

Little Angels Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY363515
Inspection date	10 June 2008
Inspector	Michelle W. Smith

Setting Address	The Old Post Centre, High Street, Newhall, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE11 0HX
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Registered person	Elaine Dianne Milsom-Waters
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Angels Pre-School opened in 2007. It operates from The Old Post Centre in Newhall, Derbyshire. All children share access to an outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local area and adjoining villages.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 34 children aged from two to three years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting employs three members of staff. Of these, two hold an appropriate early years qualification and one is working towards a qualification. Of the two qualified staff members, one is working towards a higher level early years qualification. 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 satisfactory.

Children follow effective self-care routines with increasing levels of independence. They wash their hands with little prompting required from staff and select their own cups and plates at meal times, so helping to maintain a hygienic environment. Their medical needs are largely safeguarded. There is always at least one member of staff on duty at any one time who is trained to administer first aid to infants and young children. A record of all accidents is maintained and a written record is kept of all medicines administered to children. However, parents do not sign the medical record book to acknowledge the entry. In addition, consent is not requested from parents for staff to seek any necessary emergency medical treatment or advice for their child. This potentially compromises children's wellbeing.

Children respect the value of meal times. They develop good social skills as they sit with friends to eat their snack whilst talking about Italian food. Staff encourage children to further their taste horizons as they discuss how lovely pasta is and talk enthusiastically about vegetables. This inspires children to eat very healthily. They take bread from a wicker basket on the table, eat chunks of apple and carrots and try broccoli and cheese pasta. All children have plenty to drink as they can access their own juice or water at any time. In warmer weather children drink lots of fluids, so helping to ensure they are never thirsty. Staff sit with children at the attractively presented snack table. This reduces the opportunity for children to become ill as staff quickly spot any food that has been dropped on the floor before children eat it. Children soon become familiar with the link between nutritious food and healthy bodies as topical books about what happens to your food and hand washing are strategically placed on the table. They are able to access their snack whenever they wish during the early part of the session, so helping to ensure they eat in line with their individual time preferences.

Children take part in a diverse range of opportunities which test and develop their physical skills on a daily basis. They flow freely between indoor and outdoor play which potentially increases the amount of time they spend playing in the open air. They run, stop and start safely, developing spatial awareness as they pretend to be swinging animals in a large group. Whilst listening to music they devise their own ways to respond to the tune, for example, they jump and clap their hands. More able children develop good coordination skills as they shake their shoulders rhythmically. They develop mastery in ball skills as they throw them into nets, hit them with racquets and play catching games with staff. Children approach physical play opportunities very positively. They laugh, giggle and are keen to practise and develop new and existing skills, often saying 'yeah' to express their excitement. Using green and red bats they use their arm and hand movements to direct children who are pretending to be aeroplanes in to land.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Staff always greet each child with a welcoming smile which helps them to feel special. In addition, the room is very thoughtfully arranged to promote children's independence, for example, they can access a wide variety of resources at any one time on table tops, wall and floor displays. This motivates more able children to learn because they are able to choose how to further their own play and build on what they are interested in. All resources such as construction toys, dolls and jigsaws are

well-maintained, of good quality, suitable and safe, so helping to ensure they are appropriate to meet children's differing needs.

Children play in a generally secure and safe environment. Staff implement the majority of safe-care practices effectively, for example, they close the external gate after all parents have left the premises. However, on occasions, the outdoor gate is not secured fully and the lock on the main entry door is not always used, largely due to practical issues. Although children are successfully supervised, the breach of security procedures increases the risk of unauthorised people entering the premises, potentially compromising children's safety. Rigorous systems are in place to ensure that children are only released into the care of named persons, for example, a written log is maintained of any people who have not previously collected them and the identification of the adult is checked prior to the child leaving the premises.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, they sing songs about traffic lights connected to road safety issues. In addition, they work with tools such as hammers and nails with care, showing respect for the materials they are working with. Staff use successful techniques to distract children from potentially unsafe situations such as shining lights in their eyes by talking about real-life situations such as using torches in the dark. Children are well-protected by staff who have working knowledge of child protection issues. They are confident in their role to protect children from risk of harm and know what procedures they need to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy in the welcoming and caring environment. They have positive relationships with staff who implement their sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and present a stimulating range of fun activities. Children show a high level of curiosity as they play. They ask 'what's this?' when looking at resources on an investigation table, turning cogs and pressing buttons as they explore how and why things work. The easily accessible resources spark children's imagination. Children place egg timers with colourful beads close to their eyes, concentrating intently as they watch the process that takes place. With tape measures hooked over their shoulders and binoculars in their hands they begin to make sense of the world around them. Some children take time to play alone, concentrating on set tasks such as arranging shapes on a clock puzzle. All children feel relaxed enough to express their unique personalities and ideas, for example, they spontaneously dance to music whilst using their arms and wriggling their bodies.

