors or sticky tape dispensers. Children are confident and competent in their energetic play when using a variety of equipment such as balance beams, slides and balls, or when participating in cooperative activities such as a musical chairs type game indoors. Most children enjoy some opportunities each week for active play in the fresh air because they often visit a local park to use more challenging climbing and balancing equipment.

Children enjoy helping themselves to a healthy and varied selection of snacks such as dried fruit and chopped fresh fruit and salad vegetables, so helping to encourage good eating habits. They freely access covered jugs of fresh drinking water during the session and are actively encouraged to drink water or milk when they have their snack, so helping to ensure they take plenty of fluids.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children usually settle readily on arrival at the setting where they are based in the main hall of the church premises. This provides sufficient space for them to move safely between a varied selection of play activities. Furnishings and play equipment are in good, clean condition and are of suitable size and design to enable children to use them safely and comfortably. For example, children are easily able to manipulate small pots and scoops at small sand trays on a low table, and safely stack and balance chunky soft play blocks when building 'a tunnel for the crocodile'. Access to two additional lounge areas at agreed times during the sessions offers children additional scope, for example to participate in smaller group activities such as stories and singing games. As there is no adjacent enclosed outdoor play space, staff take children to a local park on several days each week and provide equipment and resources at the end of other sessions to enable children to be physically active within the premises. However, available

time, space and resources are not currently used to best effect at present to enable children to develop their large movement skills because equipment and opportunities are usually only available for a relatively short period each day.

Sensible precautions and procedures are in place to reduce most identified risks to children. For example, staff are sufficiently aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency such as a fire or a child being lost to enable them to act appropriately in any such circumstances. Daily checks are carried out to ensure that evacuation routes are clear and that items such as cleaning materials are safely stored. An electronic buzzer system at the main door to the building alerts staff to the entry of anyone to other areas of the building. An additional fixed safety barrier is used to divide the main hall and the adjacent female cloakrooms from the rest of the building, so preventing any unauthorised access to this area and enabling children's continuing independent use of the toilet facilities. However, arrangements at the end of the session to supervise children's collection at the inner hall door are not yet fully effective in ensuring that children are unable to leave the premises unaccompanied.

Staff are aware of what child abuse and neglect mean. They recognise their responsibilities to follow identified procedures in the event of any concerns about a child. Consequently, this helps to safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children across the age range usually settle readily and are occupied and busy in their play. They greatly enjoy playing together in an interesting pirate role play area, beginning to act out roles and to talk about the 'treasure' that they have found. They enjoy building purposefully with soft blocks, for example planning to make a tunnel where a crocodile hides. They are often sufficiently confident and motivated to show individual concentration. For example, they choose to draw using a selection of stencils and crayons, or fill small pots with sand to make pies in table-top sand play. Children across the age range show interest in a well-chosen range of books, for example listening with interest to stories linked to the current pirate theme.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning for the nursery education programme is satisfactory. The new proprietor has encouraged staff to organise available time and resources to provide increased opportunities for children's decision-making and sustained play. For example, children now decide individually when they wish to have their snack. This enables them to choose how long they spend in well-defined areas providing independent opportunities such as pretend play, mark-making, construction and sensory play with materials such as sand, water or dough. Staff are calm and consistent in their dealings with children. This helps to establish clear expectations for behaviour and to make children feel secure in their play and learning.

Systematic arrangements are in place to enable staff to observe children's activities and to assess their current stage of development. However, some staff lack a confident understanding of some aspects of learning, such as those related to knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result, assessments sometimes tend to focus on very specific aspects of communication or mathematical development, such as children's ability to write their name or to recognise numerals. Assessments often give less consideration to other aspects of children's learning, such as their problem solving skills, independent creativity or knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result, these assessments are not yet fully effective in ensuring

that short-term plans are consistently well matched to children's individual stages of development to offer high levels of challenge and progression across all aspects of learning.

Children are usually sufficiently assured to play alone or in small groups. For example individual children enjoy solitary play filling and emptying small pots of sand, or handling a variety of different shells, whilst two children play alongside each other to build with soft blocks and a small group of older children begin to act out simple roles on the pirate ship. Children generally use materials appropriately, for example, as they handle books with care or return paint brushes to the appropriate paint pot after use. They show growing independence in some simple self-care tasks such as pouring their own drinks and washing their own hands. However, some planned craft activities are overly adult-led, limiting children's opportunities to independently develop their skills in using simple materials and tools such as tape dispensers and scissors.

Children readily talk to others on an individual basis about their ideas and wishes. For example, they excitedly tell staff about what they want to do on a forthcoming holiday, or talk to each other about pirate treasure or imaginary crocodiles. They listen to well-chosen stories with interest and handle a varied selection of fiction, poetry and non-fiction books with care when choosing familiar favourites. Children begin to learn about rhythm and sound as staff introduce them to structured clapping and rhyming games. Older children begin to differentiate between pictures and symbols as they use a range of resources such as pencils, crayons and felt tips. They are sometimes encouraged in purposeful writing activities, such as trying to write their own names on their paintings, or making lists and maps in their pretend play.

Children readily use number names in their play and sometimes begin to count accurately to 10 and above. However, current activities and experiences are not consistently well planned to provide challenging and purposeful opportunities to promote children's problem-solving and number-combining skills. Children show growing practical awareness of shape and size as they build and balance with soft blocks with curved and flat surfaces, or as they select and manipulate construction pieces to create a model shown on a pattern card.

