



## The Learning Tree

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY315896
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 June 2006
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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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Learning Tree was registered in December 2005, and operates in purpose built premises close to the M55 motorway in Lytham, St Ann's, Lancashire.

It is open from 07.30 to 18.30 all year round. It offers full day care for children aged from birth to five years in the locality and surrounding areas. At present there are 24 children on roll with two receiving nursery education grants.

There is a qualified manager in post, with an increasing staff team, of which the majority hold an appropriate child care qualification. There is a qualified teacher working with the funded children.

Lancashire's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership give the nursery support from teachers, and provide training at the nursery.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted as they benefit from being cared for in a clean and hygienic environment. They follow sound hygiene practices by routinely brushing their teeth after lunch, washing their hands after messy activities and after using the bathroom. The staff follow clear procedures for nappy changing and serving meals, which effectively reduce any risk of cross infection and helps to keep children healthy.

Children sit in social groups for meals and snacks which are generally nutritious and home made with fresh produce. There are sound procedures for recording information, however, there are minor omissions within the medication record. Staff hold relevant certificates such as first aid and food hygiene, which ensures that children's health and welfare is promoted.

All children have many opportunities to be active outside in free play and planned activities that encourage their physical skills. Children develop large and small motor skills as they climb the slide and scoot around on the sit-and-ride equipment. They enjoy the climbing frame and run confidently under and over with good understanding of directional commands. Younger children develop their coordination as they enjoy dancing, and learn to push tricycles along with their feet.

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

The provision is good.

All children are cared for in warm, bright and attractive surroundings which are safe and well maintained. Toys and resources are readily accessible which promotes their independence. The children are encouraged to 'tidy up' and put their toys away after sessions. Older children are aware that if toys are left on the floor other children may fall over them.

All children have frequent access to good, safe, outdoor areas with plenty of interesting and imaginative activities. For example, they watch how different size balls roll down pipes at different speeds. Children are able to play safely during hot weather because staff are vigilant about them being protected from the sun, and the children themselves have a good awareness of the potential risks of being out in the sun too long.

Children are kept safe whilst on the premises because the staff implement good and consistent procedures when visitors arrive at the nursery. They carry out detailed risk assessments of care both on and off the premises. Children are protected by the staff's good understanding of child protection through their regular attendance at courses, and their clear understanding of how to follow the procedures if necessary.

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

The provision is good.

The children are settled, happy and content in the care of the supportive staff team. Relationships between the staff and the children are very good, which contributes to the children's well-being. Staff are aware of and meet the children's needs well. For example, they know when the babies are tired or hungry and respond appropriately. The children clearly enjoy attending the nursery where the staff create a caring and fun atmosphere. Children's progress is recorded and staff are developing confidence in using this information to plan the next steps in children's progress.

Recently the staff working with children under three years have begun to use the Birth to three matters framework, for example, planning activities and questions to encourage the children to become 'competent learners'. They have started to introduce more exploratory and sensory opportunities for the babies, such as play with natural objects in 'treasure baskets' and more tactile play with materials such as dough, water and bubbles.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff working in the pre-school have a sound knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage and how children learn effectively. Children participate in an appropriate range of interesting activities, which staff adapt in accordance with each child's individual needs and interests. The children are motivated and making progress towards the early learning goals. Children's achievement is clearly linked to the stepping stones. The suitable observations and assessments mean staff are clear about each child's abilities, so they can provide beneficial support and challenge to ensure progress is made.

Children settle well into the nursery and show a sense of belonging as they greet staff and each other. They are involved and interested in activities throughout their day. The children display increasing self confidence and independence, freely selecting equipment for themselves and taking responsibility for their personal care. Children's levels of achievement as they progress towards the early learning goals are improving, as staff focus more clearly on the stepping stones to achieve steps, such as using scissors and the listening centre competently. Children enjoy well-planned, outdoor, physical activities that encourage their understanding of the effects that exercise has on their bodies. For example, children know they would need to drink more water when playing outside in the hot weather. Early number skills, colour and shape naming are progressing well. They can confidently follow instructions matching size and shape when modelling with play-dough. Children are developing their language and thinking skills through staff questioning and extension of their ideas. However, they do not readily pick up books to enjoy reading, or show

sustained interest in developing role play and construction as provision in these areas is insufficiently developed to stimulate their play and learning. They make many creative pictures and patterns as there are good opportunities for children to enjoy sand, water and free painting activities. This is further enhanced as there are some good opportunities for children to initiate more elaborate designs as they make farm animals as three dimensional models.

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

The provision is good.

Children's individual care needs are effectively well met, because staff discuss all issues relating to their care with parents and carers and follow children's own familiar routines. Children are happy and content, developing respect for each other and their awareness of diversity. Clear arrangements are in place to care for children with learning disabilities or difficulties.

The children demonstrate caring and kindness towards each other. They behave very well in the nursery by cooperating at group games, sharing and taking turns. For example, one child gave another some of her play-dough so they both had the same amount. They enjoy the praise and encouragement they receive from staff. The caring environment created in the nursery fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Warm and friendly relationships are established as staff work very well with parents. They exchange information about the children's care and learning each day as parents bring and collect their children. This benefits the children as closer links between home and nursery are created. Regular newsletters and notice boards provide parents with additional information on the intended curriculum and care needs to ensure they are well informed about what their children do at the nursery.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff have secure knowledge of childcare and use this to provide stimulating opportunities for children. They have access to regular training opportunities and use these to develop their own knowledge and enhance the care of the children. The staff deployment and organisation of key worker groups provide the children with consistency so that they are secure and confident. However, this could be further enhanced with children under two years to include feeding and nappy changing needs.

Detailed documentation is in place and generally implemented by staff, who follow clear routines to ensure that children have a structured day and enjoy their time at the nursery.

The leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. The manager has lots

of enthusiasm and commitment and is supported well by the registered provider. They motivate staff and are continually looking for interesting ways to develop and improve the nursery and the learning experiences for children.

The nursery is meeting the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

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

This is the first inspection since registration.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints to report.

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**

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 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 all administered medication records are complete and signed by parents to acknowledge the entry
- further develop the key worker system for children under two years to ensure the individual needs of children are consistently met at feeding and nappy changing 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 activities and resources for developing children's early reading skills

- provide additional resources to enhance play opportunities and children's learning in particular props for role play and construction materials.

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