



## **Linden House Nursery**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY103054
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 March 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Margaret Coyne

<b>Setting Address</b>	83 West Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU6 1SE
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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*

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## 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?

Linden House is a privately owned day care provision which opened in 2002. The nursery is situated in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. The children have access to 3 classrooms and a conservatory. There is also children's toilets and nappy changing facilities, a kitchen, office and staff facilities. Children share access to a secure, enclosed outside area. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:30 for 50 weeks of the

year.

There are currently 43 children aged from 2 years to under 8 years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 10 staff. Of these, 6 staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and 2 staff are working towards a qualification. The nursery receive support from an early years teacher and the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned daily routines and procedures when using the toilet and washing hands. Children have a growing awareness of how and why we wash our hands and when it is important to do so. For example, before meals and snacks, after being outside or handling the pet rabbit and after messy activities. Children are protected from infection through well-managed hygiene routines which are practised by the nursery. For example, the sick child policy and the hygienic nappy changing procedures followed by staff. Overall the standard of cleanliness throughout the nursery contributes to the children's good health. Windows and doors are opened to ensure the rooms are well ventilated and children receive fresh air. Children also access the garden in all weathers to gain fresh air. Staff are well informed about children's health issues and all relevant records and documents are in place. However, parents are not asked to sign the medication record so they are informed of the time and amount of the medication given to further protect the children. A suitable level of staff hold first aid certificates and are confident they can administer first aid to the children to protect their health and prevent them becoming distressed.

Children benefit from a generally healthy diet. They are provided with varied, nutritious meals and snacks in accordance to their needs and any allergies or dietary requirements are complied with. Snacks are varied and healthy and children sit as a group enjoying social time together. However, staff do not reinforce, through discussions with the children, about healthy eating and why certain foods are good for us. This has an impact on their understanding of healthy food items. The meals provided are ample for the children and they have free access to drinking water at all times. However, their independence skills during snack and meal times are not developed sufficiently. The daily menu is displayed showing parents the food their child has had during the day. Meal times are an enjoyable social occasion where children can ask for more food to satisfy their appetites and express how much they enjoy their meals.

Children enjoy a stimulating range of equipment to promote a healthy life and their physical development. They take part in activities to encourage them to use their

bodies to keep fit and healthy. Children move with confidence and skill as they ride scooters and cars and balance on tyres. The outdoor area has recently been upgraded and a climbing frame is on order to promote children's climbing skills and control. Children take part in action songs both indoors and outdoors. They enjoy group games to gain control and create the desired effect. For example, as they throw small balls into the air using the parachute. Children's dexterity and hand and eye coordination is developed well as they enjoy playing with small world figures, construction equipment and manage domestic style equipment in the home corner. They cut, glue and paint using a variety of tools and techniques. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well to provide a broad range of stimulating physical play experiences for younger children to boost their confidence and gain control of their bodies. Children are able to nap and sleep as they require and will tell staff if they become tired. This benefits all children as individual sleep and rest patterns are observed.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children's safety is paramount to the organisation of the nursery. Staff recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Effective security measures are in place to protect the children from harm and promote safety around the nursery with the children. The group have secure systems in place for the children's protection and welfare. Systematic risk assessments are carried out and all staff share in the responsibility for keeping the children safe. Accident records are maintained and shared with parents. The setting is well planned, bright, cheerful and welcoming with lots of space for children to move freely and safely around activities. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe in the group as they explain and practise simple procedures such as emergency evacuation. They help to tidy up their play areas, learning the boundaries to keep safe in nursery and road safety on outings. Staff effectively explain safety to the children. This is done in a simple but positive manner aimed at their level of understanding so they can take risks and remain safe within their environment. Supervision is high throughout the nursery and deployment of staff is efficient.

