



Little Bears Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY234843
Inspection date	20 September 2005
Inspector	Ruth George / Judith Attridge
Setting Address	St Leonards Village Hall, Jenkins Lane, St Leonards, Buckinghamshire, HP23 6NW
Telephone number	01494 758 081
E-mail	
Registered person	Little Bears Pre-School
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Bears Pre-school opened over 20 years ago. It is managed by a committee of parent volunteers. The pre-school is situated in the village hall in St Leonards, Buckinghamshire. They open Monday to Friday during school term time from 09.30 to 12.00. The children have access to a hall for play and a secure outdoor play area and access to the adjacent park and field.

The pre-school is registered to take up to 24 children at any one time and currently

have 21 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the village and surrounding area. The pre-school supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven staff. There are two staff, including the manager who hold appropriate early years qualifications, two staff are working towards a qualification.

The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about healthy eating during snack time and planned cooking activities. They explore and taste foods, such as peas that they remove from the pods. A new trial system for snack time means that children bring nutritious snacks from home as discussed with the pre-school. This reinforces their healthy eating at home and promotes their good health.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through regular routine. They know when they need to wash their hands protecting them from germs that spread infection. Children's health is protected by effective hygiene procedures, for example, cleaning tables before and after food activities and snacks, and during toileting and changing routines. Procedures for administering first aid to children ensure they receive appropriate care in the event of an accident.

Children participate in a range of physical activity indoors and outdoors. They demonstrate increasingly adept skills when using balls, beanbags and soft rings developing throwing and kicking skills. They enjoy running and moving with increasing control during games outdoors without colliding, demonstrating good spatial awareness. They do not have regular opportunity to climb, balance and use large equipment to develop larger muscles. They enjoy participating in songs that require them to move and stretch their bodies. Children use malleable materials, shaping play dough to develop their manipulative skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe environment where risks are minimised. They play safely outdoors and are kept safe on outings to the local church and when on the field. Children learn about safety rules, for example, by practising fire evacuation and a visit from the local fire fighter reinforces this.

Children choose from a good range of resources that are rotated daily to meet their interests. Children learn to handle tools safely, they use knives to chop vegetables

under supervision. Children are effectively cautious when using potentially dangerous equipment that requires careful handling so as not to harm themselves, at the same time developing new skills for independence. Children learn to keep themselves safe and to avoid accidental injury. The child protection policy helps protect children's welfare, and staff have a good understanding of how to handle concerns raised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and settled, they play and explore a variety of activities. Children enjoy playing on their own, in pairs and most especially in small groups during imaginative play. Children feel secure and know the routines well. They move around the pre-school with ease and interact confidently with other children and adults, including visitors. They choose what to do from a pre-selected range of activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff work well together as a team to provide children with a good range of interesting activities. The children are progressing well, supported by staff who have a good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. Children's learning is extended during planned and spontaneous play. The organisation of planned activities sometimes lack flexibility, for example, to have singing time outside on sunny days. There are good records of children's achievements, which are used to inform planning to meet children's learning needs.

Children enjoy the varied curriculum; they enjoy listening to a fire-fighter talk about his job and explore the breathing apparatus. They explore tea leaves using a magnifying glass, staff enhance the learning responding to a child's curiosity about what happens to a tea bag if left overnight to dry. Children relate confidently to each other and adults. They work independently and within groups, concentrating and co-operating with others. Children display consideration for others and help to tidy away. They play together enthusiastically and forge relationships with others during pretend play.

Children are attentive to the stories that staff read to them and join in appropriately responding to questions. Children use books independently and older children borrow books to take home and share with their parents. Children are confident in finding their name cards and demonstrate awareness that print carries meaning when looking at books. Children mark make and use emergent writing in the 'shop', some can write their names. Children link letters to sounds, for example, 'f' for foggy when discussing the weather. Children have increasing ability to use simple calculation skills, for example, a child says 'I am drawing six cones and I have done three, I need to draw three more'. Children experience and learn about measuring and volume when playing with the water and use this skill at snack time when they pour their own drinks. Children look at shapes in a variety of play such as puzzles, perforation shapes in tea bags and construction.

Children learn about the changes in weather through shared discussion and observation. Children enjoy visits to the local church and have an increasing awareness about the wider world; they celebrate festivals and raise money for other children through sponsored activities. Children use and explore an interesting range of natural materials including natural chalk from the local environment. Children have some opportunities to use programmable toys but these do not extend the more able children. Children's imagination is stimulated in role-play and dressing up. Children recognise primary colours and some identify other colours such as pink and grey. Children benefit from regular opportunities to draw, using coloured pencils, felt pens and crayons. There are limited materials readily accessible to enable children to express themselves freely in art and design. Children enjoy singing in a group and know the songs well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children with special educational needs receive appropriate support from the pre-school. Parents and staff work co-operatively together and with the local authority Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and the health visitor to develop a suitable curriculum to help the child's development.

Children's behaviour is good, staff praise and give clear explanations. Children respect others by listening when spoken to and come to the aid of friends, picking up items dropped on the floor. Children form good relationships with their peers; they are happy, settled and show concern for others.

Children enjoy visits to the local church where they take part in Harvest Festival celebrations. A farmer provides children with first hand experiences about the people who work in the community. They also learn about festivals from other cultures during the year. Children benefit from the excellent range of books that promote positive images of diversity helping children to learn about others in the wider world. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good quality information about the setting and the curriculum in a variety of ways including regular newsletters. Parents feel valued and encouraged by the staff and committee to contribute to their child's learning and experiences at the pre-school; they can make suggestions for improvements or help during a session. Those spoken to made specific comments about the good improvements in their child's social, literacy and number skills. Parents feel well informed about their child's achievements and know they can discuss their child with staff at the end of sessions. There is not currently a formal opportunity for parents to discuss achievements in more detail.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. The children benefit from the well-planned

daily routine and curriculum. The number of staff at sessions is high and ensures children remain well supported in their care and learning. Staff meet regularly and share their observations of the children to inform the planning competently. The play leader evaluates the care and nursery education and continues to look at ways to develop and improve this for the children, however, they do not clearly plan for all areas of physical development.

The pre-school keeps all the appropriate records on children's care, health and welfare, however, written consents from parents are not available to take photographs of children or for local outings. All policies and procedures are in place, made available to parents and known to staff. Policies are not regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect current practice and there is not a clear procedure for administration of medication.

Children's care and education benefits overall from the good quality of staff at the pre-school. The committee complete half-yearly appraisals and encourage staff to gain qualifications and to update their training. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the pre-school was asked to develop a number of policies, to develop staff induction, ensure all children participate fully at activities and are supervised when playing on the stage. All policies are effectively implemented, nearly all children access the range of activities available to them and an induction procedure is now in place promoting the interests and safety of the children.

At the last nursery education inspection, the pre-school was asked to evaluate how they use the resources and the space. They were also asked to improve assessments to inform future planning and share children's achievements with their parents. Staff now complete regular observations of children and use these to inform future planning. Parents receive information about the planning in a variety of ways, although currently informal. Parents spoken to feel well informed about their child's progress and this contributes positively to children's learning experience.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
--

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.
--

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- increase opportunities for all children to develop their large physical skills (also applies to nursery education)
- obtain written consent from parents for outings and to take photographs of the children
- develop procedures to systematically review the pre-schools policies.

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the care section above.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk