



Little Sparrows Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY298471
Inspection date	25 October 2005
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	187 Churchgate Road, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, EN8 9EJ
Telephone number	01707 876298
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Registered person	Little Sparrows Day Nursery
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.

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Sparrows Day Nursery opened in 2005 having moved premises. It operates from five rooms on the ground floor of a house in Cheshunt. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:45 to 17:45 throughout the year.

A maximum of 27 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 36 children on roll aged from birth to under five years. Of these, 12 children

receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special educational needs.

The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. It employs 10 staff. Six of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are good procedures in place to promote children's health. Staff obtain written permission for administering medication and seeking emergency treatment. They are trained in first aid and keep a first aid box easily accessible. They ensure that parents sign to acknowledge any treatment given to their children. There is a clear sickness policy in place. Children who are infectious are not allowed to attend the nursery so that others are protected. Babies sleep according to their needs and young children have a rest after lunch. Staff check all sleeping children regularly. Any dietary information on children is displayed clearly in the kitchen and eating areas so that all staff are aware of special diets. Therefore, children keep healthy while in their care.

Staff are attentive to good hygiene. They wipe the tables before and after eating, and take care to sweep the floor. The cook has trained in food hygiene and keeps the kitchen clean and tidy. All children wash their hands before eating. They are becoming aware of why they need to wash hands when they have been to the toilet. Staff encourage them to use tissues when necessary. They change children's nappies in a hygienic manner. Children bring individual blankets for use with their sleeping mats. Consequently children are becoming aware of hygienic practices which help to keep them healthy.

Children have a very healthy and varied diet. The meals are home cooked using fresh ingredients, for example, children enjoy chicken or quiche with a choice of vegetables at lunchtime. For tea they choose from various kinds of bread, cold meat, cheese and salads. They eat very well and particularly like the variety of fresh fruit on offer. They recently grew their own tomatoes. The menus are rotated on a four-weekly basis so that children have a balanced diet. Drinks are available at snack and mealtimes, and children can request water at other times. Overall they are very well nourished and are learning about healthy eating.

Children enjoy many good opportunities for physical activity. They are developing skills outdoors through playing on wheeled toys and exploring balls. Babies especially enjoy using the baby walkers on the hard surface area. Young children have fun playing in the sand pit and water tray. They push cars and trucks around tracks. In good weather children have the use of climbing and balancing equipment on a grassy area. They enjoy many activities which contribute to them keeping fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is generally safe and secure. A detailed risk assessment was done on the premises when the nursery moved in and this will be repeated annually. Staff also carry out weekly and daily checks to ensure children's safety. Children are prevented from access to the kitchen through the use of a security gate. There are adequate fire precautions in place around the building. Children practise the evacuation plan regularly so that they know what to do in an emergency. Older children sometimes go for walks in the local area and staff maintain good ratios so that they are closely supervised. The gates to the back of the premises are kept locked during the day so that children can play safely outdoors. There are rigorous procedures in place for the parking of cars. Parents and visitors use a bell to gain entry, the entrance hall being separated from the nursery by a security gate. Overall, the implementation of policies and procedures ensures that children keep safe.

Children are becoming aware of how to keep themselves safe. They learn about road safety and practise the rules for keeping safe using play equipment in the garden. Older children know how to use scissors safely. Staff remind them about personal safety whenever necessary. They check the resources for safety and remove any that are considered unsafe. There are many colourful and stimulating resources for children and these are rotated to maintain interest. Younger children enjoy exploring the available resources although some like to put toys in their mouths. Consequently they put themselves at risk if staff do not ensure that all the resources set out are safe for all children. Staff do discuss safety issues at their meetings to help maintain vigilance at all times. On the whole, children play safely with the toys and equipment.

Staff have appropriate child protection procedures in place. The manager has attended training and has all the necessary information to enable her to seek advice or report a concern. Staff are aware of the system for logging concerns. The child protection policy is available to all parents. Consequently children are protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children show interest in the activities on offer. They particularly enjoy creative activities and like to explore different techniques, for example, roller painting. They play with construction equipment, toy cars and animals. They join in imaginative play with others in the home corner. Staff interact with children, talking and encouraging communication. Children are forming positive relationships with staff and benefit from their support, for example, a child learns why motorbike riders wear helmets. Babies begin to make connections through exploring objects in treasure baskets. Young children express feelings of delight when seeing figures pop up as they explore buttons. Children take part enthusiastically in singing sessions, joining in with the actions. They show initiative in choosing resources during free play. Many like to share books with members of staff. Overall children enjoy their play and learn to make choices.