Children have access to an abundance of safe, good quality, age-appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are well-organised throughout the nursery in child height storage units to encourage children to become independent and gain safe access to their resources. Children show respect for their toys and equipment and help to tidy items away. Resources are presented well to encourage children to participate. The purposeful use of space throughout the setting separates areas into different activities such as the home corners, comfy reading areas, creative areas and messy play areas.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through current policies and procedures for the protection of children. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection and some have recently attended training to further enhance their understanding and information gained is shared with all staff. All procedures are up to date and supporting literature and comprehensive records are in place and

available for staff. Their good practice ensures any concerns are dealt with in a sensitive manner and a designated person is responsible to share information with outside agencies to ensure children are protected at all times. Parents are aware of the nurseries responsibility to protect the children in their care and appropriate guidelines are followed at all times. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of any allegations made against them as these are included in the child protection policy.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy, contented and secure throughout the nursery. They confidently access the stimulating and challenging range of activities and form secure relationships with staff and other children. Staff have an accomplished awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has started to have a positive effect on the younger children's achievements. Staff plan activities in line with this framework using the different components and have gained a secure knowledge about what children can learn. Children's development is recorded in line with this framework and shows the progress they make. These follow them through to the next classroom and are used to gain a secure starting point for the Foundation Stage. Young children receive lots of cuddles and attention which increases their sense of well-being and contentment. They are eager to participate in the activities because staff make them fun and interesting. For example, listening to an interactive story of the 'Hungry Caterpillar' using play food as props. They enjoy the various activities such as a domestic play area, creative activities, exploring natural objects and manufactured toys. A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's self-assurance, confidence and emotional well-being. Young children develop their communication skills as they respond to others around them. With the use of verbal and non-verbal language they make their needs known to staff who are adept at interpreting these. Children are responsive to new experiences and are directly involved and interested in their play. They are starting to learn about responsibilities and are allowed to make errors, decisions and choices as they select activities and share their play with others.

Children exhibit high levels of confidence and security and this has been achieved by the consistent staff team who provide support and direction. Staff value the children and speak positively to them. This results in children mirroring adults in their own play. For example, after watching the builder build the conservatory children like to become builders in their role play. Older children resolve their differences as they learn to share with others. Staff encourage them to use language to find their own solutions and negotiate differences. Children join in enthusiastically with hands on real life experiences such as taking part in building their own conservatory they wear hard hats and have opportunity to lay bricks and smooth out the floor covering. Staff ensure the activity is well managed and safe for children to participate in and allow them real tools to use so they gain ownership of part of the nursery.

Staff throughout the nursery make the experiences enjoyable and meaningful for the children which in turn aids their concentration and confidence to participate. Children

are receptive to the constant praise and encouragement that is provided by staff. This has a clear impact on their self-esteem and encourages them to try new tasks and participate in activities. There are three travel bears which children take on their holidays and trips. With parent participation these trips are recorded with pictures and a travel log to share the stories of the bears travels with the other children. This develops their knowledge of the wider world and being part of the nursery 'family'.

## Nursery Education

Children are secure, happy and occupied throughout their time in the nursery. They confidently move between activities playing freely or joining in with some structured learning sessions. They have a strong sense of belonging as they seek out friends, join in activities and clearly know the routine. Behaviour is very good as the children know what is expected of them. Children's independence is well developed in all areas of play. They access equipment to extend their own play and initiate games and activities themselves. Staff are adept at stepping back letting a child take over the activity using their own skills and imaginations. Children enjoy using language in their imaginative play and during group discussion as they happily talk about their weekend. They enjoy books and will sit comfortably together in the book area as they share stories. Children are learning sounds of letters and can recognise some familiar words. Older and more able children confidently write their own names on their work and can read the names of other children in the group. Children confidently count and can recognise written numbers and match objects. However, resources for simple problem solving, measuring and weighing are not freely available to increase children's mathematical thinking as they apply their own skills, to underpin their knowledge and experiences. Some practical activities increase children's sorting and counting skills such as a traffic survey as they count trucks and cars going by the nursery.

