

Little Elves Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY243412
Inspection date	27 September 2007
Inspector	Carol Patricia Willett
Setting Address	The Key, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 1HA
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Registered person	Little Elves Community Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 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?

Little Elves Community Pre-school has been established since November 2002. It is a committee run provision registered to provide sessional care. The pre-school operates from a room in the community centre at Elvetham Heath in Fleet and it serves the local community. Children have access to a small outdoor area and an enclosed tennis court for outdoor play. Opening times are five mornings per week from 09:15 to 11:45 and three afternoons from 13:30 to 15:00, term time only.

There are currently 52 children on roll. This includes 45 funded three-year and four-year-olds. The setting has procedures in place for caring for children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Six members of staff work with the children on various days, of which two have a recognised early years qualification. Three members of staff are on training programmes. Three members of staff have current first aid certificates. The pre-school receives support from an advisor from the Early Years Childcare Service and a development worker from the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and welfare is well promoted as they play in a clean and well maintained environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene. Children are safely escorted to the toilets and have use of steps to ensure they can be independent. Staff provide portable camping style hand washing facilities in the main playroom so children can learn about good personal hygiene before they eat their snacks and to make effective use of time. All children consistently wash hands before snack time and are beginning to understand the importance of doing so. Staff follow good hygiene procedures and are vigilant in ensuring the premises and resources are clean before the children arrive. They replace items identified as unhygienic, for example, the carpet has been replaced with mats that can be washed. These procedures help to prevent the spread of infection. Children are cared for appropriately as there is always at least one member of staff who holds a current first aid certificate. All documentation is accurately maintained and all parental consents in place. All medical conditions are recorded and parents give prior written consent for prescribed medication to be administered which ensures children receive good care according to their needs.

Children are developing an understanding of a healthy diet as they enjoy the café style snack system. Staff talk to the children about healthy diets and fruit as the children identify their choices from the healthy eating posters displayed in the snack area. They use this as a social time to share experiences with their friends and staff. They enjoy healthy snacks and enjoy choosing from the wide variety of chopped fruit, breadsticks, crackers and biscuits. Children develop in independence as they pour their own drinks and can freely access drinking water throughout the session so they stay healthy. They independently get their lunch boxes and tidy away after they have finished when they stay for packed lunch times.

Children have daily opportunities to develop their physical skills and play in the fresh air. They enjoy playing with balls, hoops, beanbags and stilts as they run around in the safely enclosed tennis court which is situated a short walk from the playroom. They develop control over their bodies as they bend, stretch, clap and march to familiar songs with the music teacher who comes in weekly. Staff provide a wide variety of tools and activities to develop children's manipulative skill as they use scissors paint brushes rollers and cutting tools with the playdough. They complete jigsaws and develop models using a variety of construction toys.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to provide a welcoming environment for the children. They organise the room well which is set up with a good variety of activities for the children's arrival. Children develop a sense of belonging and settle well as they are greeted daily by the staff. Samples of their work and posters are displayed around the room. Children play in a safe and secure environment as staff give high priority to safety procedures. The main doors are kept locked and children are unable to leave unsupervised. Children are kept safe as staff are vetted and demonstrate a good awareness of safety. For example, a risk assessment is completed on a daily basis of all areas that the children use. Children are safely escorted to the toilets and tennis courts where they play outside. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as staff remind them gently why they should not run around the hall. They practise fire evacuation regularly to increase their confidence and awareness in an emergency.

Children have easy and safe access to a wide range of good quality, age appropriate resources and activities selected by the staff on a daily basis. The children are able to change the resources if they want to play with something else as the low shelving units allow easy selection. Children's welfare is promoted with regard to child protection. Staff are aware of the procedures to take if needed. Some staff have recently attended a workshop on 'safeguarding children' to ensure their knowledge and understanding is secure and up to date.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and are growing in confidence and all are engaged in play throughout the session. New children who have recently started have settled well as staff provide a calm busy learning environment. Children respond well to the staff and form good bonds with their keyworkers seeking them out when they are upset. Staff provide a variety of activities covering all areas of development on a daily basis using the Foundation Stage curriculum and the Birth to three matters framework. This ensures children make suitable progress in their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make sound progress in all areas of learning because staff plan and prepare activities and resources to ensure all six areas of learning are covered on a daily basis. Staff are kind and caring and form good relationships with the children. Some staff do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the stepping stones to maximise learning opportunities. All staff do not use effective open ended questions to further develop children's knowledge, understanding and thinking. Focus activities are not consistently effectively planned or evaluated as the learning objectives are not clear. Staff do not plan effectively to ensure the activities are sufficiently challenging for all the children. Staff record children's achievements on activity sheets and note these in the children's records. Some resources and activities are not prepared sufficiently well. For example, crayons are not sharpened and this leads to frustration as children can not choose the colour they want as sharpeners are not readily accessible for the children. Children's choice is limited to old Christmas cards in a cutting and gluing activity. They do not have independent access to a wide range of recycled and joining materials and tools to further develop their creativity and develop props for role play.