Children are gaining in confidence and developing skills. They talk confidently with visitors and are learning to be independent. They enjoy mark making with pencils and crayons. They are becoming aware of mathematical concepts, such as comparing shape and size. They talk about stories and help to illustrate them creatively. They show increasingly good communication skills. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support their practice. They make use of a planning chart to record the activities and resourcing each week. This ensures that children have a wide range of learning experiences, although the choice is sometimes more limited in the afternoons. Children particularly enjoy being able to go into the garden to join in sand and water play. They generally have very good opportunities to learn through their play.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. They sit attentively at circle time and confidently choose their name cards for the 'apple tree'. They are learning to recognise other words that fit onto the weather chart. They concentrate well when drawing and writing. Staff sound out words for them so that they can learn the shapes and sounds of letters. Children learn to count and recognise numerals. They work out how many children are present, checking to see if the correct number of names are on the tree. They choose the correct numerals in number rhymes to represent how many objects are left each time. They are beginning to use mathematical language to describe patterns, such as, 'wiggly' and 'straight'. Therefore children are developing early literacy and numeracy skills through planned activities.

Children learn about the local environment and the weather. They talk about insects and machines, recording their ideas in drawings. They enjoy a variety of cooking activities and grow plants from seeds and bulbs. In this way they discover the processes of change. Children enjoy the opportunity to explore creative materials, for instance, printing with different shapes and colours. They paint detailed self-portraits and make collages to illustrate a story. They learn about sounds when playing musical instruments. A weekly visit from a music teacher helps them to develop their music and dance skills further. Children enjoy good opportunities for outdoor play. They join in ring games and use a wide range of equipment. They learn how to throw and catch balls. They are beginning to show good manipulative skills when threading bobbins. Overall they are developing new skills in all areas.

Staff lead circle times effectively. They are careful to include all children in the activities. They draw children's attention to the first sound of their names on 'apple' cards. They ask questions which encourage children to think, for example, looking for shapes and patterns around and on themselves. They explain carefully what is available for choice after the group time. They praise children's achievements, for instance, when they make cards for members of their families. Staff interact well with children and engage them in conversation. They extend children's imaginative play and creative exploration. Sometimes they miss opportunities to extend children's understanding with relevance to the theme, for example, increasing their awareness of mathematical language. Overall they promote children's learning well in a group situation but do not always take the opportunity to extend their learning at free choice times.

Staff plan the activities around themes. They have a very useful bank of activities which is continually updated with new ideas. Each activity outline includes an aim so that staff have an awareness of the learning outcomes associated with the theme. The activity ideas are supported by a useful collection of posters and worksheets. Planned activities for each theme show a good coverage of the early learning goals but are at present arranged under the out-of-date 'desirable outcomes' headings. Staff use these to plan weekly activities, although these lack a focused learning objective. Consequently staff are not always clear on the intended outcome for each activity. Children's progress is assessed very effectively using charts that link to the stepping stones. These build on a short report written by staff when children move into the activity rooms. Staff collect samples of children's work and photographs of them enjoying activities. These are attractively presented and provide an illustrated records of the children's time at the nursery. Children also have their own workbooks in which they can choose to put pieces of work and have it labelled appropriately by a member of staff. Children's assessments and records are used by their key workers to guide the future planning of activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are included in the activities. Staff go out of their way to make sure that children do not feel left out. They invite everyone in the group to take part in the adult-directed activities and encourage reticent children to have a go. They find alternative toys for younger children wanting the same one. Children have self esteem because they are treated with equal concern. Any children who lack the confidence to join in are assured that they have been missed and are encouraged to join in next time. Children have helped to make a large 'welcome' display with painted faces so that they all feel they belong. They show increasing personal independence. Older children see to their own needs, for example, managing aprons, putting away paintings and washing hands. Younger children are given choices at mealtimes and helped to eat independently. Children sit with staff, serving themselves and developing social skills. Consequently they have a real sense of belonging and a growing personal independence.

Children are becoming aware of diversity within society. They use resources that reflect this diversity and take part in activities linked to cultural and religious festivals. They talk happily with staff about their families and home life. Staff meet their individual needs effectively, for instance, helping children make cards for special family events. Young children receive good support. Staff readily cuddle them if they are upset or just want attention. Older children show a caring attitude towards younger ones. Children have very good relationships generally. They enjoy playing together around the sand and water trays, talking with each other and sharing toys happily. There are sound procedures in place to support any children with special educational needs. Overall, children's individual needs are met well and they learn to respect others in society.

