



Lucton School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289937
Inspection date	06 October 2005
Inspector	Rachel Wyatt / Ann Doreen Burford
Setting Address	Lucton School, Lucton, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 9PN
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Registered person	Lucton Pierrepont Educational Trust - 518076
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?

Lucton School Nursery was registered in 2005 and has been in existence since 1993. It is an integral part of Lucton School, a co-educational independent day and boarding school. Founded in 1708, the school is situated in the north Herefordshire village of Lucton and serves a wide catchment area. It is located 7 miles away from Leominster and 17 miles from Hereford. There are 3 designated rooms and associated facilities available for the nursery's sole use. An adjacent self-contained

reception area has recently been developed. Children have access to fully enclosed outdoor play areas in addition to regular use of the school playing fields and covered sports hall.

The nursery is registered for 24 children aged under 5 years. There are currently 52 children on roll in the nursery and reception class. This includes 23 children in receipt of nursery education funding. Support is available for children with special educational needs and for children with English as an additional language.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 17:00 all year round, apart from 2 weeks at Christmas and bank holidays.

Eleven members of staff work directly with the children. Two are qualified teachers and other staff have relevant early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority. Many children subsequently continue their education through the school. The school is a member of the Independent Schools Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle. They become increasingly independent in hand washing and visiting the toilet. Children's well-being is supported appropriately by staff who have a secure knowledge of the nursery's health and hygiene procedures. Children who become sick are made comfortable and other children are protected from infection. The premises are kept clean and tidy, although the collection of soiled nappies is not always prompt.

Children are well nourished and enjoy effectively organised snacks and mealtimes. Children have a choice of drinks and snacks, including regularly provided fresh and dried fruits. Younger children usually stay in their own rooms for mealtimes although they do join together for snack time. Staff sit with the children to enjoy this social time. Babies' feeds and arrangements for weaning are discussed and agreed with parents. At lunch time older children join the rest of the lower school to enjoy a well-balanced meal. They learn about healthy living through a variety of topics, for example, cooking fresh vegetables to make soup and making charts of fruits eaten at snack time.

Children are energetic and frequently go outdoors for fresh air and exercise. There are good outdoor facilities including shaded areas adjacent to the nursery. Children enthusiastically scoot and peddle a variety of sit and ride toys and run about on the playground. They enjoy walks, ball games and other physical play activities on the playing fields. Children develop confidence and skill in climbing and balancing and have opportunities to use different equipment during visits to a nearby play area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe. The premises are secure and the outdoor area is fully enclosed. Risk assessments are completed and regularly reviewed. These are discussed at staff meetings to ensure staff are fully informed on how to keep children safe in the nursery and when on outings. Children are well supervised without inhibiting their exploration. Good supervision of children including high adult to child ratios for example for outings and swimming, mean that children are safeguarded but can experience new challenges.

Children are reminded about safe play by vigilant staff. On walks and outings children demonstrate a growing understanding of basic road safety and the need to remain close to staff. Children use an appropriate range of age-appropriate furniture, equipment and toys. Items are regularly checked for cleanliness and safety. All resources meet safety standards.

Children are protected because staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities with regard to child protection. Staff monitor children's well-being including discussing and recording existing injuries or any concerns. The arrival and collection of children is well managed to ensure their safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children are making good progress because of the staff's sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Babies and children are well supported and involved in many rewarding experiences. Planning and assessment for children aged under 3 positively reflects the ethos of 'Birth to three matters', and very good links are made between staff's observations and planning for younger children. As a result their individual needs are clearly identified and appropriate activities provided to help them reach their full potential.

Babies and young children relate well with each other, enjoying each others' company. They benefit from the staff's warm rapport and encouragement which aids their confidence and growing independence. They have opportunities to make choices of toys, activities and books for story time. Children are energetic, moving with increasing confidence and skill. They explore their natural surroundings, looking at and collecting different items. They are introduced to numbers and counting in natural contexts such as counting how many children are present or comparing different amounts of conkers they have collected. Children enjoy songs and rhymes and listening to stories.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are keen to learn and to take part in activities. They often listen well and follow instructions. Some children are quite lively. Staff skilfully channel their energies appropriately so children remain

interested and complete tasks. Children enjoy working together and confidently take part in mixed-age-group activities, including special events and lunch times within the main school.

Many children are articulate, confident speakers and eager to contribute to discussions. They respond well to questions, express their ideas and comment on stories. Quieter or less confident speakers are facilitated by staff who effectively use questions, explanations and prompts to encourage their involvement. Children are making good progress in recognising letter shapes and sounds. They recognise their names and use letter sounds in appropriate contexts. Children enjoy mark making, forming recognisable letters. Many children write their names and some older 4-year-olds are writing other simple words. Children in the reception class have made a good start in French, recognising and using an increasing number of words or phrases during discussions, activities and rhymes.

Children count and recognise numbers with increasing accuracy. Children in reception are working with numbers up to 20. In both nursery and reception classes, children engage in simple number operations. Numeracy activities are very practically based so that children become adept at problem solving using familiar resources in relevant contexts.

First hand experiences also contribute to children's appreciation of both the natural world and aspects of technology. They observe seasonal changes and natural features. Recently children dug up vegetables which they then made into soup. Nursery children discuss healthy eating and have made a chart of popular fruits brought in for snack time. They learn about aspects of other people's lives and celebrations and enjoy describing their own experiences.

Children are energetic. They move about speedily but with growing control and spatial awareness. They follow different actions during physical activities and games such as 'Simon says'. Children are beginning to balance well using different apparatus. They have good pencil control. Their drawings and paintings are imaginative and detailed as demonstrated by their self-portraits displayed in both classrooms. Children sing tunefully and enjoy music sessions. They are beginning to recognise and replicate sounds made by various instruments.

Staff create a relaxed but purposeful learning environment for children. They know children well, drawing on information gained from parents and from effective assessment procedures. Curriculum plans provide children with interesting topics and a balance of free choice and more structured activities. Plans show how children will make progress in all areas of learning and incorporate their differing learning needs. Staff use a variety of teaching methods to ensure all children can contribute at an appropriate level. Interesting resources and learning materials help to sustain children's involvement and extend their understanding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff and parents work closely together, sharing detailed information about children.

Where children need additional support, for example if they have special needs, staff make an assessment and provide care accordingly. Plans reflect children's differing needs and levels of skill and staff are adept at adapting activities and their approaches. As a result all children are included and their needs are well met.

Nursery and reception children are very much part of the whole school community. Older children in the nursery together with the reception class have lunch with the lower school. They also confidently take part in school assemblies and special services such as Harvest Thanksgiving. During topics and activities children explore aspects of their own lives and experiences. They find out how they have all changed since babyhood, sharing photographs and drawing and painting pictures of themselves. A sufficient range of resources reflect the diverse community but there are limited positive images displayed in some areas of the nursery and reception.

Most children play and learn harmoniously together. The staff's understanding and experience helps them to promote children's awareness of good behaviour. Children are helped to adapt to differing types of play and activities as they move from one room to another. Children understand that they are part of a group and the need for responsible behaviour. Children aged 3 and 4 discuss class rules. Children make choices, take responsibility for simple tasks, help each other out, share and take turns. They learn about the importance of listening to others and following instructions. If children misbehave, staff have a calm and consistent approach to managing situations. This coupled with the ground rules, means that children know and understand what is expected of them. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. From the outset they receive helpful information about the setting. The prospectus is being revised to include additional detail about care for children under 3 years and the Foundation Stage. In the nursery there is a wealth of information about staffing, topics, activities and general care arrangements. Displays illustrating the Birth to three matters framework are inviting and informative. This means that parents of younger children and of children in receipt of nursery education funding have a good insight into their children's routines, activities and experiences. Weekly school newsletters also feature early years' activities or events such as the nursery children's visit to a local play park and the provision of new books for nursery and reception.

Parents of 3 and 4-year-olds in the nursery are well informed about the intentions of the Foundation Stage. They can look at interesting displays relating to current topics and activities. Curriculum plans are displayed and details of the letter of the week. However, parents of 4-year-olds in reception do not currently have such ready access to details of topics, activities or plans. In other respects parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning. They share information about their children's progress and are invited to regular parents' evenings. Parents contribute resources for activities and topics. They follow up activities at home with their children, including looking at books.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation of record keeping and documentation supports the care of the children. The manager reviews and updates all of the paperwork and is currently developing an operational plan. However, certain aspects of this need further development. In some procedures the staff's practical role is not always fully explained, for example in the lost and uncollected child policies.

Secure document storage, improvements in medication recording and arrangements for parents to make appointments to discuss their child's progress help to maintain confidentiality. However there are some inconsistencies in record keeping. The current format of accident records compromises privacy. Whilst parents are informed of medication dosages they do not routinely sign the associated record. Parents and carers can access plenty of helpful information about the nursery, general childcare matters and other relevant local facilities. However, they do not routinely see the nursery's policies or procedures.

The nursery is well organised. This means children are confident to initiate and extend their own play and learning. They can access a stimulating variety of toys and additional resources can be borrowed from other classes. Children are cared for by an effective, well qualified and experienced staff team. They attend courses to improve their knowledge and understanding of childcare issues. Regular meetings between managers and staff including the staff appraisal system also contribute positively to the setting's improvement strategies. The staff's growing awareness of and enthusiasm for the Birth to three matters ethos has already had a positive impact on babies' and young children's play provision and on planning and assessment procedures. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children attending.

Leadership and management of the nursery education provision are satisfactory. Managers and staff work well together. They liaise regularly and support each other. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and ensure that children have good quality learning and play experiences. Managers and staff use and continue to develop appropriate ways for evaluating and monitoring planning and the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children's progress is monitored and reviewed and plans reflect their differing learning needs and skills.

Children are familiar and comfortable in their surroundings. The nursery's transition room is inviting and welcoming with plenty of interesting displays and well-laid out activity and table-top areas. Low-level storage units and child-size furniture means that children can readily see what is available and help themselves to resources. Children enjoy using the cosy book area and role-play area created as a result of alterations to a corridor which is now part of the classroom.

As a result of ongoing development of facilities throughout the school, children in reception now have their own brightly decorated classroom. Some examples of their work are displayed. Plans to create display areas and install more shelving for books will add interest and help children to exercise more choice. Some other areas used by children in nursery and reception are not so inviting. The sports hall used for music and physical activities can be cluttered with extraneous furniture. Adjacent accommodation to the reception class is uninviting. Proposed refurbishment of the

hall way and toilet area will create a more welcoming environment and encourage children's independence in seeing to their personal care.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the setting was registered.

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

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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):

- make sure parents are well informed about the availability and content of the nursery's policies and procedures
- continue to develop the operational plan and include the staff's practical role in relevant policies and procedures.

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):

- develop further the range of information made available to parents so they are all well informed about the Foundation Stage.
- improve further the early years learning environment so that all areas are inviting and conducive to young children's use.

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