Staff provide children with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They have fun with the computer and this shows their growing skills and knowledge of the mouse and keyboard functions. They access various learning programs to support their literacy and numeracy skills. Children explore as they take part in hands on experiences helping to build their new conservatory and when growing seeds and bulbs. However, few opportunities are available to increase children's ability to explore and both natural and man made objects and discover how things work. Excellent use has been made of an African village next to a play house gives children comparisons between different ways people live around the world. Dressing up clothes are available from different cultures and this again extends children's understanding of the wider world. The encouragement for children to enjoy music is very well managed and led with a music teacher who works part time in the group. All children enjoy participating in the music sessions and perform 'Billy No Buzz' using their voices, actions and a variety of instruments. They get real pleasure from their performance. Creative activities give children a sense of achievement as they are able to create spontaneously using their own imaginations and skills. They can freely access a range of different textures and techniques to create. For example, using a variety of different fruits and vegetables to print with including sweet corn, pineapple and peas. Staff are adept at allowing children opportunity to do so spontaneously through child-initiated art and craft. Children's imaginations are uninhibited as they make up imaginative games and play

often inviting staff to join in a role such as the 'Tooth Fairy' and 'Mother Christmas'.

Children's achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones. Staff use on-going observations extremely well to plan the next steps in children's learning. Written observation and accompanying photographs give clear examples of children's progress and achievements across the stepping stones. These identify any gaps in a child's learning which staff use when developing future planning.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage and ensure children have a challenging range of activities each day to occupy and stimulate them. However, some activities are limited and children do not always have enough time to work at their own pace before having to clear away for snack time. Staff have a good awareness of children's starting points and use this to plan the next steps in their development. Consistent staff impacts on children's high levels of confidence and security. Staff know the children well and have created a realistic balance between adult-led and child-initiated play. Staff are excellent role models and inspire, praise and encourage children to try things for themselves. This helps children succeed and builds their self-reliance skills. Staff encourage children to participate by making the activities interesting and aimed at the children's individual abilities. This extends their capabilities and arouses their natural curiosity to learn through their play. The interaction between staff and children is wonderful as they enjoy their time together. Staff encourage children to take part. They maintain their interest and increase their concentration as they make activities interesting. Staff are secure with the early learning goals which reflects on the progress the children make. Their open-ended questioning skills are excellent as they encourage children to think for themselves and take part in discussions. They encourage children to gain the confidence to succeed and support them well as they aspire to do so. Planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively. It includes the aims and objectives of each activity, resources used, deployment of staff and key vocabulary to introduce. Separate planning is carried out by the music teacher to incorporate her activities in this area. An evaluation of activities ensures they are meeting the needs of all children. Staff are enthusiastic and dedicated and this impacts on the children's enjoyment and learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity. For example, dressing up clothes, an African village and artefacts from travel bear's adventures around the world. Staff have very positive attitudes and present themselves as sensitive role models which in turn helps children relate to others. Through discussions and activities children are able to acknowledge each others differences and show great respect for those around them. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children play in an environment where they are nurtured by adults and free from any type of stereotyping or discrimination.

Staff are clearly committed to supporting each and every child in order to meet their needs. Suitable systems are used to support any children with special needs and the ethos of the nursery is that each child is unique and has the right to the same experiences and to develop alongside their peers. Detailed pre-registration forms gain full information from parents about each child in order to meet their needs effectively. The nursery is well supported by the local inclusion officer.

Children have a secure understanding of the boundaries within the nursery and respond to direction from adults in a caring manner. A consistent approach is followed by all adults. This impacts clearly on their security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. Children gain an understanding between right and wrong because staff are consistent and employ highly effective behaviour management strategies. These help defuse a situation and distract and engages children in worthwhile activities. Children's self-esteem is nurtured and promoted with praise and encouragement by staff. Children share in the responsibility for their own behaviour as they learn to listen to others, share and wait turns and are kind to their friends. For example, children work cooperatively together as they tidy up and share equipment. Staff are caring role models for the children, creating a calm, positive, fun and interesting environment in which they thrive. Staff have high expectations for all children which impacts positively on the behaviour seen at the nursery. An excellent reward system is used with reward cups and achievement certificates. These are handed out for good behaviour, for trying hard with music and for any child who has made outstanding progress. Children aspire to receive an award and this is reflected in their overall good behaviour. The nursery's behaviour management policy will be updated to include a reference to bullying.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. This partnership impacts significantly on each child's sense of belonging, their security and well-being. Parents play an active role in their child's care with the regular exchange of information. They are invited to open evenings, fund raising and concerts. Staff present themselves in a professional manner while being approachable and friendly. This helps parents feel secure and at ease, confident with the care provided for their child. This impacts on the children's sense of security and confidence. Parents are fully informed about their child's progress and achievements and their involvement impacts greatly on the children's good health and well being, and their care and learning. A high level of information is available to parents including all policies and procedures and information on the National Curriculum. The planning of activities and information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework is displayed. Parents also receive a topic web showing them different learning objectives for the term and a topic sheet to help them extend activities at home with their child.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The effective organisation throughout the nursery ensures children's care and learning is enhanced. Leadership and management of the nursery is good. The manager works closely with the senior nursery nurse and both have a strong awareness of their roles and responsibilities. They enhance their knowledge through



extensive training and encourage staff to attend additional training. This is reflected in the good progress the group have made since their last inspection. Action plans have been implemented and high priority has been given to moving the group forward. The manager has received guidance and support from appropriate bodies such as development workers and the local authority. The management team including the administrator are responsible for all aspects of the nursery including staff supervision and employment, ratios and deployment, operational plan, staff training and qualifications. A robust system is in place for the recruitment, supervision and induction of all staff. Staff have a secure knowledge of the National Standards and implement these throughout the setting. This is enhanced with their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. High regard for the welfare of the children, their group sizes, adult support and well-planned activities, contribute to children's well-being, enjoyment and achievements. A positive, motivated and dedicated staff team is in place. Opportunities for children to play and learn are enriched because each member of staff has different experiences which they bring to the care provided for children. Positive links with the mainstream schools and the local community are established and this helps when children take part in activities out of the nursery and move on to school.

The premises are very well organised. Indoor space is effectively arranged to maximize the play opportunities for children through the different age groups and abilities. It provides children with safe, imaginative areas and resources which they can access independently. Routines are in place to ensure all areas of play and learning are organised. These also take account of part-time children so they have opportunity to participate in the weekly activities.

Children's welfare is maintained because staff share in the responsibility for the highly effective organisation of all records and documents. Staff are actively involved in evaluating and improving their own practice and work closely together with the management team. They play an active role in planning the activities and routines for the children and designated roles are implemented. Staff training is of high priority and the manager tries to ensure as much in-house training takes place to benefit her staff team and increase opportunities for children. Complaints are logged and procedures are met including a written response to any complainant. An inclusive environment has been created which clearly shows that each child matters. Overall, the needs of the children attending are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection there were four recommendations raised. To update documentation for accident records and emergency evacuation records and to provide evidence of a staff induction process. These recommendations have been met. A separate sheet is used in the accident record to maintain confidentiality and a history of the accident, including a diagram of the injury site is logged. Children's full names are used for all accident and incident records. Full records are kept of all evacuations practised including numbers present and the time taken to leave the building. A staff induction procedure is in place to provide staff with full operational details of the nursery and their role.

At the last educational inspection there were three key issues raised. To develop planning to include some focussed activities, to provide some short group work covering aspects of literacy and mathematics and to provide parents with information about the Foundation Stage and stepping stones. These key issues have been met. Planning has been developed to include some focused activities from all six areas of learning. Short group time activities have been included, directed at individual group needs and information for parents has been extended to include the Foundation Stage and stepping stones. This is to be further extended with additional information about the National Curriculum by displays on parents notice board and in the welcome pack.

### **Complaints 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.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

## **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 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):

- ensure parents signatures are obtained for each entry on the medication record
- extend the opportunities for children to develop an understanding of healthy eating and to develop their independence skills at snack and meal times

### **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):

- increase the range of resources and activities freely available for children to extend their interest in mathematical concepts, and opportunities to explore

and discover both natural and man made objects. Ensure daily routines and planned activities allow time for children to work at their own pace.

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