

The Learning Tree Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306503
Inspection date	07 December 2007
Inspector	Elaine Murray
Setting Address	47 Beryl Road, Prenton, Merseyside, CH43 9RS
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Registered person	Jane Orme
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?

The Learning Tree Nursery is a privately owned day nursery. It is one of a group of eight nurseries owned by the same provider. The nursery opened in March 1999 and operates from a converted house in Prenton, Wirral. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08.00 until 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 37 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, of whom four are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs seven staff, of whom four, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing physical skills and enjoyment of exercise through regular outdoor play. They enthusiastically run, jump and play with balancing and climbing equipment. Babies are encouraged to progress to their next physical milestone as they are encouraged to sit or to move for toys. Babies and young children's sleep needs are acknowledged and met, helping to ensure their good health. Children show an awareness of simple hygiene procedures as they routinely wash their hands before snack and after using the toilet. They learn to wipe their mouths after eating and to dispose of the wipes hygienically. Staff are vigilant in following hygienic procedures as they change nappies and clean equipment. This helps to protect children from the spread of germs. The nursery's clear sickness policy is shared with parents and helps to protect children from the spread of infection. Several staff have up-to-date first aid training, helping to meet children's needs in the event of an accident or emergency.

Children learn about a healthy diet as they are provided with healthy and nutritious food which is cooked on the premises using fresh ingredients. The cooks effectively adapt the nursery's pre-planned menus to meet the needs and preferences of children attending, whilst providing a balanced diet. Snacks and meals include plenty of fruit and vegetables. Children's understanding of healthy eating is developed well in topic work and through discussion with staff. For example, children's attention is drawn to pictures of healthy foods in a book. Drinking water is readily available for older children at all times. Younger children are offered water regularly, promoting their good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in bright, well maintained accommodation which staff make attractive and welcoming. They create a stimulating environment by making good use of the available space to display children's work and photographs, and develop attractive role play and book areas. This helps to foster children's sense of security and belonging. Space is used well to meet children's needs as older children can move freely between the quiet room and activity room. However, the toilet facilities do not ensure that children's privacy and dignity is respected. There is a broad range of good quality toys and equipment which are suitable for different ages and abilities. This helps to meet children's needs effectively. Children's independence is promoted as they confidently select from the many resources available in low level tubs or on low shelves.

Staff take effective measures to ensure children's safety indoors and outdoors. They make a daily safety check of the premises and outdoor area. Risk assessments identify potential hazards and action is taken to minimise the risk to children. Children show a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe as they independently negotiate the steps and path to the outdoor area safely, holding onto the hand rail when necessary. Older babies learn to keep safe as they are reminded to sit down in their chairs. Children learn to protect themselves in the event of a fire or emergency through regularly practising the fire evacuation procedure.

Children are well protected as staff have a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and are familiar with the procedures to be followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff establish positive, warm relationships with children, helping them to feel settled and secure. Children are happy and content. Babies are secure and happy and respond well to staffs' caring approach. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to promote learning. Babies attention is drawn to a book of photographs of themselves, helping to affirm their identity and sense of belonging. A photographic display of children's daily routine also helps children to feel secure. Children enjoy learning to explore and investigate, using their senses, as they play with bubble water, sand, paint and cooked spaghetti. Babies enjoy exploring the different materials in a basket and happily play with paint. They are fascinated watching bubbles and are excited when they are able to blow the bubbles themselves. Children make connections as they find out what happens when as they repeatedly roll balls off the end of a flat surface. They show delight as they splash in the puddles outside and explore jelly using their hands. Children are encouraged to make choices and confidently select their own resources. They show growing independence in putting on coats and wellington boots. Children's language is developed well through careful encouragement and questioning from staff. Staff know the children well. They make regular observations of babies and young children's learning and use this information to inform assessment records. In their day to day teaching they generally use this knowledge well to adapt activities to the ages and abilities of the children. However, on occasion, planning does not sufficiently take into account children's ages or stages of development and learning outcomes for children are not realistic.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and this is reflected in their teaching. They provide a broad range of interesting, practical activities which promote much effective learning. Staff take care to present activities in an interesting and meaningful way. As a result children's interest and concentration in activities is sustained, helping them to make good progress. For example, staff effectively guide children's learning in the well resourced Christmas grotto role play area. Children's imagination and language skills are developed as they take turns to be Father Christmas. They develop mark making skills as they write lists, they learn to estimate how much paper they will need to wrap the presents, and develop skills using scissors to cut paper and sticky tape. Staff make good use of every day opportunities to promote children's counting skills and number recognition. Children confidently count the plates at snack time. They happily jump on different numbers in the outdoor play area, and catch numbered ducks in the water tray. Staff question children effectively to make them think and extend their learning. For example, children are encouraged to think how they will make an imaginary cake, what they will do and how it will look and feel. Staff have a good awareness of children's capabilities. They make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information well to inform their day to day teaching. However, staff who work with the children are not fully involved in the planning process. This means that, at times, assessment is not effectively used to inform planning and learning objectives do not reflect the needs of different abilities.

