



Lavenders Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219220
Inspection date	24 November 2006
Inspector	Carol Mansell
Setting Address	19 Bushmead Avenue, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK40 3QJ
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Registered person	Child Base Limited
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?

Lavenders Day Nursery is one of 32 day care nurseries owned by Child Base Limited. It opened in 1990 and operates from a converted Victorian house comprising of five separate base rooms. It is situated on the outskirts of the town of Bedford. A maximum of 76 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open five days a week for 52 weeks a year between the hours of 8:00 until 18:00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 127 children aged from birth to five years on roll. Of these, 30 receive funding for nursery education. Children in attendance live locally. The nursery currently supports children who have special educational needs, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 staff. Of these, 17 staff members including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two staff who are currently working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority, together with support when required, from other professional bodies in relation to children with special educational needs.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children understand the importance of washing their hands before snack time, recognising that it helps to stop germs from spreading. Older children have opportunities to use the toilets by themselves which helps to build their independence skills. Younger children are escorted by the staff and offered gentle reminders of the procedures to follow which helps them to understand simple good health and hygiene practices. Children recognise the need to wash their hands after eating as 'they might be sticky'. Young children are encouraged to use their spoon to eat their dinner and staff provide simple explanations to help children understand that their hands can carry germs. This helps them to learn about keeping themselves healthy. Children are safeguarded as staff have completed suitable first aid training courses. They check the contents of the first aid boxes regularly and ensure the contents are replenished as needed. Children receive appropriate care and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. However, staff do not always ensure that medication files are completed effectively. Some records lack parent's signatures and others lack details of medicines administered as well as dates and times they were administered which potentially compromises children's welfare.

Children have their dietary needs met because staff work well with the parents. They share relevant information with all staff involved in preparing meals and snacks. This ensures children have access to appropriate foods to help them stay healthy. Staff have devised a comprehensive system to ensure all adults working with the children recognise those who require a special diet. This includes place mats with the children's photographs on and written information regarding any allergies, intolerances or religious restrictions. This ensures their dietary needs are met. Young children are encouraged to feed themselves and they receive lots of praise and encouragement from the staff. This helps to build their confidence and self-esteem. Older children participate in a rolling snack programme. They take the responsibility of having something to eat and drink part way through the morning and afternoon sessions. They automatically wash their hands when they are asked if they would like to go to the snack table. Staff encourage all children to at least have a drink at this time. They talk to the children about the importance of food and drink helping them to learn about healthy living. Children have access to water at meal times and staff encourage them to drink throughout the sessions. This helps to ensure they do not get dehydrated. Children have freshly cooked meals which are organised on a four weekly rota. They enjoy hot lunches and dinners, with favourites being cheese and broccoli macaroni bake and yoghurt for dessert. This ensures children are suitably nourished and have a well-balanced diet.

Children enjoy participating in a wide range of physical activities. They have many opportunities to use the outdoor area where they are able to run around freely, use the wheeled toys and kick the footballs into the net. This helps to build their gross motor skills. Children also have many opportunities to enhance their fine finger movements such as, cutting, sticking, and manipulating malleable materials. They enjoy using a variety of mark making equipment such as, chalk, pencils and paint brushes. They explore the construction toys finding different ways to join the bricks or blocks together. They have ample opportunities to explore water and sand activities as well as exploring and experimenting with different textures such as, corn flour. This ensures children have opportunities to enhance their creative development and their fine motor skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. Staff ensure the property is inviting by decorating the walls with examples of children's work, displays of photographs and information for parents. Children stay safe because staff take effective measures to ensure they are aware of who is trying to gain access to the property. Parents gain entry using the buzzer system and staff ensure they check identification before allowing access to visitors. This ensures children are protected from harm. Children generally stay safe as staff conduct regular risk assessments. They talk to the children at an appropriate level to help them to understand about keeping themselves safe in the setting. Children regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedures which helps them to understand responsible behaviours. Babies are protected from harm as staff strictly follow the procedures before gaining entry to the second floor where babies and staff may be moving behind the door. Everyone rings the bell before opening the door, this ensures babies remain safe. Babies have suitable cots to sleep in and younger children have mattresses they use on the floor. All children have their own bedding which helps to prevent the spread of infection. Babies are protected as the staff check them regularly. They ensure the sleep room is at an appropriate temperature, safeguarding small babies from harm.

Children have access to a range of toys, resources and equipment that are cleaned regularly and checked by the staff for any damage. Toys and resources are stored in brightly coloured containers and many are stored at an appropriate height which enables the children to put the toys away safely at the end of each session. Children are provided with activities that are fun, interesting and offer lots of challenges. They have access to an interesting outdoor area which offers a firm patio surface during the wetter weather and a grassed area for fine weather. Children explore the outdoor area confidently. They choose the resources they want to play with from those provided by the staff. Some children choose to explore the outdoor area rather than playing with the resources. They look at the plants that have been growing during the warmer weather and occupy themselves by looking for different creatures in the soil and on the path. Children are encouraged to use their curiosity and to increase their knowledge which helps to build their confidence and self-esteem.

