



Little Fishes Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY333798
Inspection date	11 September 2006
Inspector	Lisa Paisley
Setting Address	Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church, 90 Thorpedene Gardens, Shoeburyness, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, SS3 9JD
Telephone number	01702 292620
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Registered person	Little Fishes
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Fishes pre-school is run by a committee. It originally opened in 1970 and has been currently registered at the new premises since 2006. The pre-school operates from a local church hall in Shoeburyness, Essex. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school and out of school club at any one time. Sixteen holiday sessions are offered from 09:15 - 11:45 for children from two to eight years. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.00 term time only. All children

share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 14 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs nine staff. Eight of the staff, including both managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications and four staff are currently attending training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A good variety of healthy and nutritious snacks are offered to the children and snack time is a social occasion, which the children clearly enjoy. They display enthusiasm in making choices from the different fruits available, including crackers, cucumber, carrots and raisins. As a result, children are beginning to understand the importance of a healthy diet. Staff are vigilant at snack time to ensure that the snacks comply with all special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy.

Children are learning about the importance of good personal hygiene through well established daily routines, such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before snack time. Children have access to hot and cold water, liquid soap and paper towels minimising the potential risk of cross infection. All documentation in relation to children's health, such as medical and accident forms are in place and signed by the parents. Staff are first aid trained and a first aid box with all the required items are in place. Consequently children receive adequate care and attendance in the event of an accident or administering medication.

Children enjoy an extensive range of activities, which contribute to their good health and physical development. Children develop increasing control of their bodies when they competently climb up the climbing frame and come down the slide. They successfully negotiate space whilst pedalling wheeled toys around the outdoor area and demonstrate good co-ordination skills to manoeuvre the tricycles and scooters.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very safe and well maintained environment where daily formal risk assessments are implemented to identify and reduce potential hazards. For example, all fire exits are clear and in working order and all low level glazing is safe. An intercom system is in place for staff to monitor people accessing the building. There are clear procedures in place for the arrival and departure of children to and from the pre-school.

Staff have a very good awareness of how to organise space, furniture and equipment effectively to enable children to move freely with independence around activities and different play areas. As a result, children feel confident within the setting and are safe and secure. Children benefit from using a range of toys and play equipment which are maintained to a suitable standard. Children select their own play resources which are appropriate to their ages and stages of development. Overall resources and play equipment are organised at child height, allowing children to self select promoting their independence and choice. Children are beginning to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe as they are encouraged to move things that they may trip up on and staff provide gentle reminders, for example, carrying a chair safely.

Children are well protected as most of the staff have attended child protection training and are aware of how to follow child protection procedures. A written policy is in place and staff are able to recognise signs of abuse and know whom to contact if they are concerned about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and are happy and settled due to staff relating to them sensitively and providing a wide range of activities which are interesting and stimulating. Staff know the children well, they greet them warmly on arrival at the pre-school, which makes them feel safe and secure. Routines provide opportunities for children to socialise with each other on a regular basis. Staff set out an extensive range of activities, toys and equipment for the children, which enable them to make choices and extend their own play. Children use the outdoor area confidently when developing their physical, investigate and exploratory skills.

Young children are confident and are making progress. Staff have obtained the 'Birth to three matters' framework which they are using effectively to plan learning opportunities that support and encourage the development of the two year-olds who attend the pre-school. Developmental records are completed on children under three, ensuring their needs are being met.

The out of school children enjoy participating in a wide variety of activities, for example, cooking, creative, construction and outdoor play. Children particularly enjoy and become engrossed in the outdoor play where they can practise their ball skills. The organisation of the setting allows children to make choices from resources that are provided at their level and independently access from what is on offer.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use the Foundation Stage curriculum comprehensively to plan a balanced range of activities to promote the six areas of learning. Planning is very detailed and comprehensive, covering all the required elements of the curriculum, including differentiation and assessments of activities. A key worker system is in place and staff use Southend's individual profiles to record children's developmental progress. Children's individual progress is beginning to inform activity plans. The structure of the session is free play with an

emphasis on children's choice.