Children raise and lift cooked spaghetti in their hands whilst looking at a picture of a child completing the same activity. They explore the food using all of their senses, suggesting 'taste it' to their friends. Superbly organised creative trays prompt them to play with natural and manmade resources such as wet sand and plastic boats. They follow their own interests plunging sponges into water and paint colourful pictures of fish. During group circle time they make suggestions about song words such as a woman 'wearing a giraffe dress' when she is coming round the mountain, tunefully recalling the chorus whilst clapping their hands. This helps children to confidently unleash their imaginative ideas. Through their lively, cheerful approach, staff encourage all children to take part in familiar and new activities and experiences. Children develop very good early communication skills as they enjoy looking at books, discuss a wide range of subject areas freely with staff and communicate with other children.

Early Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. They use the curriculum guidance well to plan activities and provide resources which cover all areas of learning. Staff who are less familiar with the meticulous detail of the curriculum receive appropriate support, so helping to ensure most opportunities for learning are maximised. Planning is sufficiently detailed. The long term plans ensure all areas of the curriculum are covered whilst short term plans outline specific learning objectives for the week. In addition, staff use their deep understanding of how children learn to seize spontaneous learning opportunities, for example, when more able children play with creative materials they spark a mathematical discussion about measure which children enjoy. This helps children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Although staff discuss each child's developmental progress, they do not always fully evaluate activities or make comprehensive use of the information gained from assessments to identify how future plans will be challenging yet achievable for individual children. Consequently, some large group activities do not always maintain children's interest. For example, during morning register some children become easily bored, swinging their feet whilst glancing around the room as opposed to participating in discussions about letters, sounds and days of the week which restricts their learning. Children are involved in the evaluation of their own learning as they proudly post sticky notes which mark their achievements into a designated post box.

Effective use of time and resources creates an inviting environment that is organised reasonably well to develop children's independence. For example, children scrape their own plates after they have finished their snack and make many choices about where and what they wish to play. However, activities and play opportunities which encourage them to begin to record their mathematics are not organised as efficiently. This restricts their confidence to detail their findings, for example, through writing numbers and making picture displays. Children behave very well as they are clear about the high expectations for their behaviour. Staff are consistent in their approach to behavioural issues and involve children in the setting of group rules. As a result, children are becoming self-disciplined. They learn to work with others, playing harmoniously as they arrange a dinner table and serve food to their friends.

Children are motivated to learn through exciting and interesting activities. They show delight as they sing a cheerful song, clapping their hands whilst singing 'noisily and fast' and eagerly answer questions during story time. They begin to use language to voice their thinking and to encourage others to participate in games. They comment 'come on lets go and do building work' explaining that they have a hammer and a 'purple thing that turns screws'. They place their hands over their eyes, expressing their thoughts and feelings as they laugh whilst saying 'I'm scared' and shriek 'oh no, the bear is coming' as they watch and listen to a story on the computer. As the story ends they are quick to ask for it to be played again, showing a lively interest in language and literacy. Towards the end of the session they gather together to leaf through books and relax to enjoy a group tale. Their vocabulary is extended as they learn new words such as 'gondola', repeating the word often to master the sound. The environment is rich in print, for example, text is displayed in the form of poems, posters and reference books, all of which are placed in meaningful locations. Therefore, children understand that print carries meaning and is read from left to right. Many children are able to recognise their name and often write for a variety of purposes.

Children concentrate exceptionally well when using information and communication technology. They use the mouse with success to click and select items on a programme linked to a television character. They are absorbed and highly interested in the technological equipment, thriving on the challenge of using cursors to direct vehicles on the screen. Children awaiting their turn on the computer count ladybirds, consolidating their understanding of numbers through sharing

experiences with their friends. More able children are keen to display their mathematical knowledge as they count seven items, find the numeral seven and say that scales are for 'finding the heavy bowl'. Younger children learn to calculate as they problem solve 'one more than' or 'one less than' when singing songs. More able children copy simple patterns and enjoy sorting different coloured bears. However, resources are not always readily accessible to encourage them to independently record their findings.

