



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 303434

DfES Number: 524760

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 07/07/2003
Inspector Name Rita Cruddos

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care, Out of School Day Care
Setting Name Early Learners Nursery
Setting Address 20 Deacon Road
 Widnes
 Cheshire
 WA8 6ED

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name . Early Learners Nursery Ltd

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Early Learners Nursery and After School Care is situated in Widnes town centre. It is registered to provide care for seventy six children aged from nought to five years in the nursery, and twenty six children aged between five and eight years in the out of school club. Wrap Around Care is also offered during school holidays. It is open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 5.30pm all year round excluding public holidays.

Children aged from birth to three years old are cared for in the main building and three to five year olds are cared for in a separate, purpose built, building at the rear of the premises. The outside play area is between these two buildings and is well equipped with appropriate toys and resources. There are currently 101 children on the day care roll of whom 41 are in receipt of nursery funding. The nursery supports children who have special educational needs. At the present time there are no children attending for whom English is a second language.

The after school provision operates from the first floor of the main building and is appropriately equipped with toys, resources and equipment for the children in the older age group.

There is a staff pool of 16 which includes a qualified teacher. Of the remaining staff there are only two who do not have childcare qualifications.

How good is the Day Care?

Early Learners Nursery provides good quality care for children.

A well motivated staff team provide a warm and welcoming environment for children and organise space and resources to meet children's needs effectively. Very good relationships are developed with the children, who are happy, confident and secure within the setting. All staff have good practical skills in caring for children and undertake regular training to improve and build on these. Records are well organised, mainly accurate and up to date.

The provider has an awareness of safety and takes positive steps to promote safety and prevent accidents within the setting though the bathroom window is to be made safe. All staff have undertaken first aid training. Good hygiene practices are encouraged. Healthy, nutritious meals are provided. All children are included, valued and their individual needs met.

The nursery offers a very good range of activities indoors and outdoors which help children progress in all areas of their development. Children can reach toys independently and enjoy their play. Children are well stimulated and interested in their play. There are however differences in equipment and toys available in some areas of the nursery. Staff interact with the children very well, they talk and listen to the children, ask appropriate questions which challenges the children's thinking and enable them to make decisions. The staff team manage children's behaviour well with consistent use of praise and encouragement. Children are aware of the boundaries and are comfortable with these.

Staff have good relationships with parents. Children are looked after according to parent's wishes and parents are kept well informed about daily activities. A prospectus and Parent's Handbook is provided. Regular feedback is sought from parents regarding all aspects of care the children receive.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There are no actions from the previous inspection.

What is being done well?

- The nursery provides a good range of stimulating range of activities, toys and equipment for children. Children are happy and secure within the setting, they move around the environment freely and confidently and are able to access toys independently and easily.
- The relationships with the children are positive and caring. Staff interact with the children very well, dedicating a lot of time to talking, playing and listening to them.
- All children are valued and their individual needs are met successfully. The children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals.
- The awareness of safety issues is good. Staff are kept up to date regarding legislation and each know what their responsibilities are regarding safety.
- Working relationships with parents are good. Parents are invited to regular meetings and have input regarding the organisation of the setting through a suggestion box. Regular feedback is given about daily activities and their children's progress. Questionnaires for parents and regular news letters are also provided.

What needs to be improved?

- the entry of the time of children's arrival and departure on daily record;
- all children have access to toys and materials that promote equality of opportunity;
- the provision of a balanced range of toys and activities for children aged 18 months to 3 years;
- the safety of the first floor bathroom window.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	develop a system in order to record the times of children's arrival and departure accurately;
5	make sure children in the age range 18 months to 3 years have access to a balanced range of toys and equipment;
5	provide toys and play materials for children in the age range 18 months to 3 years that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice;
6	make sure that first floor bathroom window is safe.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The quality of nursery education for funded three and four year olds is good overall with areas of very good practice. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They make good progress towards early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development with only minor weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good overall with very good aspects of teaching in relation to planning, providing challenges for four year olds, supporting children with special educational needs and managing behaviour. Assessment systems are good and work particularly well for identifying next steps for four year olds. A very good system for focusing on learning aims at each activity area for the day or week is used in both rooms. The staff generally use time and resources well and spread the educational programme over the day to create a more relaxed afternoon for full time children.

The quality of leadership and management is generally good overall. There are systems for evaluating the quality of activities and how well the educational programme is being followed. The manager is committed to improvement and has reorganised space to give the funded three and four year olds adjacent rooms and better facilities to spread out activities. The action plan arising from the last inspection has been carried out well.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents receive basic information about the daily activities which is posted on the door. There are open days and parents meetings to share information about children's progress. Children sometimes take work home to do and parents are informed of how they can help. Parents feel they can discuss their children's progress at any time, but are not yet invited to make a formal contribution to records.

What is being done well?

- Well constructed long term and medium term plans and detailed weekly plans, with learning goals clearly identified, underpin all work with the children.
- There are good systems for assessment for four year olds involving planned observations, note taking and regular entry of information onto a progress chart linked to the stepping stones. Children's different levels of development are identified and used to adapt activities or group children appropriately to need.
- An excellent system is used to highlight the role of staff in supporting children's learning during free play activities. A selection of replaceable stickers are displayed by each activity which identify learning aims linked to

stepping stones and helps staff to focus on the learning outcomes with children.

- The strong commitment to improvement indicated by the change of rooms to accommodate the funded children and the effective way the action plan from the previous inspection has been carried out.
- Children make particularly good progress in personal and social development, physical and creative development due to the good management of children's behaviour, the well planned use of resources and the positive support for children to use their imagination.
- The programme of activities for knowledge and understanding of the world is extensive and very well presented to children in a way which engages their interest.

What needs to be improved?

- the identification of next steps for able three year olds in making calculations and thinking mathematically, so that appropriate challenges are set.
- the location of books and comfortable furniture to encourage children to share books of good quality with adult support during free choice times.
- systems for parents to contribute more formally towards the assessment process, and appreciate the stepping stones towards early learning goals.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The key issues for action at the last inspection were:

to review organisation of activities to allow children to make more choices in their learning and to provide a better balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities;

adapt the programme for language and literacy to allow children more frequent chances to communicate meaning through their own mark making, and to participate in role play more regularly.

The nursery has made very good progress in implementing the action plan. The daily routine allows for significant periods of free play activity time where children make their own choices.

Children participate freely in both role play areas and are encouraged by good staff interaction. The learning aims for children playing in the role play area are clearly identified. There is an art area where a variety of implements for mark making are available. Children learn to label their pictures with their own name and use note pads in role play areas to make lists when this is linked to a topic.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress. Friendly and supportive staff create a happy and purposeful atmosphere. Children confidently select their own activities and learn to wait their turn when needed. Good behaviour is encouraged and children learn to help each other and share. At meal times the children learn to pour out their water and take their plates and cutlery for washing up, becoming increasingly independent in self care.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children make generally good progress. They communicate well, listening and responding to stories and instructions. Four year olds use well constructed sentences and descriptive words. Children begin to write their names identifying and forming some of the letters. They enjoy matching sounds to letters and learn some words from a reading scheme. Access to good books for sharing with an adult during free choice time would improve learning for three year olds.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children make generally good progress. There are many resources and planned activities to practice counting and for making comparisons. Four year olds compare how tall they are on life size drawings and count the number of scoops when measuring out quantities. Three year old children talk about the dragon's long neck and tail. More able three year olds are not sufficiently challenged to make calculations in play when their capabilities are not recognised.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress. Staff plan a programme which ensures children explore a variety of textures, notice changes in the seasons and similarities and differences between animals. Children design and make a pirate ship made from blocks and a dragon made from papier-mache and use different methods to stick their own models together. They learn how to use computer technology. Children learn about people in their own and wider community through topics.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress. The staff organise the outdoor play space and the many resources for physical play very well to support learning. Children move confidently over and under the climbing frame and through the tunnels. They play co-operatively with the parachute to control the ball. Older children pedal strongly on bikes. All children have regular access to small equipment and develop good manipulative skills. Children learn about healthy living.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children make very good progress. Staff adapt popular singing games to suit the topic. Children have great fun acting out games as pirates. When painting children explore colour and produce very individual pictures to express their feelings. Children play imaginatively in the role play area together and use puppets to make up stories. There are regular opportunities to make sounds with instruments and children use their bodies well to respond to music.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Use assessments more effectively in the identification of next steps for able three year olds in making calculations and thinking mathematically, so that appropriate challenges are set.
- Improve the location of books and the comfort of furniture to encourage children to share books of good quality with adult support during free choice times.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.