Children are happy and confident in the environment. They are keen to participate in the range of activities provided and are encouraged to independently select resources and initiate their own activities and games. Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet staff and each other upon arrival and they are learning to share, take turns and be co-operative. For example, when playing with tools in the sand tray. Children are developing good communication skills, as they engage in conversation with their friends and staff, who actively listen. They enjoyed books and sit in small groups to share stories. Children confidently use tools and resources to make marks, however, there are limited opportunities for children to use name labels encouraging children to write their own name. Counting and number recognition is well promoted and children learn about simple problem solving through the use of imaginative play. Older children can count up to ten and beyond. Children's knowledge of early addition and subtraction is promoted through daily routines, such as counting at snack time and whilst singing nursery rhymes.

Children learn about their environment by staff inviting people from the community into the pre-school to meet the children and talk about their roles, for example, a fire safety officer, a nurse and a veterinary surgeon. They are developing a good awareness of the uses of information technology in everyday life and are able to operate equipment, such as audio tapes and headphones, battery toys, domestic items and the computer. They have excellent opportunities to find out about the natural world and enjoy exploring their environment, for example, trips out to the beach, a children's theatre and a traffic survey linking in with a topic on transport. Children's imaginations and free expression are well promoted through a wide range of activities, this includes playing musical instruments, singing, painting, and craft activities. They particularly enjoyed playing with the jelly, which prompted children to use a range of descriptive words, for example, 'stretchy, juicy, soft and wobbly'. They have very good opportunities to practise running, jumping, throwing and catching during periods in the garden. Children move around the premises safely avoiding hazards, they find a space on a mat and line up when requested. Consequently, as a result they are confident and have developed good control over their bodies.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly greeted on arrival making them feel welcomed. They are treated with equal concern, helping them to settle and join in with the activities. Staff respect parents' wishes as regards to any individual needs, helping to promote the children's self-esteem. Children who require additional support are respected and fully integrated within the setting and their needs are met through staff working in partnership with other agencies. Children benefit from having access to a good range of play resources which promote positive images of diversity and from participating in activities which promote their awareness of different festivals and cultures. For example, finding out about 'flamenco dancing', making pyramids and looking at building such as Big Ben. Children also have the opportunity to taste a range of foods including pizzas and nann bread.

Children are very well behaved and benefit from having consistent boundaries set by staff. Staff regularly use praise and encourage the children, promoting their self-esteem and confidence. The introduction of the 'star of the day' reward system gives children extra responsibilities and encourages them to be aware of the needs of others. Consequently, children are beginning to share play equipment, take turns and increasingly take responsibility for their own actions. They respect their environment by helping to tidy away toys before snack time and at the end of the session. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from their parents being actively involved in their children's learning. For example, open days with an appointment system and reports are sent out each term to inform parents as to how their child is progressing. Regular newsletters are sent out to parents informing them of future events and topic work. A parent/key worker book is used to make comments on children's progress from both home and pre-school. This ensures parents are fully informed with regard to their child's developmental progress, topic work and any events or celebrations.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is supported and enhanced by the good organisation of the nursery. All staff have been vetted by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), ensuring their suitability when looking after children. However, there are no written vetting procedures and current vetting procedures does not include health checks for new staff. Staff make sufficient use of available play space both indoors and out. As a result, children are able to move freely and independently around the setting accessing a range of activities which support their play and learning. Documentation and records are comprehensive and organised effectively and confidentiality is maintained. Policies and procedures including the operational plan are regularly reviewed ensuring that the pre-school continues to meet the National Standards. The pre-school is currently accredited through the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and they are currently going through the re-accreditation process.

Leadership and management is good. Committee members, manager, deputy and staff are highly committed and very professional in their role. Staff are deployed effectively within the pre-school and good staffing ratios are maintained throughout the session ensuring children are well supervised and supported during activities. The committee have implemented a training budget to ensure that staff are able to update their childcare knowledge and skills. Children benefit from the input of qualified and skilled staff who have a good understanding of their role, responsibilities and how children learn. Consequently, children benefit from good continuity of care.

Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

First inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. 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):

- devise and implement written vetting procedures and include a health declaration for all new staff ensuring that their suitability is being appropriately assessed.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to write their own name.

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