Children show the ability to take turns during a lotto game. They are increasingly able to express their ideas in sentences as staff promote this through talking to the children about their activities and experiences. Children's vocabulary is developed as they are encouraged to describe how different fruit and vegetables feel and taste. Children enjoy books and stories. They show confidence as they make use of the ample opportunities available to them to communicate meaning through writing or mark making. Children learn to use mathematical language as they

weigh cooked spaghetti. They confidently match pairs of socks on the outdoor washing line. Children observe changes in the weather and the growth of seeds and bulbs. They are developing skills using construction sets and enjoy making models from waste materials. Children are able to use a computer to support their learning. Their sense of place is developed effectively through good use of visitors to the nursery, such as a police officer. Children show imagination in role play. They make regular use of musical instruments to explore sound.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged to develop positive and caring relationships. For example, staff show them how to help each other cut sticky tape in order to wrap presents. Children learn to develop a responsible and caring attitude as they help raise money for a charity to help sick children. Staff ensure that all children are included in the activities provided at most times, helping to promote their self-esteem and sense of belonging. However, at other times the organisation of activities does not ensure that all children are positively included. For example, on an occasion when some children did not have wellington boots available for playing outdoors in puddles, staff did not adapt their plans sufficiently to ensure that all children felt included. Children develop an awareness of diversity and the wider community as staff make good use of resources and planned activities to promote this. Older children develop an awareness of different cultures and beliefs through topic work relating to festivals, such as Chinese New Year.

Children generally behave well due to staffs' positive and consistent approach. They are familiar with the routines of the nursery and respond well to praise and encouragement from staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive a high level of information about the education provision through the parent's brochure, regular newsletters and written information about the Foundation Stage of learning. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning through completing regular tasks with their child at home. Staff produce detailed information about children's progress in the form of monthly written reports and regularly complete assessment profiles. However, current system of sharing information does not ensure that all parents of funded children are fully informed about their children's progress and achievements.

Staff have established positive relationships with parents. Parents of babies and young children are well informed about their children's day to day experiences through use of a daily diary sheet. Staff request information about children before a child joins the nursery and obtain relevant parental permissions. This information is used to help meet children's needs. There is a positive informal sharing of information between staff and parents, as staff establish close links. Staff value and respect the views of parents and work closely with them to meet children's needs. Any concerns are dealt with promptly and recorded appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager is enthusiastic and provides positive direction to staff. Roles are clear and staff work well together to teach. Planning is regularly evaluated and children's progress in learning is well monitored. The quality of teaching is also monitored through regular staff appraisals. The manager seeks and acts

upon advice from the early year partnership regarding improvements to the provision. This approach has a positive effect on the quality of children's learning.

Children are cared for in a well organised environment. Staff are deployed effectively to meet ratios and support children's well-being and development. There are clear written procedures in place for the appointment of staff, which ensure that the required checks are carried out and that staff are suitable to work with young children. Most staff hold relevant qualifications, which has a beneficial effect on children's learning and welfare. Detailed policies and procedures are effectively in place and contribute to positive outcomes for children. Records are used effectively to support the care of children and comply with regulations. Space and resources are organised well to promote children's safety, care and learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was required to: ensure arrangements for delivering meals to the baby unit conform to food safety regulations; ensure registers reflect accurate detail of the staff attendances daily; provide more opportunities for children to make choices about activities and resources and provide more chances for children to write and make marks.

These recommendations have been met with positive effect on children's safety, welfare and learning.

The setting was also required to develop the use of assessments to inform planning. Steps have been taken to address this issue by making use of evaluations of activities to inform plans. However, this remains an aspect for improvement.

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.

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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):

- adapt toilet facilities to ensure that the dignity and privacy of children is respected
- make better use of assessment to inform planning, to ensure that the activities planned consistently meet the needs of different ages and abilities (also applies to Nursery education)
- make sure that the organisation of activities ensures that all children are positively included.

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 all parents are regularly informed about their children's progress in learning.

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