Children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. They are keen to learn and occupy themselves by engaging in the range of activities provided for them by the staff. Children are happy and gaining in confidence as they share toys and resources. For example, children confidently communicate with their peers and adults and happily talk about what they like at snack time. Children have daily opportunities to make marks and older children confidently use pencils and chalk to draw pictures and brushes for painting. Some children like to write over their names recognising familiar letters in different names. They enjoy listening and participating in story time and sitting with staff on an individual basis in the book corner. Children like to look at the books. However, they do not have free access to information books and staff do not ensure there are always books to provide positive images of diversity in the selection. Children are enthusiastic and participate well in the well planned music sessions which cover all areas of the early learning goals. Children are confident in numbers and count as they play, counting the number of horses and other animals in the farm identifying the different sizes. Children enjoy singing songs such as 'five little ducks went swimming' which introduces concepts of subtraction. Staff provide plenty of opportunities for children to count, compare and look at different shapes throughout every session. The children enjoy card games where

they match objects and learn rules and taking turns. Children learn about the wider world as part of topic work. They learn about the local community and enjoyed a visit to the local supermarket to see bread making. Children enjoy playing outside and developing their physical skills as they play with balls and beanbags and hoops. They independently put on their coats and jumpers and line up sensibly to go out. Children enjoy singing and enthusiastically join in singing time. Most children know the words and actions well and sing out loud. They enjoy tapping the instruments in time to the music and follow visual instructions well to start and stop. Children use their imagination while playing together in the office role-play area using the phones and keyboards, having conversations on the phone with their friends and family. Children confidently explain they are playing on the farm as they chat between themselves making up their own scenarios. They play well in small friendship groups sharing the resources as they play with the pirate ships and castle. Children display good levels of self-esteem and respond well to praise given by the staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop in confidence as staff are caring and take account of their individual personalities. Children show respect and consideration for others as they share resources. For example, children play together on the floor with the farm animals; they share out the horses and show interest in what others are doing. Staff provide a positive learning environment so children are generally well behaved and benefit from praise and encouragement. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through sharing their own and other cultures and the positive behaviour management strategies. Children learn about diversity through planned topics and the resources that they have access to.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive useful information about the group when their child starts. Policies and procedures are available for parents to see and include an effective complaints procedure. Newsletters and notice boards keep parents informed of planning so they have information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the early learning goals. Parents are able to meet with their child's key worker on an informal basis to look at the achievement records of their child. Parents receive regular feedback through contact books which identifies learning targets. Parents are encouraged to contribute to these books which ensure children's ongoing developmental and educational needs are met. They are not actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning to develop effective links between home and pre-school. Parents are not involved in the development of or review of individual education plans for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This means all children's development needs are not always effectively met.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The newly appointed committee and manager have a very positive outlook and commitment to improving the provision for children. They work closely together and engage the support of the Pre-school Learning Alliance development worker to guide and support them. However, the systems in place to inform Ofsted of significant events and check the suitability of the new committee are not robust which means children are not effectively protected. There are satisfactory procedures in place for recruitment of staff and to check their on-going suitability through annual staff appraisals. Most required documentation is in place and accurately maintained.

Children settle well, make satisfactory progress to the early learning goals and are happy within the pre-school as staff work well as a team supporting all children in a satisfactory manner according to their needs. Children move around freely and safely as staff organise the space and resources well. This allows children to make choices and initiate their own play. Staff select a wide range of resources to ensure that children are suitably occupied throughout the session.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. They are supported by an enthusiastic committee of parents who have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. However, there are no formal systems in place to monitor or evaluate many aspects of the provision. This results in some records not sufficiently well maintained so children's progress is not effectively planned for or monitored, such as, for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Planned activities are not evaluated effectively to ensure they offer sufficient challenge to all children. Staff training is encouraged and opportunities are given for all staff to undertake courses and workshops. Overall, the group meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school were required to make improvements to documentation including the attendance register, accident and incident records, child protection policy and complaints procedures. The pre-school has made effective improvements to the range of documentation and addressed all the identified issues which ensures children's safety and welfare is effectively promoted. The nursery education inspection identified no significant weaknesses.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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):

- develop effective systems and procedures to review individual education plans for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and ensure parents are involved in the process

- develop robust systems to notify Ofsted of significant events including the change of committee members in order to safeguard children

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):

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation stage curriculum and stepping stones in order to improve planning and evaluation of focus activities to ensure they offer sufficient challenge to all the children and in order to maximise learning opportunities
- improve staff's teaching skills in order to develop good questioning techniques to further develop children's knowledge, understanding and thinking
- develop effective systems to monitor all aspects of the provision for nursery education to ensure it effectively provides for children's progress and development

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