Activities such as visits to a local park or to the library, help children to start to learn about their local neighbourhood. They begin to learn about the wider world as they taste foods from India or use books and puzzles reflecting different cultures and lifestyles. They show interest in everyday technology as they learn to use a mouse to operate a simple computer programme. They experience different substances and materials as they play with sand, water and dough. They see how things change during mixing and cooking processes during activities such as making pumpkin soup or spider biscuits. However, staff are not yet fully confident in their own understanding of all aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. Consequently, they do not yet make best use of assessment and planning systems to fully extend children's exploration and investigation of how things work, or their independent and purposeful design and construction abilities. For example, although children enjoy decorating a cardboard telescope linked to their pirate role play, they are not actively encouraged to be involved in its design or construction. They do not have ready access to toy telescopes, binoculars or magnifying glasses to enable them to begin to explore the effect of different types of lenses on what they see.

Children greatly enjoy interesting role play activities, such as playing in a pretend pirate ship. Use of well-chosen stories linked to such activities helps to extend children's imaginative ideas, such as looking for lost treasure or dealing with an imaginary crocodile. Children readily identify and join in with familiar songs, linked to particular props. They sometimes use musical instruments to create simple rhythms. They enjoy freely using creative materials such as paints, crayons and collage materials in their freely chosen play, so helping them develop an awareness

of colour, texture and form. However, adult-led craft activities sometimes focus on the end product rather than the development of children's skills, techniques and independent imaginative ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A caring and welcoming environment helps children know that their feelings are recognised and that they are valued as individuals. For example, staff are responsive and sensitive in helping younger or less confident children separate from their parents or carers on arrival. They show interest and awareness when responding to older children's spontaneous comments about recent or anticipated experiences, such as family holidays. Staff are often effective in encouraging children's purposeful and successful free play. For example, an adult sensitively encourages a hesitant child to settle at the construction table and to carefully select and manipulate the items needed to make the model shown on a simple pattern card that he has chosen. Children show growing ability to cooperate and negotiate with others. For example, a younger child willingly offers a small scoop and container to a newcomer at the sand table, and older children begin to assign roles to each other in pretend play on the pirate ship.

Children are helped to recognise and accept diversity through ready access to a good range of books and puzzles reflecting different cultures, abilities and lifestyles. Brief notes are often attached to the backs of puzzles, or included at the end of books, providing useful additional information to adults about the cultures, festivals or religions depicted. This helps them effectively support children's interest and awareness. Planned experiences and activities include opportunities for children to develop a practical awareness of different lifestyles and cultures. For example, a pretend market stall, linked to recognition of the festival of Diwali, enables them to smell, touch and taste a range of spices, Indian sweets and tropical fruits. When appropriate, staff liaise with relevant therapists to support the needs of children with identified learning difficulties or disabilities. A number of staff have undertaken short courses relating to ways of supporting children with a range of disabilities or chronic health conditions, so helping them develop a good awareness of inclusive practice. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents speak favourably of the friendly environment which helps them feel confident in the care offered to their children. An updated prospectus provides new prospective parents with useful information about arrangements for children's care. Systems are in place to enable parents to share relevant information about any individual health and care requirements, such as allergies, so that these can be managed effectively. Staff also seek information from parents about children's preferred activities and interests, and about their existing skills and abilities, so helping them to gain an understanding of children's initial level of maturity and development.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Parents receive a useful summary of the areas of learning within the Foundation Stage. Regularly updated displays provide them with ongoing information about current plans for children's continuing learning. Systematic arrangements are now in place for staff and parents to regularly share information about children's progress towards the early learning goals, and to identify the next steps in their learning. Consequently, this helps parents and staff work together in children's best interests.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Clear recruitment and clearance systems are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. The majority of staff hold recognised early years qualifications, and staffing is organised to ensure that good adult:child ratios are consistently maintained. This helps to ensure children are generally appropriately cared for and supervised. However, clear arrangements are not yet in place regarding arrangements to deputise in the absence of the officer in charge. This potentially limits the setting's ability to manage children's care to best effect in such circumstances. Required records, such as daily registers and children's personal and contact details, are generally legible, methodically maintained and readily accessible, so helping to underpin children's care. The new proprietor has reviewed and updated existing policies and procedures. Staff have been advised of relevant changes and policies are available for parents to view, so helping to ensure they are generally familiar with the operational plan that underpins the management of children's care.

The leadership and management of the early education programme is satisfactory. The new proprietor and staff meet regularly to discuss ongoing planning and organisation. This helps the staff group to begin to have a shared understanding of the setting's aims and to work together as a team. The proprietor uses action planning to identify specific targets for the development and improvement of the setting, for example with regard to the introduction of new and improved furnishings and equipment. She clearly identifies how and when these improvements are being implemented, so ensuring her identified goals are measurable and realistic. The proprietor works with local authority mentoring and development workers to help staff begin to accept and implement new ways of working to extend children's purposeful choice and independence. For example, the recent introduction of a snack bar system offers children more freedom to continue in their sustained play and to choose when they are ready to eat and drink. However, systematic appraisal systems are not yet in place to identify staff's existing skills and understanding and to set agreed priorities for ongoing professional development. Overall children's needs are met.

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 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 satisfactory. 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):

- improve arrangements to minimise the risk of children leaving the premises unaccompanied during collection time at the end of the session
- ensure there is an identified deputy to take charge in the absence of the manager
- develop organisation and use of available space, time and resources to provide more opportunities for children's free movement and to promote their large movement skills.

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 consistent staff confidence and understanding of all areas of learning
- develop use of assessments of children's current stage of development within short term planning to ensure activities and experiences are well differentiated to offer high levels of challenge, independence and progression to children across all aspects of learning
- develop systematic arrangements to evaluate staff skills and understanding and prioritise specific areas for professional development.

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