

Little Oaks Nursery Class

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511781
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Inspector	Linda Janet Witts
Setting Address	C/O Hartpury Primary School, Over Old Road, Hartpury, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL19 3BJ
Telephone number	07961 550 398
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Registered person	Little Oaks Nursery Class
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Oaks Nursery Class opened in 1997. It operates from an Elliot building in the grounds of the New Hartpury Primary School in the village of Hartpury in Gloucestershire. The nursery serves the village and surrounding rural area. It is managed by a committee which includes school staff, school governors and parent representatives.

Places are available for children in their pre-school year, and if places are available, from the first term after their third birthday. There are currently 10 children on roll, of whom nine are funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group welcomes and supports children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery class currently opens four days a week on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, during term-time. Extra sessions may be offered subject to demand. Core opening hours are from 09.00 until 13.00. Three part-time staff and a regular helper work with the children. All staff have early years qualifications and are child protection trained. The setting receives teacher support from the local Early Years Childcare Services.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because the adults working with them carefully consider how best to promote children's healthy well-being. Children's health, nutritional, physical and emotional needs are met extremely well. All areas of the nursery building are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and the adults follow very effective procedures that promote good hygiene. Children gain an excellent understanding of the importance of good hygiene. Those that can, take themselves to the toilet and are independent in their personal hygiene. Picture prompts on the toilet doors remind children to wash their hands and child-friendly soap dispensers encourage good hygiene. Children know to wash their hands to remove germs before they eat and adults are on hand to ensure they do so thoroughly. Children cover their mouths if they cough and can help themselves to tissues. They also know that any food dropped on the floor must be discarded. Children's privacy is ensured in the event that they need to be changed and practitioners deal with such situations sensitively. Suitable arrangements are in place to deal with sickness and accidents and associated documentation is well maintained.

Children eat healthy nutritious snacks and can help themselves to their individual drinks bottles as they wish. The children have plenty of fresh fruit of different varieties. They even have the opportunity to try more exotic fruits and food from around the world. For example, as part of Chinese and Indian festivals children try traditional dishes such as stir-fry and Indian sweets. The newly created garden enables children to plant and tend fruit and vegetables that they will harvest to eat.

Children have excellent physical play opportunities. They regularly go outside to play in the garden, on the school playground or field. They can also undertake activity in the school hall. The children relish the opportunity to run around, chasing one another and are keen to demonstrate how fast they can run. They pedal and propel wheeled toys with control, manoeuvring around the playground avoiding collision with others. The children use equipment that presents challenge to them, for example, 'loopies' that require children to wind two handles in a co-ordinated manner in order to operate them. A wheeled 'aeroplane' engages a group of children working together. One steers the aeroplane at the front; two passengers sit behind holding onto the waist of the child in front and tucking their legs up under the bench-style frame, whilst another child pushes the vehicle from behind. They shout instructions to one another and giggle as the aeroplane meanders across the playground gathering speed. Children join in group parachute games and dance activities. Children also have plenty of opportunities to develop their climbing skills using the group's climbing structure and school equipment. The children understand the value of fresh air and exercise and also know about the effects of exercise on their bodies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety is given high priority by the adults working with them. The team of staff and volunteer are extremely vigilant; they monitor access to the nursery and use thorough risk assessments to reduce any potential hazard on the premises and for outings. They have an excellent understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits both indoors and outdoors. Children are helped to learn how to keep themselves safe. When indoors children are discouraged from running and know to walk carefully down the steps that

are present between the two levels of the building. Photographs of 'rules' to keep children safe are displayed and used to remind children what is expected and how adherence will keep them safe. Regular fire drills familiarise children with fire evacuation procedures and children learn about road safety during excursions into the local community.

Children use an extensive range of high quality equipment and resources. These are appropriate to the children's stages of development, are stored so that children can access them safely, and are stimulating and engage the children, fully supporting their all-round development. Children play an active role in tidying away resources, helping to maintain a safe play environment.

Children's welfare is given top priority by those working in the group. The practitioners are fully committed to safeguarding children and they regularly attend child protection and safeguarding training to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge of how to deal with any issues, should they arise. The group also has clear written procedures available for reference.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The children attending the nursery thoroughly enjoy themselves. They arrive with enthusiasm and are fully occupied throughout the session. They receive extremely good support from all of the nursery adults. Each child is nurtured in their play and learning, enabling them to meet their full potential. Those children that are not yet receiving government funding for nursery education join in all activities playing alongside or with the other children. Key workers are mindful of children's different stages of development and happily adapt activities to suit, whilst ensuring full participation.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making excellent progress across all six areas of learning, of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children are highly motivated because of the exemplary teaching skills of the leader and her team. All children are interested in the extensive range of rich, varied and imaginative experiences offered. The adults know each child very well; they know about their families, interests and learning style. They gather such information from parents and through ongoing observation and assessment, and use the information effectively to inform planning. Activities are planned to ensure all individual children are challenged in their development. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent support. In partnership with children's parents outside professional support is sought and individual education plans agreed. This together with ongoing support in the setting ensures that all children are fully included and are supported in their learning.

