



Little Apples

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	502595
Inspection date	10 May 2006
Inspector	Margaret Patricia Mellor
Setting Address	St Gabriel's Parish Room, Hall Lane, Huyton, Liverpool, L36 6AZ
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Registered person	The Apple Trust
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Apples was registered in 2001. It is run by a Board of Trustees and is based in St Gabriel's Parish Rooms near to Huyton town centre in Knowsley. Children have access to the main hall, multi activity room and a first floor room for their care and play experiences. There is a secure, fully enclosed garden for children's outdoor play. The setting primarily serves children living in the local community.

A maximum of 42 children aged from two years to under eight years may attend at anyone time. The setting provides an all year round service and runs Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 17:30 hours. There are 88 children on roll aged from three to 11

years who attend various full day, sessional care and out of schools sessions. The setting supports children with special needs.

The setting employs nine full and part-time staff to work with the children. Seven staff have a relevant qualification in child care. There is a cook, cleaner and administrator. The setting receives support from Knowsley Social Services and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well protected as the staff act in children's best interests when they are ill and store medication in an accessible place out of children's reach. Eight staff have a relevant first aid certificate and keep a fully stocked first aid box close at hand so they can quickly respond to any minor injuries. This safeguards children's well-being. Children thrive because good health and hygiene procedures are consistently followed by staff, which helps to prevent the spread of cross-infection, promoting children's well-being. Younger children learn simple good personal hygiene as the staff sensitively remind them to wipe their noses and to put their tissues in the bin. Older children are reinforcing their learning of how to keep healthy as staff explain why being hygienic is important and confidently talk about how washing hands gets rid of germs so they stay well.

Children's interest in food is nurtured because the cook provides them with many healthy and nutritious freshly prepared foods. The children's lunch is particularly wholesome and served in ample portions to ensure the children are well nourished. Children enjoy a variety of fresh and dried fruits with French toast or cream crackers at snack times. This increases their awareness of a range of textures. There are effective procedures for sharing information about children's individual dietary needs so parents wishes are respected and children remain healthy. Drinking water is readily available for all children throughout the day enabling them to independently help themselves when thirsty or after exercise.

Children enjoy a range of activities planned by staff that contributes to their growth and development. They love run in the fresh air, climb, ride on wheeled toys, move to music, play ball games and older children spontaneously do hand stands. This promotes their coordination and spatial awareness skills. Staff encourage cooperation and participation through the effective use of group games and resources, in particular the parachute. Children relish tactile and manipulative activities that helps to build on and reinforce their fine motor skills. All children are able to be active or restful in line with their respective needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, safe environment and although the premises are old they are suitable for the children's needs. They enjoy a variety of challenge as they play in the safe enclosed outdoor area. Children can develop their independence as they move freely and safely in the setting because the staff vigilantly implement procedures when visitors and parents arrive. All the necessary safety equipment is in place and the staff carry out a daily premises check. This helps to minimise the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves. There are effective and well thought out procedures for keeping children safe and well, whilst enjoying outings. The staff ensure parents give written permission for children travel in a vehicle and that all children are appropriately secured so they travel in comfort and safety.

Children learn about personal safety as they regularly practise what to do in the event of a fire and younger children through the staff's gentle reminders to pick up the toys so they do not trip. All children benefit from road safety activities planned by staff that contributes to children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Their protection is further assured because the staff have a strong understanding of child protection issues and the steps to take to safeguard children. The staff's willingness to note concerns and discuss these with parents ensures that the well-being of children in their care is a high priority.

Children enjoy freedom of movement in the setting because the staff organise the space well. They have free access to a generally good range of quality toys and equipment that are suitable for their age while presenting them with appropriate challenges. The toys, games and resources are maintained well as the staff follow appropriate health and safety procedures, so children remain safe. All children have much fun as they play with the toys and relax in comfort with their friends because the tables, chairs and comfy cushions are suitable for the children who attend.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are clearly relaxed and at ease in the setting that helps promote their personal, social and emotional development. Younger children benefit from consistent everyday routines such as meals, story or rhyme times. This promotes their sense of belonging. All children eagerly enter the setting where they are given a warm welcome by the staff who have set out a wide variety of toys and activities. They choose between self initiated play or engage in activities with staff. Older children eagerly and happily develop their friendships as they form into small groups with their friends to relax after school, engage in imaginative play and chat about what they are doing. Younger children relish the staff's close contact as they play with the toys and show much interest in the activity going on around them. This helps build the youngster's confidence to initiate their own play and learning. All children are listened to by staff and as a result they are confident to make their needs known to the adults. They have a good understanding of how to behave and keep themselves healthy and safe.

Children have a good time in the setting because the staff plan a generally broad range of interesting activities that help stimulate and enhance children's skills through play. They are motivated and eagerly participate in a creative activities, such as mark

making, reading and as they make models out of play dough, Knex or recyclable materials. They extend their imagination as they love to dress up and play with the cars or small world figures in the dolls house. Younger children learn to count through everyday routines, play matching or sorting games with staff and have much fun as they do jigsaws that promotes their mathematical thinking. They begin to understand about the natural world as they watch the birds, plant seeds and listen to stories about the hungry caterpillar. Older children particularly relish jewellery making, playing outdoors and having a game of pool. All children explore their senses as they listen to music, run their fingers through the sand or water and taste different food textures. This further enhance their early learning or out of school experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are highly valued because staff have a good understanding of special needs that sometimes involves them working in close partnership with parents and others, such as the 'Portage' worker. This means that all children are included and joining in the days activities. Children are happy to attend the setting and are very comfortable with their easy relationships with staff promoting their sense of belonging. Art work for all ages of children is valued as it is widely displayed on the walls. This builds on children's self-esteem and provides a welcoming environment for themselves and their parents. Children begin to learn about the wider community as they go for walks, however, there are few activities or resources that extend children's understanding of different lifestyles.

Children are kind, considerate and thoughtful to one another because the staff provide positive role models, encouraging polite interaction. All children are busy and involved in the activities and as a result their behaviour is very good. Staff have high expectations of children and offer praise freely ensuring that they develop confidence and know when they have done well. Younger children willingly help to tidy away the toys before snack, which positively fosters their self-worth. Older children are developing good social skills and a clear respect for others because staff have invited them to contribute to the club ground rules and acceptable behaviours. All children are polite to one another as they willingly share the toys and take turns. They show consideration and thoughtfulness through their interactions with their peers and adults.

Children's needs are met very well because warm and friendly relationships have been established between the staff and parents and information is shared regularly. Parents are provided with a welcome pack and invited to complete an 'All About My Child' booklet as part of the enrolment procedures. This reassures parents that children's interests come first. A detailed notice board and regular newsletters keep parents up to date with forthcoming activities. There is effective ongoing sharing of information through younger children's diaries and as parents engage in easy conversation with the staff about their children's activities. Parents comment positively about their children's care, learning and progress. This meaningful relationship between home and the setting very clearly contributes to children's

continuity and quality of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, comfortable and generally well equipped environment because the staff have a commitment to continual review and development of the service. Clear policies and procedures are in place that assist the staff team to work well together to provide an effective service for the children. The staff ensure children are well protected because they are only collected by authorised people and non-vetted persons are not allowed access to them. All the relevant daily documentation is maintained well, such as children's daily attendance, accident and medication records, which further promotes children's welfare.

Children benefit from the appropriate adult-child ratios and the experience of the qualified staff. There are rigorous systems for recruitment, induction and supervision of adults who care for the children. Staff are committed to their own self development through attendance on childcare courses. Regular team meetings help the staff to share ideas. This further contributes to the quality of care offered.

Children are cared for in a family group setting and younger children have a named keyworker so that their experiences are happy and positive. Older children benefit from informal key working as staff support with small group activities. All children are assisted to develop their independence and create friendships because the staff have organised a stimulating and fun environment. The staff plan the activities well so that all children benefit from fresh air and enjoy a balance of structured activities and self-initiated play. Children have plenty of fun and grow in confidence as they self select toys and pursue activities that appeal to them. Information is shared with parents regularly promoting children's continuity of care.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There are five recommendations of the previous report which refer to: organisation; care, learning and play; health; partnership with parents; and documentation. They have: improved the keyworker system; developed the planning and assessment for children's learning; reviewed the hand washing and drying facilities in the bathrooms; introduced a parent welcome pack; gained parental consent for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment; and reviewed the registration procedures and medication records. This is further safeguarding children and has improved the quality of care offered.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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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):

- improve the range of children's activities and resources that promote equal opportunities.

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