

Little Stars Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY359268
Inspection date	09 July 2008
Inspector	Sandra Elizabeth Williams
Setting Address	c/o Yarlside Primary School, Redoak Avenue, BARROW-IN-FURNESS, Cumbria, LA13 0LH
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Registered person	Little Stars Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 Stars Pre-school is managed by a committee and operates from the portacabin situated within the grounds of Yarlside school, Barrow, Cumbria. The provision consists of an entrance lobby, an activity room, a small reading room, a kitchen area, toilet facilities and a store room. The group also has the use of the nursery classroom, the main hall and the computer suite in the main school building. All children share access to outdoor play areas.

The group serves children from Barrow and the surrounding area. A maximum of 24 children aged from two to under five years may attend the pre-school at any one time and there are currently 36 children on roll, of whom, 12 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday term time only. The morning sessions in the portacabin run from 09.00 until 11.30. The wrap around care in the nursery room runs from 11.30 until 15.00. The setting supports children with learning difficulties.

There are four members of staff who work with the children, all of whom hold level 3 Early Years qualifications. The supervisor is working towards a Foundation Degree in Early Years.

The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the Sure Start team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children demonstrate a good understanding of simple health and hygiene practices and are learning to take responsibility for their own self-care routines. For example, they use the toilet independently and wash their hands using the easily accessible soap and paper towels provided. Children are very well protected from infection because the sick child policy is widely available and well adhered to. Staff are trained in first aid, which further supports children's health and safety. There is a well equipped first aid kit available in case of accidents and emergencies. If children are tired they are able to rest on comfy cushions and rugs in the 'chill out' room.

Children take part in regular physical activity and have continuous access to the outdoor play area throughout the sessions. There is a great emphasis upon the importance of children receiving regular fresh air and exercise. They travel around the playground, skilfully pedalling their bicycles forwards and backwards. They demonstrate a good sense of space as they are able to manoeuvre around objects and each other. They also enjoy taking part in obstacle courses, where they practise their balancing skills and crawl through tunnels. Their fine motor skills are developing as they use paint brushes and other mark making equipment in the creative and writing areas.

Children are very well nourished and enjoy healthy snacks each day. They enjoy fruit and vegetables such as apples, oranges and carrots. Children demonstrate very good pouring skills as they help themselves to water and to fresh milk. This helps them to develop their independence skills and hand-eye coordination. Children do not currently have continuous access to fresh drinking water throughout the sessions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is welcoming and safe, vibrant and exciting. The nursery is extremely attractive and welcoming due to the hard work and effort of the staff. Children's art work is displayed creatively on the walls, which positively supports their sense of belonging. The staff display an abundance of information on the parents' notice board in order to keep parents well informed. Activities are very invitingly presented at floor and low-level which ensures children are interested and motivated to become involved.

Safety is given high priority. For example, staff ensure that they supervise children's arrival and departure extremely carefully and ensure that the gates and doors are always securely closed. They also closely monitor visitors to the nursery. Children are independent but closely monitored when using the toilets. Regular and thorough risk assessments are carried out by the staff to address all areas of potential concern that may impact on children's continued safety and well-being. Children learn about keeping themselves safe by helping to tidy up their toys so that they do not trip over them. Fire safety is taught, through regular emergency evacuation practices and by visits from the fire brigade. Children are well protected because staff understand their important role in protecting them from abuse and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice if needed. They have undertaken training in the past,

however, they have not recently updated their knowledge regarding the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the pre-school enthusiastically and settle into their chosen activities with ease. They enjoy very positive relationships with staff, who greet them individually. Children are very excited and show great interest in all they do. The broad selection of activities and the free play sessions encourage them to continually make many choices in their play. They freely link up with friends and move from one activity to another. They particularly enjoy the freedom of being able to use the outside play area at any time throughout the session as the staff provides a free-flow arrangement which allows this to be possible.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress as the staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage. This is very evident in their planning, assessments and evaluations of children's progress that link very well to the stepping stones. This information is used effectively to aid future planning for the children, and ensures that appropriate challenges are set so that all children make progress. Most children are able to concentrate and actively listen to others. However, during story time the younger children are less able to sit quietly and this makes it difficult for the older children to hear the story and participate in discussions. The children are currently not grouped appropriately during group times which means that the older children are distracted.

Staff use questioning appropriately, which extends the children's learning. Children are fully able to engage themselves in activities of their own choosing for extended periods of time. This is particularly evident in the outside area and the creative area. They frequently initiate positive interactions with others. For example, they approach staff and confidently ask them for particular play equipment to enhance their play; whilst outside, they ask for the large bricks to be made available. Children are developing a good understanding of what is right and wrong, and are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions on others. Children are developing very good self-care skills as they learn to pour their own drinks at snack time and wash their hands at appropriate times. Their learning is enhanced by being able to take turns in looking after the teddy bear. They take it home and attend to its needs, for example, they brush its teeth and make sure it is well looked after.

