



## **St Leonard's Nursery**

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 300739

**Inspection date** 28 November 2005

**Inspector** Jill Lee

**Setting Address** St Leonard's Church Hall, Everingham Road, Sheffield, S5 7LE

**Telephone number** 0114 242 2466

**E-mail** suemoore@BTclick.com

**Registered person** Susan Moore

**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](http://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?

St. Leonard's Nursery was registered in 1995. It is a privately owned nursery, which operates in the St. Leonard's Church building in the Longley area of Sheffield.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens each weekday from 08.00 until 17.30 throughout the year. Children are cared for in one main play room. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play and a large hall for indoor physical activity.

There are currently 28 children on roll aged between 2 and 5 years, of whom 12 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special needs but there are no children who speak English as an additional language.

There are five staff employed to work directly with the children, four of whom have an appropriate qualification in child care and education and one who has a play work qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery environment is warm and adequately maintained. Children are protected from illness and infection as staff follow clearly defined hygiene routines. For example, they check and clean the toilets throughout the day and consistently wear disposable gloves for nappy changing. Children are helped to understand the importance of good hygiene practice; for example, they wash their hands before eating and are able to wipe their nose independently. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication meet requirements and protect children.

Staff consider parents' wishes so that children's individual health and dietary needs are met. Children enjoy freshly cooked meals, which sometimes include fresh vegetables; they are able to try different fruits at snack time. Staff do not routinely introduce discussions about the importance of healthy eating. Children are developing independence as they feed themselves, learning to use appropriate cutlery and pour their own drinks; however, they do not make choices about what they want to eat or serve themselves at mealtimes. They are offered drinks frequently throughout the day.

Children enjoy daily physical activity both indoors in the big hall and outside, which contributes to their overall good health. They develop co-ordination and control of their bodies as they occasionally use climbing and balancing equipment. They play running and chasing games and wriggle their way through the big tunnel, squealing with delight. They manoeuvre wheeled toys around, pedalling back and forth, avoiding obstacles and stopping safely; they practise throwing and catching balls and jumping in and out of hoops. Children are supported to develop and extend their physical skills and become confident to express and manage their own needs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in secure, welcoming premises by staff who understand their role in keeping children safe. They are protected from potential hazards as staff check the premises daily and take appropriate steps to minimise risks, both in the setting and on outings. Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff involve them in discussions and teach them safe practice. For example, children know they are 'only allowed to run around in the hall and outside'. Staff promote sensible behaviour

by explaining when actions are unsafe; for example, that rocking on the chair while eating an apple may cause the child to choke.

Children have access to sufficient, safe space to allow them to enjoy a good variety of activities. They choose from a reasonable range of safe and suitable toys and play materials. Resources are of sound quality and well maintained; they are organised in low level storage, making them easy for children to reach. The play environment allows children to move around freely and safely, developing their own play ideas.

Staff give priority to protecting children but have not had any recent opportunity to access appropriate child protection training. The child protection policy does not refer to recent guidelines. Children are sensitively supported to share their feelings and make their needs known. However, staff are not sufficiently aware of updated child protection procedures to assure their ability to protect children fully.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well and are happy in the nursery. They confidently make choices about their play, independently selecting activities from the balanced range available. Children explore activities freely, such as sand and construction; they use the small world and role play resources very cooperatively. They concentrate well on activities which interest them and persevere to complete tasks; for example, working out how to fit the drawer back into the unit. Children learn to share and cooperate well, involving others in their games; for example, they negotiate roles in their imaginary play so that everyone can join in.

Caring relationships foster children's self-esteem and warm interactions enable them to play happily, reassured by the presence of familiar adults. Planning of the continuous provision within the daily environment does not sufficiently promote children's free, exploratory play opportunities. For example, the role play area and craft areas are not presented so that they invite children's interest and access to sand, water, paint and dough activities are alternated rather than continuous. Daily routines sometimes disrupt the flow of children's play and limit their opportunity to return to activities. The needs of children of different ages are not fully considered when planning group activities. A very limited range of activity choices is made available in the outdoor area and large hall.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, so that children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. They show interest in a range of purposeful first hand activities and are confident to try out new experiences, supported by staff with a reasonable knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Activity planning covers all areas of learning so that children enjoy a balanced range of experiences within the daily environment; they are interested and motivated to learn.

Children enjoy coming to the nursery. They communicate well and confidently share their own ideas and experiences; they enjoy stories and most are able to listen

attentively. Children begin to recognise and practise writing their name; they know some letter sounds but opportunity to use writing for different purposes is limited. Children count and recognise some numbers in everyday activities, like calendar time; they use some comparative size and positional language with comprehension in their construction play.

Children become interested in the world around them. They have wellingtons and umbrellas so they can enjoy and explore the outdoor environment in all weathers, observing changes in the seasons and in nature. They explore wet sand and talk about how heavy it feels; they pour water through funnels and colanders, describing what happens. They are making a Christmas collage with a hairy camel, although the creative area is not always sufficiently interesting to prompt their independent creativity. Staff do not sufficiently define learning objectives and vary the resourcing of activity areas, to enhance stimulus and promote new learning for children.

Staff routinely observe children's achievements in their everyday play experiences and in planned observations. Observations are, however, not clearly linked to the stepping stones or appropriately evaluated to help staff plan next steps in learning and identify ways in which activities can be differentiated. This means that the daily environment does not consistently provide sufficient challenge to extend learning for some children.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly welcomed by staff who work closely with parents to find out what is important to them. Children know they are valued, as staff listen to what they say and ask questions about their experiences and interests. Familiar staff are always on hand to offer support and reassurance. This contributes to children feeling secure and content in the nursery. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children with special needs are involved in all activities. The nursery has established a clear system to record parents' concerns.

Children play harmoniously together; they make close friendships with each other. They are aware of their own needs and often show consideration for the needs of others as they take turns, share toys and develop shared play ideas. Staff help them to manage situations for themselves; for example, they watch the clock for five minutes as they negotiate when the train game is to start. Staff reinforce rules and boundaries but with insufficient consistency. For example, children do not always respect resources, as they have damaged some of the new home corner equipment and they are not clearly reminded about expected behaviour at snack time. They are encouraged to take some responsibility for their own behaviour; for example, they are helped to see that another child may be upset if their castle is knocked down. However, staff do not actively use all opportunities within daily routines to promote children's independence skills and opportunity to contribute in daily routines. For example, a few children help to tidy away toys ready for snack time but they rarely help to prepare the snack or set the tables; some children do not hang up their own coats after playing outside.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered in the nursery. They learn about the wider world as staff plan activities, which raise their awareness of the lives and cultures of other people. For example, they dress up in multi-ethnic dressing up clothes, find out about different festivals and plan a Christmas nativity. They are encouraged to make choices and decisions as they plan their own play.

The nursery establishes a good partnership with parents and carers. Parents receive an informative introductory brochure which explains nursery practices well; they are encouraged to make suggestions. They are confident in approaching staff and regularly share what they know about their child. They enjoy relaxed and comfortable relationships, promoting children's sense of security. Staff keep parents well informed about what their children are doing and learning. This includes regular daily discussions, newsletters, photographs and written details of planned activities. Parents are able to see their child's assessments by request and formal parents' evenings are planned twice yearly. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and staff have tried to suggest some activities for parents to share with their child at home; they are encouraged to choose a book on a regular basis to take home to read with their child.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery environment is organised to promote children's welfare. Daily routines are planned to respond to children's varying needs and interests. Staff are deployed effectively and careful risk assessments are in place to monitor children's safety.

Children's care and education are supported by satisfactory leadership and management. The stable staff team enjoy working together. Staff have some appropriate development opportunities; for example, they are working closely with an advisory teacher and workshops are planned to develop use of the outdoor environment. Procedures to appraise staff development needs and monitor the effectiveness of teaching in systematically helping children to make progress are not completely robust.

Required policies and procedures are in place and shared effectively with parents. There is a system in place to keep policies updated. Induction procedures help to ensure procedures are consistently applied, so that children's welfare is safeguarded. Staff are appropriately vetted and have suitable skills and experience to work with children; vetting procedures are to be updated to meet new requirements. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. Parents' wishes regarding their child's care influence day to day practice and clear written agreements are recorded.

Overall the nursery promotes children's well-being and meets the individual needs of the range of the children who attend.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to update policies and procedures and ensure staff become fully familiar with their responsibilities within them. This has been addressed so that policies and procedures mainly reflect current practice and legislation; procedures for administering medication are now as required and parents are aware of the role of Ofsted if complaints cannot be resolved by the provider. Detail of staff responsibilities and recording requirements are not sufficiently outlined in the procedures. The equal opportunities policy now includes procedures for responding to racist and discriminatory remarks, which contributes to the promotion of inclusion and positive practice in the nursery. There is a system for ongoing review, which helps to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded by staff who understand their responsibilities.

Planning for appropriate play experiences for children aged 2 to three 3 remains an area which the nursery is developing, although younger children settle very well in the nursery and their care needs are addressed effectively.

With regard to the provision of nursery education, the nursery was asked to improve the use of freely chosen activities and daily routines to extend children's learning, particularly in maths and developing writing for different purposes; to improve the use of information gained from observations and assessments to plan next steps in children's learning and provide challenge for more able children; and to improve the organisation and presentation of resources to enable children to make the best use of the learning materials available. Staff have worked well to make progress in all these areas, but further developments are needed to link observations to how activities are planned and the environment resourced, to stimulate children's interest and offer well planned opportunities to make consistent progress through the stepping stones.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints since 1 April 2004. 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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- plan activities to raise children's awareness of the importance of healthy eating and increase their opportunity to make healthy choices at mealtimes
- ensure the child protection policy reflects current guidance and update staff awareness of their responsibilities within the child protection procedures
- re-evaluate the range of choices offered in the daily continuous provision and the impact of routines on children's experiences, such as using the Birth to three framework to enhance planning for younger children
- reinforce expected behaviour and plan more opportunities for children to be actively involved in helping with routines and managing their own behaviour

### **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):

- evaluate observations of children's progress and use them to plan next steps in learning, differentiate activities and increase challenge
- identify the intended teaching focus in activity areas, varying presentation and resourcing to enhance stimulus and promote new learning
- enhance procedures to assess staff development needs and systematically monitor the effectiveness of teaching in helping children to make progress.

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