



Little Appleseed Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127325
Inspection date	16 January 2006
Inspector	Felicity Gaff
Setting Address	High Brooms Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9DA
Telephone number	01892 535679
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Registered person	Bethnal Trust
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 good. 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 Appleseed Pre-School is run by the Bethnal Trust. It opened in 1990 and operates from church premises in the High Brooms area of Tunbridge Wells. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open 5 mornings a week during school term times between 09:15 and 12:00. It also opens on up to 3 afternoons a week between 12:30 and 15:00. There are currently 41 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll and of these, 22 receive funding for

nursery education. Children are drawn from the surrounding urban area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs as well as a number who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs 7 staff. Of these, 3 hold appropriate early years qualifications and a further member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is suitably promoted because staff follow appropriate routines to prevent the spread of infection. Staff act promptly to improve their practice, for example, by changing hand washing routines to reduce the risk of cross infection. Parents receive clear information about arrangements for sickness and exclusion times for infectious diseases when their children join the group and through reminders in the newsletter. Staff maintain all the required records to support children's health very clearly. Children do not have access to regular outdoor play but staff organise the available space effectively to provide access to daily physical activity. Staff use well-loved stories and rhymes such as *We're Going On A Bear Hunt* skilfully to encourage children to explore different ways of moving in, on and through large climbing apparatus. Children learn about healthy eating as they share nourishing snacks. They discuss the food they need to grow and stay healthy as they make winter bird feeders.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in generally safe, secure and suitable premises. They benefit from sufficient, good quality furniture and equipment so they can reach an interesting variety of toys easily, play safely, and have opportunities to rest and relax in comfort. Staff monitor the condition of the premises and equipment by carrying out effective daily and weekly risk assessments. There are effective arrangements to exclude people who have not been checked. Staff take preventive action following some accidents, such as removing the doors of a cupboard. However, they do not regularly monitor the accident record to identify and minimise recurring patterns. As a result there are a high number of similar minor accidents. Staff have a basic understanding of child protection issues and understand their responsibility to protect children by reporting concerns about their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting because they are cared for in a secure, exciting and very interesting environment. They feel confident and at ease because staff enhance their play by offering very effective support and

encouragement. Consequently they immerse themselves in complex and deeply satisfying imaginative role play which helps them explore and practice a wide range of social skills. Children are extremely friendly and co-operative. They talk confidently and courteously to adults and to each other, developing their language and social skills very well as they create elaborate group games with small world toys. Two-year-old children receive very good support from caring and skilful adults to help them settle and ensure they are included. Staff work closely with the children and organise sessions well to ensure they all have access to some active physical play. They group children by age for part of the session; as a result children develop close relationships with their key workers and have the space and time to use all the available play opportunities.

NURSERY EDUCATION

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children make acceptable progress in all areas of learning because they receive a great deal of individual attention and have access to a wide range of stimulating resources. They use their initiative as they decide what resources they will use and how they will use them, helping themselves to what they need from well-stocked storage units. For example, children extended a mark-making activity to writing, delivering and replying to letters because they were able to help themselves to envelopes. Children practise counting regularly and some are able to perform simple number calculations confidently. They name common shapes such as triangle and square but are unable to describe their properties. Children create elaborate role-play scenarios as the excellent range of dressing up toys and supporting props, such as working torches and binoculars, stimulate their imaginations. They participate enthusiastically in planned activities and are eager to discuss what they see and do, for instance as they mix the ingredients for winter bird feeders. They use their understanding of technology as they confidently demonstrate how to operate resources such as tape recorders.

Staff provide a well- balanced play environment so that children can choose from activities supporting all areas of learning. However, plans do not regularly identify how adult-led activities will be adapted to meet the needs of children at different ages or stages of development. Plans often contain insufficient detail to support staff in selecting resources. For example, children were offered two colours of paint with no choice of paper or brush size, restricting their opportunities to explore and experiment. Staff miss opportunities to provide a range of reading and writing resources in role play areas such as diaries, calendars, phone books and recipe books. They make good observations of what children do and understand, and sometimes use these to inform future plans. However, plans do not yet ensure all areas of learning are fully covered and regularly revisited, to ensure learning is consolidated. Therefore, children's progress in some areas is erratic.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their families feel very welcome in the setting because the staff create very good partnerships with parents. Parents value the welcoming, caring

atmosphere. They appreciate the ease with which their children settle readily into pre-school routines and how they develop their independence and confidence. Children begin to understand diversity as they play with multicultural toys and puzzles and celebrate festivals from different traditions. Staff have a basic awareness of the needs of children learning English as an additional language and offer them some support. They work closely with parents to ensure they fully understand and meet any special needs. Children's behaviour is very good. They choose their own play things independently and demonstrate strong social skills as they share their toys fairly. Staff observe children's play and intervene skilfully to encourage and assist them which helps prevent frustration. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive detailed information about the pre-school before children attend. This is augmented by regular newsletters which include details of planned themes and topics and weekly plans are displayed. Parents receive clear information about what their children do and the records staff keep. They feel welcome to approach staff at any time to discuss their children's progress and staff actively encourage them to do so.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are acceptable procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitable and appropriately qualified. However, the registered person delegates responsibility for employing staff to the supervisor but does not ensure she fully understands all changes to regulations. Arrangements for storing personal records of the staff do not always ensure confidentiality is maintained. All the required policies and procedures are in place and are generally satisfactory in supporting the care provided for children. However, the policies and procedures for employment, including the storage of confidential information, and those for child protection and complaints are incomplete. The effective organisation of space and resources provides a stimulating play environment. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. Children have access to a wide range of good quality play equipment and are cared for by suitably qualified staff. Staff form a united team and are well-deployed to work directly with the children most of the time; they make effective use of many incidental learning opportunities. The assessment system supports staff in identifying what children know and understand and what they need to do next. However, it is not yet used effectively to inform future planning to ensure children make progress in all areas of their development.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the registered person was recommended to improve the selection of healthy snacks offered and to develop the use of resources for physical play. Children's health is now suitably promoted by the provision of a choice of dried and fresh fruit as well as a biscuit at snack time. Children are able to use large climbing apparatus throughout the session. Staff clear sufficient space during the

session to allow children to engage in a choice of physical activities. However, plans for these times are minimal. They do not ensure that all children become fully involved and do not show how activities will be adapted to provide appropriate challenges to all.

At the last education inspection the registered person was asked to assess and improve the organisation of group activities, space and resources. They were also asked to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage and how children learn and to develop leadership and management. Since then the organisation of time, space and resources has been improved. Children choose freely from a wide range of easily accessible play resources throughout the session. Changes to how children are grouped allow them to form close relationships with staff and with each other. As a result they are now purposefully occupied at all times. Staff have attended training and have changed the systems for planning and record keeping. This has resulted in a more interesting range of activities for the children. However, staff do not yet use these effectively to ensure all children make good progress in all areas of learning.

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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- monitor the accident record regularly to identify and address the causes of recurring patterns of accidents
- improve staff awareness of child protection issues
- improve the written policies and procedures for child protection, employment of staff and complaints

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 the use of the activities provided so that all areas of learning are regularly revisited to consolidate children's understanding and ensure they make good progress
- improve planning systems to enable staff to use assessments of what children do to plan for their future learning

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