



Little Gems Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY295341
Inspection date	29 November 2005
Inspector	Steven Anthony Urry
Setting Address	St. Winefrides RC Aided Primary School, Mellock Lane, Little Neston, Neston, Merseyside, CH64 9RW
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Registered person	Joanne Honora Smith
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Gems pre-school and out of school has been registered since December 2004. The provision is privately owned and operates from within St Winefrides Primary School. Services are provided for the children attending the school and children from the local villages.

The provision is registered for 24 children overall. There are currently 35 children on roll in the pre-school and 36 children on the roll in the after school club. This includes

24 funded children. All children attend for a variety of sessions. There are funded children who have special educational needs. Children attend the provision who speak English as an additional language.

The setting operates Monday to Friday, term time only. Morning sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45. When there is sufficient demand afternoon sessions operate from 12:45 to 15:15 by prior arrangement. Children between the ages of two and a half and five years attend the provision.

There is an experienced manager who is supported by four other staff. All hold relevant qualifications in child care. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning to take care of their bodies and follow good personal hygiene routines. They know to wash their hands as part of the daily routine before eating their snacks and recognise the need to wash the germs away after they have been to the toilet. Children's health is promoted because practitioners have relevant first aid training, which is updated on a regular basis. Practitioners ensure children's health requirements are met and record when medication is administered and when accidents occur. The risk of children being subjected to infection is minimised as practitioners implement effective health and safety procedures, for example they wipe the tables down with an anti-bacterial spray.

Children enjoy sharing their snacks in small groups and begin to develop an understanding of healthy eating as healthy options are introduced to the children each week, including biscuits with cheese, followed by a varied selection of fresh and dried fruit. Children's needs for regular fluids are met by them being able to ask for drinks. However, the older more capable children are unable to access drinks independently.

Children enjoy daily opportunities to engage in physical activities this helps them begin to recognise the importance of taking exercise and adopt a healthy lifestyle. The children all enjoy a good range of outdoor apparatus as well as good access to a stimulating sensory garden which captures their interest and their natural curiosity as learners.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is maintained because practitioners are vigilant and identify and remove all potential hazards both indoors and outside. Risk assessments, daily health and safety checks and procedures for outings ensure children's safety is not compromised. Children learn how to handle tools safely, for example when making

'rocking' Christmas cards they handle scissors with increasing skill. They practise and record fire drills regularly; this increases both the children's and the adult's awareness of how to respond in an emergency situation. The children are reminded of the need to walk in a line and understand that they need to stay together to ensure their safety when they go outside. Effective procedures to sign children in and out of the building contribute to their safety and welfare being promoted.

Children are protected from harm because all of the practitioners have an appropriate understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regards to child protection issues. They know how to implement local procedures and record injuries should any concerns arise. Children's welfare is enhanced by effective systems being securely in place for working with parents and outside agencies.

Children move freely within a welcoming, safe, secure learning environment for much of the session. They use a suitable and safe range of equipment and have good access to resources in all areas.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children in both the pre-school and the out of school enjoy a varied, well planned and interesting range of activities. These include singing, listening to stories, building and construction, domestic and role play, sand and play dough. They have many good opportunities for sensory and creative play, such as pouring chocolate chips from one vessel to another, making collages, or playing games involving the use of rhythm, sounds and movement to music. They have good opportunities to develop their physical skills by using a varied amount of natural resources in the sensory outdoor play area. They listen to stories, look at books, and recite familiar words and numbers in songs with enthusiasm.

Children are making steady progress in all areas of their development, due to the staff's lively and effective interactions with them. The children talk about what is happening during play activities, and the staff are responsive as they encourage and support their efforts to communicate their thoughts and ideas. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to develop their understanding of how young children develop as individuals. The current methods for assessing children's progress are identified for further improvement in order for the adult carers to track, plan and enhance children's individual progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals, as the staff use their knowledge of how young children learn to plan themed activities on a regular basis. Staff provide children with experiences in all the areas of learning, and there are sufficient and appropriate resources to support their development in most aspects of the stepping stones. Children are making progress in speaking clearly and listening to one another. They are learning about letters, numbers and shapes, although this occurs mainly through formal activities as opposed to spontaneous and child initiated play.

Children concentrate well and are keen to learn from the variety of activities provided. They relate well to each other, as they learn to share resources and take turns to participate in activities, for example listening and speaking in a group. Children have fun and use long descriptive words such as 'fantastic' whilst making cakes and describe how food makes you big and strong.

Children benefit from good access to early science and maths, for example skilfully weighing ingredients, measuring and identifying objects according to their different attributes, such as recognising and naming shapes and colours.

Activities support children's understanding of socialisation as they learn to feel part of and respond to the wider community and to respect difference. They have opportunities to learn about their local community and the wider world, for example celebrating special events and a range of cultural festivals. They also discover and learn about different places around the world in 'teddies travels' where they describe and record their joint adventures. Most children operate the computer independently and use the computer well, showing excitement and pleasure when they achieve the desired effect.

The role play areas such as the 'workbench' ensure children are given sufficient opportunities to extend their learning in practical activities within the daily routine. The children enjoy creative and messy activities, such as dancing or painting pictures for the Christmas displays. They develop their understanding of time and place through topic work, discussions and making good use of the local area, for example visiting the library. They have regular opportunities to develop good hand control and co-ordination, using pencils, brushes, threading objects and use their large muscles in games and physical activities.

The curriculum is well planned although sometimes opportunities are overlooked, such as enhancing children's skills in free drawing and writing in the role play area. Children are mostly afforded sufficient challenges, as activities are adapted to meet their individual learning needs. Staff are beginning to make assessments of children's achievements, but these do not currently show how children are progressing towards the early learning goals. This information is currently not utilised sufficiently to plan the next steps in children's learning. This results in a less informed approach to supporting children's efforts to develop particular skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show positive self-esteem and express themselves confidently because they are valued by practitioners who know their individual home and family circumstances. The effective registration procedures helps to ensure children settle in to the group well and the implementation of the key worker system enables young children to develop self-assurance and a sense of belonging. Children are kind to one another and help their peers in activities, for example the older children help the younger ones to put away their chairs. They are sensitive to one another's needs and respond well to the continual praise from staff helping children feel valued and proud of their individual achievements.

Children are reminded about the rules through discussions with the practitioners. They behave very well. The children are happy and relaxed as they go about their activities and are confident with the daily routine. All children are valued and welcomed into the pre-school. Practitioners recognise the need to work alongside parents and outside agencies to ensure children with special educational needs and children with English as an additional language are supported effectively. There are no children attending the pre-school that currently meet this criteria, however strategies are in place should children with additional needs be identified.

Activities and discussions, for example about Christmas and Chinese New Year help the children to gain an understanding of the world around them. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit because friendly informal relationships are established between their parents and practitioners, which helps to secure links between home and pre-school. Parents are informed about the group through information provided in the detailed prospectus, newsletters, the parent notice board and informal discussions with practitioners. Opportunities are available for them to spend time in the group, for example, a new parent spending the morning at the group.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Basic induction training, policies and procedures are in place and work in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Most information is well organised and readily accessible. However, the written parental permission for medical advice or treatment is only maintained for the out of school provision. Staff training is provided and is linked to professional development in order to meet identified needs and support improvements within the setting.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff display knowledge of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and implement this in their practice. Children engage in purposeful activities which are further enhanced by the staff's knowledge of child development and the difference in children's needs/development which contributes to their quality of care.

Time is well managed and a good balance of indoor and outdoor play is used to extend learning and development for all the children. Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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):

- ensure written parental permission for medical advice or treatment is maintained

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 the systems for assessment and recording; ensuring that the next steps in children's learning are identified and the activities build on what children already know and understand, therefore sustaining children's interests and challenging them appropriately.

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