Children are protected as staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Staff have a good awareness of the child

protection policies and procedures, including those regarding any allegations made against a member of staff. Children are protected as staff adhere to the strict collection procedures ensuring authorisation has been given by the parents in the event of someone else having to collect their children. This ensures children are protected from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies enjoy exploring the messy play activities provided. They use their senses to explore a wide variety of textures and materials such as, corn flour and paint. Babies and young children enjoy exploring the heuristic play equipment. They investigate how the different objects taste and feel. Babies and young children benefit, as staff plan activities in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This ensures they have access to stimulating and interesting activities. Young children enjoy exploring the glittery sand which staff pour onto the floor so they can experiment in a variety of ways. They enthusiastically pour the sand between their fingers, taste it and some children lay across the sand, wriggling around in it. This ensures all children can access the activity and maintains their interest. Young children experiment with their communication skills. They use babbling, pointing, crying and smiling to communicate their needs and desires. They enjoy exploring the sturdy books made by the staff, which helps them to understand how to look at books correctly. Young children have opportunities to listen to stories and are beginning to join in with action songs and rhymes. This increases their communication skills. Children are settled in the group and enjoy using the outdoor area. They have access to climbing equipment as well as bikes and other wheeled toys. Children enjoy kicking the ball, using the skipping rope, throwing and catching balls and climbing on the log train. They are gaining an awareness of the importance of fresh air and exercise with regards their well-being.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. They have a clear understanding of children's starting points and use this information to recognise children's interests and preferences in their play. Staff challenge children and ask them open ended questions and give them opportunities to show their knowledge and understanding of different areas of learning. Staff and children ensure all children are included in the activities and all make an effort to ensure children with learning difficulties or disabilities are able to participate at an appropriate level. The teaching reflects the community the children come from and the wider world. Staff plan a varied programme of activities for the children, covering all areas of the curriculum. However, they do not maintain children's records effectively to adequately show children's progress in all areas of learning. This potentially compromises children's ability to progress to the next steps in their development.

Children are eager to learn, they are generally interested in the activities becoming focused and able to resist distractions. They persist with activities that interest them and staff have a good awareness when an activity does not hold the children's attention. Staff are flexible and make changes to the planning, allowing children to continue with other activities that have occupied them. For example, some children become distracted during the action activity outside

as they are more interested in the outdoor static equipment which they do not get to use very often in the colder weather. Staff continue with the activity with children who wish to remain involved allowing the other children to freely explore the outdoor equipment. This allows children to be independent thinkers and to make choices. Children have opportunities to use a variety of mark making equipment. They have pencils and paper in the home corner and access to a table which is specifically set out for this purpose. The children imitate the staff, calling out the names of the children and marking them down on their piece of paper as if taking the register. Staff encourage children's language development through planned activities. They practise letters and words with the children according to their ability. Children like to look at books and enjoy sharing them with other children and adults. Children are encouraged to use their concentration, listening and thinking skills at story time. They understand that this is a time when the adult needs to use their speaking skills in order to tell them the story. Children enthusiastically join in with familiar stories and staff animate the story which helps to maintain the children's interest. These activities help to enhance the children's communication, language and literacy skills. Children confidently find their names on the door, at snack time and meal times. They recognise their own name and many children are able to recognise other children's names as well. Staff offer lots of praise and encouragement which helps to build confidence and self-esteem.

Children are learning to share and take turns, they are well supported by the staff when they find this a little difficult. Children talk happily together at meal times. They assist each other when putting on coats, hats and scarves. Children seek support from staff at meal times when they are having difficulties in cutting up their food. For example, children ask a member of staff to cut up their vegetables and state 'I like big mushrooms when they are cut up'. Children are able to understand their own wants and needs and are becoming aware of the needs of others. Children have opportunities to see and use the different number lines which are available both indoors and outside. They are learning about capacity and have examples on the wall to follow regarding whether the jar is empty, full or half full. Children happily use the scales to measure their ingredients when baking. This helps children to understand mathematical concepts. Children enjoy visits from the 'Zoolab'. They learn about the different creatures that come to visit them. These include snakes, millipedes, a tarantula, cockroaches, large snails and a scorpion. Children learn to hold the creatures carefully and discover how they feel. This helps them to gain an awareness of other creatures and how to care for them. Children have opportunities to use the computer. Some children are more able than others and use their understanding to help others complete different tasks on the computer. This helps the children to form constructive and harmonious relationships. Children enjoy participating in cooking activities. They confidently peel and prepare vegetables to make a vegetable curry. They have access to a variety of different dressing up clothes and enjoy dancing to Indian music. This helps children to gain an understanding of other cultures. Children enjoy playing in the home corner where they hang the washing on the line. They match the socks as they hang them up. The children like to play with a variety of hand puppets. They use them to tell stories and hide the puppets inside other ones, exclaiming 'That's big, look there's lots in there'. This helps children to enhance their creative skills and develop their personalities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a range of resources and activities which promote a positive view of the wider world. Children benefit as diversity is celebrated throughout the nursery. All children participate in a wide range of planned activities and have access to an extensive range of hand made books covering different celebrations such as, Grandparents day, Chinese New Year and Saint George's day. This helps the children to gain a sense of belonging. Children generally benefit from the staff's positive attitudes, which help children to learn about people who are different to themselves and to show respect for others. Children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet individual children's needs and ensure they are included fully in the life of the setting. Children with disabilities are fully integrated into the groups. They are encouraged to participate at an appropriate level and staff provide additional support as needed. Children make sure that everyone is included in the planned activities, such as playing a rhythm with the musical instruments. They ensure everyone has had a turn and wait patiently as some children take longer than others. This helps children to be aware of their own needs and the needs of others. All children are valued and respected as individuals and all their needs are well-documented and implemented. Staff are kind and caring towards the children which impacts on the way the children view themselves and those around them. Children are learning to share and take turns, some find this difficult but staff are always on hand to provide appropriate support. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff make every effort to demonstrate to children the benefits of getting on with each other and the importance of respecting and valuing everyone's differences.

