

The Learning Tree Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 306503
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Inspector Sue Anslow

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

The Learning Tree Nursery is one of seven nurseries registered by the same private provider. It opened in 1999 and operates from two rooms on the ground floor of a converted house and a separate building in the garden. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is situated in a residential area of Prenton, Merseyside. It is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm all year round, except for Bank Holidays.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 31 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 34 children aged from birth to five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff, all of whom hold early years qualifications to at least Level 2. The nursery provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds and works closely with early years professionals.

There are currently 34 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 overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The children enjoy their time spent in the nursery and make good steady progress in their learning and development. Effective procedures are in place in most areas to ensure that the children's welfare requirements are met. Staff communicate well with individual parents, home routines are followed as requested and information is exchanged daily. Partnerships with local schools are valued and children with additional needs are supported appropriately. Staff recognise the uniqueness of each child and operate a policy of inclusion. Regular evaluation of the service is seen as a priority and a monitoring system is in place to ensure all areas are covered.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve hygiene routines with regard to hand washing around snack time.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly. Staff have attended relevant training and have the knowledge and skills to carry out correct procedures should the need arise. Staff take steps to ensure that children are safe both indoors and outdoors and that furniture, equipment and toys are kept clean and safe for children to use. Risk assessments are carried out as required, including journeys off-site. The setting actively promotes equality of opportunity for all children attending. Each child has their own key-worker who liaises closely with parents to ensure their individual needs and requirements are met. Children learn about the wider world around them through play activities, discussions and appropriate resources.

Staff work well together in this small nursery and benefit from good management support, both in the nursery and from the lead co-ordinator. Regular staff meetings and appraisals ensure knowledge and skills are kept up-to-date. Good recruitment procedures ensure children are looked after by suitable people and opportunities to attend relevant training courses are provided. The recommendations raised at the last inspection have been satisfactorily completed and a system for monitoring and evaluating the setting as a whole is firmly established. Ideas and comments from children and parents are noted and used, together with input from the whole staff team, to form targets for future development.

The nursery works closely with parents and carers to ensure each individual child's needs are met. Families receive a welcome pack when they first start and staff discuss the children's home routines and interests with parents during the settling in periods. This information is recorded and used by key-workers to plan appropriate activities for the children. Regular newsletters and notices keep parents informed of forthcoming events and activities. Parents are able to speak to staff at any time and parents evenings are organised to discuss the children's development more formally. A set of written policies and procedures support the work of the nursery and are included in the welcome pack for all parents to read. The nursery also enjoys close links with local schools and teachers visit the nursery during the summer term to meet the children who will be moving on to their school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The staff have good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use effective key-worker systems to support the children's progress. Weekly plans cover all six areas of learning equally and staff ensure any children attending part-time enjoy the same opportunities as those attending every day. Activities are linked to different themes throughout the year and staff are alert to children's interests and ideas, providing opportunities and resources as appropriate. Staff

record their observations of children's achievements and comments during the day and use these to inform their planning for the following week. The children's profiles contain notes of staff's observations together with a tick sheet of developmental stages to enable staff to track each child's progress. Photographs and examples of the children's art work illustrate to parents the many exciting play and learning opportunities their child enjoys.

The children benefit from generous play spaces in each of the rooms and a very large garden at the back of the building. A wide variety of activities are set out each day for children to choose what they would like to play with, but they are also able to help themselves to different toys and materials from the low level shelving around the room. A good balance of active and quiet play is available, both indoors and outside. Physical play is promoted extremely well and children enjoy running, climbing, sliding, rocking and pedalling on different pieces of equipment outside. Creative play is also promoted well for all age groups. Children have great fun making shapes and patterns in the sand and shaving foam, learning about different textures and using their senses to describe things. For example, they compare the taste, smell and feel of different fruits at snack time, using words like juicy, crunchy and cold.

Children learn new skills and are able to explore and investigate the world around them through their play. They use the dressing up clothes and act out domestic routines in the home corner. They practise fastening zips and buttons on wooden frames and gradually become adept at using the computer mouse to move the objects around the screen. They watch the progress of the seeds and bulbs they plant and delight in the antics of the birds and squirrels in the garden. Letters, numbers, shapes and colours are introduced through daily routines and activities. Appropriate questioning by staff encourages children to think, remember and work things out for themselves. For example, 'how many knives and forks do we need for lunch' and 'what day comes after Wednesday?'

Children learn to keep themselves safe through daily routines and reminders from staff. They practise evacuation procedures regularly and talk about road safety when out for walks. Children are well nourished through the provision of freshly prepared meals, snacks and drinks throughout the day. They can rest or sleep in comfort and all areas are kept clean and tidy. Children of all ages are happy, confident, friendly and responsive. They behave well and are learning to share and take turns. The children enjoy each other's company and benefit from warm relationships with all the staff.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met