The practitioners recognise the importance of giving children time to practise their newly acquired skills and to develop good levels of concentration and perseverance. They also enable children to make decisions in their play. Children choose what activities they wish to undertake. Photographs of possible activity choices are displayed on the decision board to aid selection. Children can also access an extensive range of other resources to change or extend activities. Themes are used creatively to enhance children's learning. For example, the current Pirate theme is used to create an exciting learning environment. The home corner is transformed into a pirate ship complete with mermaid figure-head, 'Jolly Roger' flag and sails. Role-play resources reflect the theme and children also make their own pirate t-shirts and accessories. The sand tray hides a stash of treasure for children to find and the interest table, stories and games

reflect the pirate and sea theme. The leader puts on a pirate voice to engage children at circle-time and during parachute games. The children giggle as they join in the fun activities. The adults utilise every possible opportunity to promote children's learning. They instinctively ask children questions pitched at the right level so children are challenged to think, and they introduce children to mathematical ideas and offer problems to solve.

The nursery environment offers a stimulating, attractive environment that utilises available space successfully. Within the room, set on two levels, there are designated areas for floor activities, creative play, a writing area and comfortable book area with attractive voile curtains with stars on, to enclose the area, if children wish. The outdoor facilities are fully included as an integral part of the whole learning environment.

Children have varying levels of speech when they start. They receive excellent support to develop their communication and listening skills. Visual prompts and picture cards are used effectively to aid communication. Many children already have large vocabularies and use spoken language to express themselves, clearly, with confidence. They use language to share ideas, ask questions, talk through activities and recall past experiences. They often initiate conversation with their peers and both familiar and unfamiliar adults. Children take it in turns to share their news at circle-time and chat socially at snack and meal times, and also during the course of their play. Children greatly enjoy books. They look at them carefully as individuals or with their friends. They listen intently to stories read by the leader, who puts on different voices to make the stories come alive. Children like to join in and talk about the illustrations and link stories to their own experiences. Children know that books can also provide information. For example, a child talks about a swordfish and the leader pretends not to know what one looks like. The child looks in a book about the sea and points out fish with similar features. The writing area provides children with a range of writing implements and resources that they can use freely to mark-make for different purposes.

The three and four-year-olds gain confidence in counting and will offer to count the number of children present and talk about numbers with confidence. For example, they remind one another that only two children are permitted at the sand tray and are quick to tell an adult if there are too many at the activity. Similarly with the home corner where four children are allowed. They count the number of coins excavated from the sand tray and know how many different children found. They recognise numerals, shapes and use mathematical language, talking about positions and size. They create patterns and sequences with pegs and they select resources by size and shape. For example, a child dresses a doll in appropriately sized clothing. The child then measures a doll against a cloth bag to see if it will fit in. The bag is then emptied and the doll manipulated in order to put it inside. The child shows great perseverance and problem-solving skills throughout the task, carefully moving the doll's long hair and tucking it out of the way of the opening, in order to zip up the bag now containing the doll.

Children learn about their environment and are keen to explore and investigate. They don 'wellies' and wet weather gear to undertake gardening tasks and to go out for walks to explore the local woods. En-route they splash in puddles, look at their reflections and then collect leaves and twigs. They show awe and wonder as they experience new things. For example, a visit from a ranger introduces children to an African snail, millipede, cockroach, stick insect, toad, rat, snake and tree frog. The children take turns to hold the creatures with great care. Children excitedly recall the experience of the visit. Children learn about the local community from visitors, such as the local vicar and her hamster, an elderly neighbour and new born baby. They also visit the local post office store. The children learn to care for the environment, playing a part in recycling and making compost. Children construct on small and large scale. They have

clear design ideas and select construction pieces accordingly. Many of the creations made are intricate in design and children spend long periods of time building and making adjustments to their designs. For example, a child builds a large ship with small clip together bricks. As the child does so they talk about the different features and then sets about adding the passengers. The design is adjusted to accommodate the desired number of passengers. Children use information and communication technology regularly and are keen to learn about how things work.

Children develop their physical skills well. As well as being proficient movers they skilfully manipulate small objects. They successfully co-ordinate their hands in order to complete tasks. For example, at the sand tray they scoop sand with a spade and transfer the sand to reveal items hidden in the sand which they then pick up with the other hand. Many manage fastenings on coats, aprons and dressing-up clothes, unaided. They use tools safely and with control.