Children are developing their language for thinking as they join in discussions about the weather at registration time. Their vocabulary is extended, as they learn the different colours of the rainbow and learn a new colour, violet. Children are able to easily recognise the initial sounds in many words, including their names and are able to recognise their names when they self-register. They regularly have opportunities to use writing as a means of recording as they freely access a full range of mark-making resources, such as paper, pencils, crayons and paints. They are encouraged to write their names on their work. They are also able to attempt writing for a purpose using different forms, for example, in the role play corner, which is set up as a travel agency, they write out tickets for the customers. The children enjoy looking at the travel brochures and the posters displayed on the walls. They also enjoy sitting in the reading room, looking at the wide range of books available to them.

Children have numerous opportunities for counting and problem solving. The children demonstrate good progress in their mathematical development as they count confidently up to 30. Staff use many opportunities to encourage children to count and calculate. For example, they know there are seven days in a week. They also become familiar with numbers as they sing songs, such as 'five currant buns' and 'five little monkeys'. They engage in matching and sorting games and jigsaws, all of which provide good opportunities for them to extend their mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems.

Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They take great delight in hunting and digging for bugs and they use magnifying glasses to carefully study the bugs and count how many legs they have. They refer to the poster illustrating mini beasts in order to identify the creatures they have found. They are able to identify many features in the place they live, as staff show them photographs of familiar places, such as the Dock museum. The children find out about past and present events in their own lives. For example, the staff display photos of the children when they were babies and ask them to identify how they have changed. Children enjoy plenty of opportunities to develop their computer skills and they demonstrate good mouse control.

Children develop their creative skills in many different ways. For example, they relish the opportunities for 'messy play' as they paint using their hands and paint brushes. They enjoy junk modelling and making rainbow mobiles and singing the rainbow song, identifying all of the colours. They enthusiastically engage in singing songs and playing musical instruments, such as tambourines and shakers and enjoy hearing the different sounds they make. They develop their imaginations as they play imaginary roles in the role play corner, which is set up as a travel agency and prior to that, a vets.

Overall, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are able to make a positive contribution due to the warm and friendly welcome they receive as soon as they arrive at the group. Staff are enthusiastic and children are genuinely pleased to greet one another. Children enjoy learning about different cultures. For example, one of the parents owns a Chinese restaurant and brought some Chinese food for the children to taste during Chinese New Year. New resources have been ordered, such as multicultural costumes, toy food and dolls, all designed to help extend the children's learning and sense of belonging. Children also learn about their own community and enjoy visits from people in the community, such as police officers and the fire brigade who talk to them about safety issues.

Children with learning difficulties are well supported in the group and the staff are very aware of the importance of working closely with parents and other agencies to support children's individual needs. Children are very well aided by staff to understand responsible behaviour. The staff act as very good role models and they are calm and gentle in their own approach, addressing each other politely and respectfully. Behaviour issues are managed using entirely suitable strategies which children fully accept. These are totally in line with the written behaviour management policy, using appropriate explanations at a level children understand. Children are helped to develop self-esteem and respect for others as they actively listen to each other at group times. This also helps them learn successfully about the needs of others. They are regularly praised and encouraged by staff which makes them feel good about themselves and

develop a strong sense of self. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children are cared for by staff who work very closely and successfully with parents to meet their individual needs. Relationships are warm and friendly, and verbal communication is clearly very good as informal conversations about children's care take place as parents drop off and collect their children. A complaints policy is in place including a system for recording any complaints if necessary.

Partnership with parents and carers with regard to nursery education is good. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning and are consulted and receive feedback throughout the time that their children spend at the group. Parents have access to their children's assessment records and informally discuss their children's progress with the staff on a regular basis. Parents receive well presented information about the educational curriculum via the display boards. Parents are also encouraged to visit the group and take part in planned sessions. Informative written reports about the children's development are provided to the parents at the end of the year.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children's care is good due to the thorough organisation of the pre-school by very experienced and well qualified staff. The staff group work very well as a team and provide good consistency for the children. Staff demonstrate a commitment to continual development and they regularly attend relevant training courses and workshops to support them in their work. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Children are relaxed and confident in their environment due to the effective organisation of their care and learning. Children's play opportunities are good as the staff organise the premises very well, thus allowing children to move about with ease. Space is well laid out and care is taken to ensure that children receive a good balance of indoor and outdoor play opportunities. Documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in good order and stored confidentially. Policies accurately reflect the working practice observed at all times.

The leadership and management are good. Children's educational needs are well met through the positive leadership and management of the supervisor. Staff have attended relevant courses and have a secure understanding and knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. There is a system for monitoring and evaluating the work undertaken. An effective level of ongoing support and advice is provided by the local authority, which also positively supports children's learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

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 records may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 children have access to fresh drinking water at all times
- update staff's knowledge and understanding of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures

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):

- ensure that children are suitably grouped according to their age and ability to ensure that the more able children are adequately challenged and that their learning is not affected by the younger children

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