Children benefit, as parents have a good awareness of the policies and procedures. They receive regular newsletters keeping them informed with general information about the setting. Parents receive verbal and written information regarding babies and young children. This ensures parents have a clear understanding of the care provided and that children receive continuity of care. Children benefit, as parents have access to vibrant displays linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework which helps them to support their children's care, learning and play.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. This contributes significantly to the children's sense of belonging, security and safety. Staff are welcoming and friendly and have built strong and effective relationships with parents and carers. Parents have many opportunities to experience the setting enabling them to gain a better understanding of how their children are growing and developing. For example, parents are invited to an open day and have opportunities to participate in a 'stay and play' session. They are encouraged to participate in different activities with their children, finding out how these stimulate children, enabling them to progress to the next steps in their development. This helps parents to become involved in their children's learning in a meaningful way. Children benefit as parents and carers have access to vibrant displays depicting different activities with regards the Foundation Stage. They have access to notice boards informing them about the different topics, the activities available to the children in each individual area of the setting and staff include suggestions of how parents can extend children's learning at home. This ensures that parents gain a greater understanding of the topics being followed and how they can participate fully, enhancing their children's learning and development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit as the provider has comprehensive and effective recruitment and induction procedures in place. These ensure children are well protected and cared for by suitable staff who are appropriately vetted and who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff have a high regard for the well-being of all the children and they ensure the ratios positively supports their care, learning and play. Children are safeguarded as the policies and procedures work in practice to promote their health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

Leadership and Management is good. The leader motivates staff and children, building a dedicated staff team who present themselves as positive role models for the children to relate to. The staff complement each other well and are able to develop their skills and interests to enhance the provision for the children. The management team have a clear vision for the nursery with a strong focus on the personal development of all staff and children. The management adequately monitor and evaluate the quality of care and education provided. Staff plan a varied programme of activities which stimulate and interest the children. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure all hazards to children on the premises are minimised. This referred to the radiator temperature in a specific room. The manager has had temperature controls placed on the radiators so staff can control the heat. There is a radiator which still feels very hot to the touch, staff are aware and safeguard the children as they walk by it. Staff are seeking further action to ensure children's safety.

The provider agreed to ensure that staff further develop their monitoring and evaluation practices to enable children's learning to be challenged and developed. Staff follow 'SOUND Foundations' with the providers and this is in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. Staff are actively encouraged to attend training courses and receive regular updates when other staff attend training courses. This ensures staff provide interesting and challenging activities for the children. However, there are still some issues with children's records not being updated effectively to show how children are developing. The provider also agreed to ensure children's details are recorded correctly on documentation. Some documents had incorrect dates of birth recorded on them, these mistakes have now been rectified.

Complaints since the last inspection

May 2006 - Ofsted received concerns in relation to behaviour management methods and supervision. Ofsted investigated these concerns in relation to National Standard 1: Suitable Person, 6: Safety, 11: Behaviour Management and 13: Child Protection. As a result of the investigation the provider adequately demonstrated how they ensured the suitability of staff members and also increased staff supervision during nap times. Ofsted are satisfied that the provider took all necessary steps and the provider remains qualified for registration.

February 2005 - Ofsted received concerns in relation to the dietary needs of children and partnership with parents. Ofsted investigated these concerns in relation to National Standard 8: Food and Drink and 12: Working in Partnership with Parents. As a result of the investigation the provider adequately demonstrated how they meet children's individual dietary needs and work in partnership with parents and carers. Ofsted are satisfied that no further action is required and the registered person remains qualified for registration

December 2004 - A concern was raised in relation to Standard 11: Behaviour and Standard 1: Suitable Person about an incident involving a child who was attending the nursery. Social Services and the police carried out an investigation and made a decision to take no further action. Ofsted asked the provider to investigate and report back to Ofsted within five working days. The provider reported that the evidence gathered in relation to the incident was inconclusive and that the nursery was therefore unable to take any further action. Ofsted is satisfied that the registered person has taken appropriate steps to address the concern and the provider remains qualified for registration

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 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 written records are kept of all medicines administered to children and parents sign the record book to acknowledge the entry

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 assessments and observations are maintained and are used to monitor the progress children are making towards the early learning goals.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk