



Little Stars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509191
Inspection date	02 March 2006
Inspector	Bharti Vakil / Kim Mundy
Setting Address	Headstone Lawn Tennis Club, Hillfield Close, Woodberry Avenue, Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 6AU
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Registered person	Little Stars Pre-School Group
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Little Stars Pre-School is privately owned. It opened in 1999 and operates in the main hall of a single storey building, rented from the Headstone Lawn Tennis Club. The hall is divided into two play areas. A maximum of 25 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.30 during school term times. There is an access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 19 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 6 children

receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school serves children from the local community and they attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four staff. Of the staff three, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff who is working towards qualification. This group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about healthy hygiene practice through the routine because overall procedures to promote this are securely in place. Children wash their hands before meals and after toileting and tables are washed before and after eating. However, children were eating sliced fresh fruit from table top surface as plates were not available on the first day of the inspection.

Suitable procedures are in place for medication and accidents. Children are protected from unnecessary illness as they do not attend when they are suffering from infections. Staff use gloves when managing bodily spillages, such as blood, which limits the possible spread of infection. Children are protected in emergencies because three staff hold current first aid certificates.

Children benefit from healthy snacks and they help themselves to water offered throughout the day. The selection of snacks provided includes fresh fruits, olives, tomatoes, cucumber, plain biscuits and milk. Parents provide packed lunches and procedures are in place to store perishable foods appropriately.

Young children have some opportunities for exercise each day through a timetabled slot for indoor play. Although an outdoor area is available, children have few opportunities for fresh air and to become increasingly agile during winter months.

Funded children enjoy a range of physical activities to develop their large muscle skills and to contribute to a healthy lifestyle. However, children do not spend enough time participating in vigorous physical activities outdoors. Children move imaginatively to music, action songs and games. They are developing their coordination as they steer wheeled toys, roll hoops and catch balls. Children are learning about healthy foods as they enjoy cooking activities and explore good and bad foods. At circle time the funded children have fun participating in breathing and facial exercises. They also talk about healthy practices, for example washing their hands and blowing their noses.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, clean and well maintained environment. The

organisation of space allows children to move around freely and comfortably. They have access to a suitable range of developmentally appropriate toys and resources. All toys, furniture and equipment are checked by staff to ensure that they are clean and safe. Children's welfare and safety are protected.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised within the setting, which has good safety and security precautions. For example, there are clear written fire evacuation procedures in place and regular fire drills are carried out to ensure children and staff are aware of the procedures to follow. Children are learning to take responsibility for their own safety as staff demonstrate tasks, for example carrying chairs to tables.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. Staff are aware of the setting's child protection policy and have a clear understanding of the reporting procedures if abuse is suspected. The setting has clear and concise written records in place, which staff have familiarised themselves with to ensure the safety of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young children are generally engaged in the activities provided. Children play with a range of resources, such as sand, dough, interactive toys, puzzles and books. They enjoy singing and story time in small groups. They thoroughly enjoy music and movement session in the larger group.

A varied range of activities are planned to encourage development in all areas. However, the organisation of the day does not allow children enough time to explore at their own pace or to consolidate their learning. The day is disruptive for the children because in the span of three hours staff change activities and toys three times. Staff spend too much time moving furniture, clearing away activities from the playrooms and replacing them from the store room. This further reduces children's choices and lessens opportunities for children to spend more time with staff.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children take part in planned daily activities, which help them to make satisfactory progress. However, the planning is not sufficiently flexible to allow children enough time to explore at their own pace and to consolidate their learning. The systems in place to evaluate the children's progress and to plan the next steps for their individual learning are not consistently maintained. Therefore, children are not always suitably challenged or supported. Staff use some effective teaching methods to extend children's thinking and vocabulary, for example at discussion time they use open-ended questioning. They are able to provide good support for children with English as an additional language. Staff do not set up the playroom to encourage children to develop their independence through making choices from a wide range of resources. Staff are keen to develop the educational provision for funded children.

Children are keen to learn and they are able to sit and concentrate during chosen activities. They are learning to take turns and to share. Children show kindness and consideration towards visitors and each other. They are developing their vocabulary as they chat to each other during various themes and activities. Children enjoy singing a range of songs from memory, for example dingle dangle scarecrow. They are practising their early writing skills and are able to write recognisable letters and draw representative pictures. Children enjoy painting and sticking and they use a range of tools confidently, for example scissors, spatulas and brushes. They enjoy dancing and listening to different types of music. Children are developing their imagination during role play experiences as they play in the home corner, for example as hair dressers.