The children are very imaginative. They bring small world figures to life as they play with the 'fire station' or construction toys. They take on roles of superheroes as they play outdoors. They dress up and engage in role play based on their own first-hand experiences or develop ideas introduced to them through stories. For example, one child selects clothes and announces that they are Peter Pan, so another selects clothes to become Captain Hook and they act out their version of the well known story. Children paint, draw and combine materials to make pictures and three dimensional models. Samples of children's art work adorn the walls of the nursery. They enjoy singing and musical activities and are encouraged to express themselves. They dance to different music, responding to sounds in a variety of ways. For example, children make arm actions and noises as they hear dripping water music, then run and make bigger movements as they hear rushing water. When they hear thunder they jump. Children also enjoy sensory activities exploring different media, for example, making 'smelly playdough'. They add different essences and herbs to create different smells. One child remarks that a herb reminds them of roast dinner and the children discuss what smells they like and dislike before adding seeds and other items to give the dough different textures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The nursery environment has an extremely warm and welcoming feel to it. A happy atmosphere, buzz of activity, and smiling faces of children and practitioners fill the setting. Here all children are highly valued as individuals and fully included. Children, their parents and visitors are greeted upon arrival and the team of staff and volunteer actively seek to ensure that everyone who attends the group is well looked after. The practitioners quickly learn about individual children's needs, sourcing information from parents to aid this. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully included and supported well because the designated special educational needs co-ordinator is able to identify special needs and takes action to support all children. She works closely with children's parents and outside professionals to give children the support they need.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is excellent. Children are self-assured and very independent. They learn to respect one another. They see positive images of gender, ethnicity, religion and disability. They are introduced to different cultures through celebrations of different festivals and themed activities. Children learn to help one another and are keen to offer assistance to adults. They are kind and considerate, share and take-turns. The children, who are mostly aged three, are aware of the behavioural expectations within the setting. Children learn to be polite

and behave well. They receive frequent, sincere praise and encouragement. The children are encouraged to take pride in their achievements. For example, a child perseveres at an activity for a long time and creates an impressive model. A safe place is found to display the model and a photograph taken to record the achievement. The child gives a beaming smile of pride. Children also receive stickers and charts are used to record achievements both at home and nursery. This fosters their self-esteem.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. The group advocates working with parents to support children's care and learning. Parents are helped to understand about the Foundation Stage of learning and how the activities planned help children to develop. They receive informative written and verbal information about the curriculum. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. For example, helping their children to take photographs to map out their day, including routine activities carried out at home and the journey to nursery. Parents help to fill a 'treasure box' with items or enable children to bring in items from home for 'show and tell' and to support themes. They are also invited to join their children on outings. Parents are keen to offer help to the group. Some become committee representatives, many help with fund-raising and the garden area has been created with the help of parents. Children are allocated key workers and photos of the individual children with their key worker displayed in the cloakroom area serve as a reminder for parents. Parents receive regular updates on their children's progress from the key workers who make themselves readily available to talk with parents, as parents wish.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The nursery group is exceptionally well organised and child-centred. The group's ethos is very much that children's care must be of the highest standard and that children's happiness, sense of belonging and being valued, is of paramount importance. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The team of experienced practitioners work exceeding well together as a team. They each have a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities and offer support to one another instinctively. They work together to reflect on their practice and to identify areas for improvement. They have successfully achieved 'The Bristol Standards', quality assurance award. Children benefit greatly from the caring attributes of their carers.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The leader's clear, visionary aims are achieved in practise as she motivates the team of adults working with the group with her enthusiasm and leadership skills. Team spirit is fostered extremely well and as a result the staff and volunteer enjoy their jobs and feel valued. They are dedicated to their roles. Each key worker plays an active role in observation and assessment of children's progress and working in partnership with children's parents. The practitioners share information about the children and ideas for activities. They all work together to evaluate group practise and the effectiveness of the provision. This has a very positive impact on children's progress. The leader works closely with the reception teacher of the host school, meeting regularly each week. She has also developed strong relationships with reception teachers in other local schools. Prior to children's transfer to primary school 'school books' are made to aid children's transition. These contain photographs of each child's new teacher and classroom.

The nursery building, set in the grounds of the village primary school, are extremely well organised. All areas are attractive and welcoming with every wall adorned with children's art work, photographs, a pictorial clock display of the daily routine, posters, charts and themed

displays. The interest table and clearly labelled storage systems are easily accessible to children and well used. The routine followed is familiar to the children and works well. Children are offered an exciting well-balanced range of activities both indoors and outdoors. A high ratio of adults work with the children and extremely effective use is made of frequent one-to-one care.

All legally required documents that contribute to children's health, safety and wellbeing are clear and detailed. The nursery's operational plan is efficient and effective. Policies and procedures are reflective of the practise within the nursery group. Records are accurately maintained and stored confidentially.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the group extend their child protection policy to include action to be taken in the event of an allegation of child abuse or neglect being made against a member of staff or volunteer. It was also recommended that the special educational needs co-ordinator extend her knowledge of the Code of Practice 2002 for the identification and assessment of special educational needs in respect of pre-school children.

In response to the recommendations made the group has extended its child protection policy to include procedures to follow in the event of an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. The special educational needs co-ordinator has attended training specific to the role and has also undertaken a ten week course in speech and communication to further improve her ability to support children with communication difficulties.

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.

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk