



Learn Through Play Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY300872
Inspection date	17 November 2005
Inspector	Jacqui Lloyd / Joanne Lindsey Caswell
Setting Address	Centenary Hall, Wheelers Lane, Smallfield, Horley, Surrey, RH6 9PT
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Registered person	Maria McDermott
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Learn Through Play Pre-School has been registered since 2005. It operates from the Centenary Hall, in Smallfield, Surrey. Children have access to a large group room. There is a fully enclosed outside play area and children share the communal toilets within the setting.

The pre-school is open, during term time only, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Tuesday and Thursday, sessions operate from 08:55 to 11:25. Children may also stay for a lunch session until 12:25. On Wednesday and Friday, sessions operate from 08:55 to 14:55.

The pre-school provides care for a total of 26 children, aged from 2 years to under 5 years. There are currently 39 children on roll. This includes 23 children who receive funding for nursery education. There is provision to support children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of 8 staff work with the children. Of these, 4 staff hold a recognised early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children begin to learn the importance of keeping themselves healthy. They develop independent self-care skills as they ask to use the toilet and recognise when they need to wash their hands. They understand the importance of hand washing, ensuring they are sufficiently protected against infection. Children's health is promoted as staff implement effective hygiene procedures to minimise the spread of infection.

The premises are maintained to a satisfactory standard and some procedures are in place to ensure they are clean and hygienic for children.

Children have regular opportunities to play in the fresh air and benefit from physical exercise. They use a range of resources, enabling them to move in a variety of ways to develop muscle control. For example, children show skill in balancing and climbing and show well-developed co-ordination.

Children's dietary needs are sufficiently met. They develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating as staff encourage children to learn about the importance of eating nutritious snacks. Children have some access to drinks, enabling them to help themselves when they are thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises provide an adequately maintained and spacious environment. Children are supervised whilst using the toilets, as these are shared with other hall users. The outside area is enclosed, providing a safe area for children.

Children play with an adequate range of resources, however, some of these are very well used and some books are in poor condition.

Children learn some aspects of safety as part of topic work. The current topic of 'People Who Help Us' helps children to learn the importance of road safety, as they enjoy a visit from the 'lollipop lady'.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection. Some staff have attended training and recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. There are written policies in place to guide staff about the relevant Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures, should they ever have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children are mainly happy and confident. They engage in different types of play, although there are limited opportunities for children to select their own play materials. This inhibits children's independence and their freedom of choice. Some children develop relationships with staff and communicate easily with one another. However, some staff have a weak understanding of children's developmental needs. Activities for the younger children are not planned in accordance with their needs and developmental ability. This prevents the younger children from undertaking activities which are purposefully planned to challenge and stimulate them appropriately. As some staff have a limited understanding of each child's personal needs, this restricts some children from feeling secure and developing a sense of belonging within the pre-school. Children have limited concentration. Due to the organisation of the pre-school, some large group activities often become disruptive and children quickly become unsettled. This inhibits the learning opportunities for all children. Staff have a limited understanding of providing a stimulating, challenging and imaginative range of play opportunities to encourage children's learning.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff lack understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, preventing them from planning and providing appropriate activities to stimulate children's learning. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is not sufficiently monitored and assessment records are not updated appropriately. This restricts staff from identifying children's different learning needs to inform future planning. Staff do not utilise all routine activities to encourage children's learning. Although some curriculum planning is in place, it lacks detail. Activity plans are not focused on specific areas of learning and some activities do not have a clearly identified learning intention. This restricts staff from using activities to assess and monitor children's progress.

Children's behaviour is not managed effectively and consistently by all staff. As a result of this, children do not always learn acceptable boundaries and do not always show care and respect for their possessions. There is poor provision in place to support children with special needs.

Children have few opportunities within the daily routine to develop their independence. They self-register on arrival and find their names at snack time. However, children have little choice in selecting their own play materials and

resources, as these are pre-selected by staff. Some children form positive relationships with one another and talk about their special friends. Children do not always show interest and motivation in the pre-school activities, as some activities present little developmental challenge. As a result of this, children's behaviour is sometimes disruptive.

Children engage in conversation confidently with adults, although their language development is not always extended appropriately, due to closed questioning by staff. Children's language and listening skills are not promoted effectively, particularly during group discussion. As a result of this, many children quickly lose concentration during these sessions, resulting in missed learning opportunities. Children show little interest in books, due to the poor presentation of the book corner and condition of the books available. They have few opportunities to see clear print and words on display. This restricts children from developing an understanding that print and text carry meaning. Children develop their skills in mark making as they have opportunities to use writing for a purpose, particularly during role play.

Children have few opportunities to count and use numbers throughout the daily routine. There are missed opportunities for children to count at snack time and there is minimal visual evidence of numbers on display. This restricts children from developing their understanding of number value and the concepts of 'more than' and 'less than'. There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts, such as capacity, as children do not have regular access to sand and water play. There is poor provision for children to undertake activities to enable them to understand the concepts of colour, sorting, shape and size. This results in many missed learning opportunities for children and restricts their understanding of mathematical concepts.

Children have few opportunities to learn about the world and respect the differing cultural needs of others. Children have recently taken part in craft activities relating to Diwali and have previously undertaken activities based around a themed multicultural week. However, there is no on-going planning, throughout the year, for children to consistently learn about diversity within society and the customs and beliefs of others. As a result of this, children have little opportunity to develop positive attitudes and learn about differences and similarities, to enable them to celebrate diversity. Children begin to learn about the role of others through the current topic of 'People Who Help Us'. Children have enjoyed a recent visit from the local 'lollipop lady' and have visited a local farm. This enables children to develop their understanding of the local community and broadens their experiences of the world in which they live.

Children have opportunities to move in a variety of ways. They use resources such as balancing beams, climbing frames, trampoline, wheeled toys, balls and hoops, enabling them to develop their muscle control and co-ordination. Children develop their manipulative skills and dexterity by handling dough, drawing and pouring drinks. They begin to learn about the importance of healthy eating, as they are encouraged to eat nutritious snacks.

Children enjoy role play and actively engage in imaginative play, particularly using the Surrey Fire and Rescue Pre-School resource pack. This enables children to play creatively and re-enact the role of fire-fighters, to support their topic work. Children

have limited access to sensory play. This restricts children from experimenting with different textures and materials. Children have few opportunities to use their own creativity. Children do not always have access to free painting and craft resources and many other art activities are heavily led by adults, limiting children's own free expression. Children do not regularly engage in musical activities, such as singing or using musical instruments. This inhibits children's creative development and restricts children from developing an interest in music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children do not consistently learn how to show care and respect for one another and their possessions. Staff do not utilise learning opportunities for children to develop their awareness of the needs of others. As a result, children are sometimes unaware of the needs and feelings of others and do not always look after their possessions and play materials appropriately.

Children are not always treated as individuals and staff do not consistently adapt play and learning opportunities to cater for their differing needs and abilities. Some staff are unfamiliar with all children's specific needs and, therefore, do not always meet them appropriately. This limits children's opportunities to develop their self-esteem and form positive relationships.

There are insufficient procedures in place to enable children to learn about the wider world and develop positive attitudes towards respecting diversity. Although children have celebrated a 'Multi-cultural Week', there is little evidence in curriculum planning to reflect how staff continually use topics and activities. This restricts children from developing an understanding of the wider world and cultural and social differences.

Staff have a weak understanding of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and do not consistently follow written policies and procedures. There is poor provision in place to support children with special needs as their individual needs are not always formally monitored.

Children's behaviour is not always managed effectively and sensitively. Staff do not consistently act as good role models and promote a fair and positive environment. Children do not always share and co-operate with one another as staff do not encourage this through the use of negotiation and co-operation. Children's behaviour is disruptive at times, as they are unfamiliar with the acceptable boundaries within the pre-school. As a result, children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is not fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is inadequate. Staff encourage parents to provide information on their individual children's progress when they start at the pre-school, although this information not used effectively to plan for children's further learning. Insufficient procedures are in place to enable parents to be fully involved in their children's care and education at the pre-school. Information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum and weekly activities is not freely available and displayed for parents, restricting them from being fully informed about their children's

activities. There are no formal procedures in place for parents to discuss their children's progress with the staff. This restricts the opportunities for children to see their parents and the pre-school staff as partners in their care and education.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Staff have worked together for many years and are aware of their differing roles. However, they have insufficient opportunities to improve and extend their knowledge of early years care and education through the completion of further training. As a result, staff do not have up-to-date knowledge and are unable to deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum and provide activities for children aged under three years appropriately.

There are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that all staff who work with children undergo the appropriate checks and vetting procedures.

Staff deployment is not always fully effective. There is a high ratio of staff to children, although staff do not always utilise opportunities to interact with children appropriately to develop and extend their learning. The general organisation of the daily routine is not always effective. Poor staff deployment, particularly at snack time, leads to children becoming disruptive and noisy. The current organisation of the group results in children of mixed ages, from 2 years to 4 years, being grouped together for activities such as story time and group discussion. This leads to disruptive group times, as a result of the differing learning needs of children of mixed ages and abilities.

There is a comprehensive operational plan in place, detailing how the pre-school is run. However, many policy documents are incomplete and staff are unfamiliar with the policies and procedures. As a result of this, staff do not consistently implement pre-school policies and procedures in their daily practice. Regulatory documentation is maintained and is signed by parents, where necessary.

The leadership and management are inadequate. The owner/manager is present at the group daily and has nominated a pre-school supervisor to oversee the running of the group. However, the manager does not ensure that staff have access to regular, appropriate training to ensure their knowledge and skills are kept up-to-date. Staff training is not seen as a high priority and there are insufficient procedures in place for staff to review and evaluate their daily practice on a continual basis.

There are no formal systems in place for the manager to carry out evaluations on the pre-school to enable her to address weaknesses and identify areas for improvement.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- review the organisation of the pre-school routine and ensure that staff are effectively deployed to maximise the learning opportunities and improve care routines for all children
- ensure staff implement appropriate behaviour management strategies to enable children to understand acceptable boundaries
- improve the care and provision for children by ensuring that their individual developmental care needs are recognised and respected
- improve the opportunities for children to develop positive attitudes towards respecting diversity and learn about the wider world

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of Foundation Stage curriculum planning, to enable them to deliver activities which provide appropriate and suitable challenge for all children

- improve staff's understanding of how to plan for, observe and monitor children's individual progress and use assessments records to inform future planning and learning
- increase opportunities for staff training and ensure pre-school practice is regularly evaluated to identify areas for improvement
- increase the opportunities for children to develop their language, mathematical skills and creative development within all areas of the daily routine

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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