Children demonstrate their awareness of number and some can count confidently beyond ten. They enjoy problem solving as they do puzzles, weigh various objects, sort and match by colour and type. Children laugh out loud shouting 'None' as staff ask them 'How many corners does a circle have?'. Children observe patterns, for instance as they thread beads.

Children are gaining knowledge and understanding of the world as they take part in themes and activities, such as mini-beasts. They enjoy looking at worms, spiders and snails as they use the magnifying glasses. Staff use books well to support children's learning as they show them pictures of mini-beasts. Children enjoy using Lego and bricks as they use their imagination to build and construct. They have planted cress and observed the life cycle of the butterfly. During a floating and sinking activity at the water tray, children question why things happen and how they work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally well behaved and polite in response to the expectations of staff. They are encouraged to take turns and share. Children show caring attitude towards each other. Staff's management of children's behaviour is appropriate.

Children are provided with a range of resources that reflect positive images, such as puzzles, books, posters and photos. These resources are beginning to increase the children's awareness of diversity and understanding of others within the wider community. Children are developing confidence and self-esteem as they receive positive attention to encourage them to communicate. However, the procedures in place for staff to be familiar with children's individual dietary and care needs are not secure.

None of the children currently attending have special needs. A suitable special needs policy is in place. The manager is the special educational needs coordinator for the setting and she has attended relevant training.

There are appropriate systems in place to share information with parents and carers. Information is shared verbally, through the information board, an information booklet and regular news letters.

Partnership with parents and carers, in relation to nursery education, is good. Clear information is given to parents about the curriculum. Parents receive regular feedback about their children's progress and they are able to speak to parents at any time. This contributes positively to children's wellbeing. Parents and carers are involved in their children's learning. They help out on outings and share information about their own culture.

Children enjoy quiet and relaxing times as they listen to stories and music. They respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell and touch. Children are learning to manage their own behaviour and they show kindness and consideration towards visitors. Children are learning about the world they live in and the beliefs of other people. They are developing self confidence and esteem as they enjoy participating in festival celebrations, such as Christmas and Diwali. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children share good relationships with staff who have been vetted for their suitability to work with young children. However, full evidence of all recruitment procedures were not available at the inspection. Over half the staff working directly with children hold a recognised childcare qualification. Children benefit from the combined knowledge of the staff team as they are encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge by attending various courses. For example, Foundation Stage of Learning and Birth to three matters framework.

Although the setting meets the required staffing ratios, it has operated with one staff during the afternoon sessions, however this was rectified immediately following the inspection. This is a breach in criteria in the National Standards. A minimum of two adults are required to be on duty at all times. Overall, children are interested in the activities on offer. However, the organisation of the day, staffing and resources do not allow children enough time to explore their chosen activity, minimises the time children spend with staff and reduces children's opportunities to select activities independently.

The relevant policies and procedures are in place to keep children healthy and safe. However, the complaints policy and procedure have not been updated in line with the changes in recent legislation to the National Standards. Children's personal details and attendance registers for children, staff and visitors are suitably organised and maintained.

The leadership and management for the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager has attended Foundation Stage training. All staff are encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills through attending training courses. The manager observes staff in order to monitor the quality of teaching. However, current strengths and weaknesses in teaching are not clearly identified. There are some effective communication systems in place, such as occasional staff meetings and daily discussions. The manager builds strong relationships with other professionals within the community.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting had a number of areas for improvement highlighted at the last inspection. The areas included safety of the toilets, the outdoor play area, provision of stimulating activities, behaviour management, the organisation of snack time and staff deployment.

The setting has now addressed some of the areas. They have taken positive steps to make the toilets and the outdoor play area safer for children. Children are now provided with stimulating activities. However, the poor organisation of the day does not allow children enough time to explore their chosen activity. Staff's management of children's behaviour is appropriate. Children are encouraged to take turns and share and show caring attitudes towards each other. Overall, children are well behaved.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain 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):

- provide more opportunities for all children to run, climb, balance and enjoy vigorous activity (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure secure procedures are in place for staff team to be familiar with and to provide children's individual dietary and care needs
- organise the day to make good use of time, space, staffing and resources in

order to meet children's individual needs more effectively (this also applies to nursery education)

- ensure evidence of robust staff recruitment procedures are available on site at all times
- ensure there is a minimum of two adults on duty
- update policies and procedures in line with the current legislation, in particular the complaint procedure.

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 outdoor play as indicated in the care section above
- develop and maintain the systems for: evaluating the children's progress; planning the next steps for children's learning; and monitoring the quality of teaching
- allow flexibility in the planning to ensure that children have several opportunities to learn at their own pace and have plenty of time to consolidate their learning
- organise the day as indicated in the care section above.

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