Children begin to comprehend how and why things work and develop the confidence to implement their own ideas. They self-select resources from an investigation area such as Ordnance Survey maps, magnets and books about wings, wheels and sails. Through using real tools such as hammers, nails and screws they learn how to effectively manage their own safety. They find out about and identify features of living things and the natural world as they help to hang bird feeders outdoors and plant vegetables. Children confidently express their thoughts and ideas as they devise story lines to support their role play, for example, they fly aeroplanes to France, lifting the plane 'into the sky' whilst making engine noises. Using props they set their own personal challenges which staff support fully. They climb onto plastic beams to extend the height of an aeroplane and then sit back down with staff to add further detail to their personal storyline. Children use their imagination in art and design, swirling spaghetti with their fingers onto paper to form shapes such as spirals whilst talking about how they are going to paint their picture.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy close relationships with the staff and each other as their individual needs and personalities are known, understood and met. Any children who are feeling uncertain or upset receive extra close care and comfort. Staff show kindness as they help them to find objects of comfort such as dummies and sit with them to redirect their thoughts through play. In addition, children show kindness towards each other, for example, they cuddle their friends and invite them to take part in imaginative games. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Through diverse projects and skilfully organised resources children gain a strong understanding about the richness of the wider world. They use Ordnance Survey maps and talk about the shape of countries, commenting that Italy looks like 'a shoe'. Through a holiday theme they learn the words for hello and good-bye in languages such as French. Staff readily implement the setting's equal opportunities policy, for example, when a boy comments that girls cannot play with certain resources, they reinforce the importance of all children being able to use all toys in a light-hearted and yet meaningful way. The setting has effective strategies in place to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so helping to ensure that all children play and learn in an inclusive environment.

Children are developing good self-esteem and respect for others. They take part in active discussions about group rules such as keeping their 'hands and feet' to themselves and know that if they put toys in their mouth they 'might get germs' or 'might choke'. As they suggest new rules such as 'not pulling hair' they gain a deep understanding of what they can and cannot do and begin to stage appropriate responsibility for maintaining a positive play environment. Children smile as they complete art activities, showing pride as they say 'I am doing painting'. Staff reward good behaviour such as kindness to others. They verbally praise children, celebrating their achievements whilst writing sticky labels which the child takes ownership of by posting into a designated box. Consequently, children are rapidly developing self-worth.

Children benefit from good relationships between staff and parents. All parents receive a welcome pack which gives them detailed information about how the setting operates including information about the role of each child's key worker and business arrangements. Their views about key issues are sought via questionnaires which are evaluated and used to support the continuous improvement of the setting. The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Comprehensive, easy to understand, written information about the Foundation Stage is available, so helping parents to begin to understand the structure of the curriculum. In addition, parents receive frequent newsletters, so helping them to stay continually informed and requesting items from home which tie into current projects such as photographs of animals. They speak to their child's key worker on a regular basis and can ask to see their child's record of progress at any time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children settle well and develop a strong sense of belonging as the routine of the day is consistent and well-managed. A particular strength of this setting is the free-flow between indoor and outdoor play. This makes exceptional use of space and places high priority on outdoor play and child-orientated learning. In addition, a section of the room is cordoned off for a proportion of the day to ensure a balanced curriculum and to arrange new activities. Children display familiarity with this procedure as they maximise opportunities to play with floor toys before they are put away. During the later period of the session children's play is focused more upon the pre-selected table top toys such as inset puzzles, puppets and chalks. As a result of this effective organisation of space and time children feel relaxed and secure.

The owner/manager has sound recruitment and vetting procedures in place, so helping to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. Children are cared for by staff who are committed to their well-being. The staff team work well together to provide children with a high level of individual attention. They demonstrate a generally good understanding of written policies and risk assessments and implement most into successful working practice. The large majority of paperwork which underpins medical and emergency procedures is in place, for example, an uncollected child policy and children's emergency contact numbers are very easily accessible. A record of children's, staff's and visitor's attendance is actively maintained, so helping to support fire evacuation procedures.

Leadership and management of early education is good. The staff team are committed to the ongoing development of the provision. Staff appraisals and regular planning meetings help them to identify strengths and areas for development so that they continue to improve the outcomes for children. The owner/manager and deputy manager take a strong lead in the delivery of the educational programme, so helping newer staff members to develop familiarity with the early learning goals. The systems used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum are generally effective. Consequently, children are making good developmental progress. 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 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 satisfactory. 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 parents sign the medical record book to acknowledge the entry and request written parental consent to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future
- ensure the premises and any outside play area are secure.

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):

- improve further the use of assessments to guide planning, to plan children's next steps in learning and to ensure consistent challenge within large group activities
- improve further the organisation of resources and activities to encourage children to record their mathematics.

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