Children are very much aware of appropriate behaviour. Older children behave extremely well. They line up responsibly when moving between rooms and abide by

the set rules when playing games. They are very aware of their boundaries and show respect to staff. Younger children are helped to understand why staff intervene at times and they are then easily appeased. Staff act as excellent role models and are calm and chatty. There is a busy, happy atmosphere in the nursery with staff interacting and supporting children throughout the day. Any child who becomes disruptive is given a short time-out and then returns to play happily in the group. These strategies all contribute to children learning to play and work harmoniously. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive a great deal of useful information about the provision, including details of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are given a policy handbook along with photographs and information about the staff. A copy of the planned activities is posted on the notice board so that parents can be aware of what their children are involved in while at the setting. Regular newsletters also keep them up to date. Parents are invited to open weeks during the year when they can see the nursery in action and view their children's work. They have the opportunity to talk with staff about their children's progress. Staff and parents exchange information daily and parents of very young children are given a written daily diary. Staff make an effort to get to know parents and carers well so that they can take into account their wishes for children's care. Children have a key worker to help them settle when starting at the nursery and this provides an early link for parents. There is a complaints procedure in place and the manager is intending to set up a complaints log. Parents are highly satisfied with the provision. This excellent working partnership enhances children's overall care.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

All documentation is well organised and provides a sound foundation for children's care and education. Attendance registers are well maintained. The contracts with parents are completed appropriately and reviewed when necessary. Various policies are in the process of being updated and time is taken to make these specific to the setting. Staff are well qualified and have a good knowledge and understanding of child development. The manager makes good use of her Montessori training in promoting good practice. She is keen that staff work directly with children and therefore keeps their paperwork to a minimum. Staff work hard to ensure that children are given time and choice, and encouraged to communicate, thereby developing independence. There is a rigorous induction procedure in place for new staff, followed by six-monthly appraisals. Staff are encouraged to access training according to their interests and to the setting's needs, for example, they are about to attend courses on the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They discuss issues and plan activities at regular staff meetings. Therefore their practice is continually improved through training and learning. Overall, the policies and procedures work extremely well in promoting children's health, safety and enjoyment. The nursery meets the needs of all children who attend.

Staff make very good use of the available space so that children have plenty of room to move about freely and make choices. The play rooms are bright and colourful, with

displays of children's artwork. Children can easily make choices from resources set out on tables, and the floor, or stored in low-level drawers. There is good access to the garden and children can choose to go out whenever they wish. The garden area is organised into areas so that children can play either in the small sand and water area, a larger hard-surfaced area or a grassy area, depending on the activities on offer. Indoors, two rooms are set aside for nursery education and one for babies. Children spend time together as a family in the shared play and eating rooms. Those receiving nursery education have organised group times during the day. This arrangement works extremely well in promoting children's ability to make a positive contribution.

The leadership and management of the nursery is outstanding. The two proprietors work closely together, one being responsible for paperwork and the other for childcare. This allows the latter, the manager, to work alongside staff in the nursery and so promote teamwork and good practice. She has good relationships with all staff and they work well together. She leads by example and is always on hand to interact with children and encourage staff. As manager, she is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and continually monitors these to improve where possible. She ensures that parents are fully aware of all aspects of the provision. The recent move to new premises has allowed her to realise her dream in having the nursery in it's own building. She has exciting plans for the future which include various cosmetic changes, the provision of a more stimulating environment for children and opportunities for growing vegetables in the garden. Overall the management team works exceptionally well in promoting good relationships and pursuing ongoing improvements in the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection staff were asked to outline a procedure for complaints and include a 'lost child' procedure in the policy handbook. The complaints procedure is in place and is currently being updated. A 'lost child' procedure has not yet been included but staff are aware and are about to add it to the policies.

It was also recommended that the nursery continued to update and review their practice in order to maintain the high quality of their education provision. The management team continually strive to improve their practice through meetings, training and the recent acquisition of new premises.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.

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 good.

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 that a procedure for a lost child is included in the policies and continue to maintain staff's awareness of helping children to keep safe when exploring resources.

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):

- ensure that the written planning is organised under the headings of the early learning goals and includes specific learning objectives for the daily activities.

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