



Lakeside Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY288926
Inspection date	18 January 2007
Inspector	Kathleen Snowdon
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Registered person	Just Learning Ltd
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 satisfactory. 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?

Lakeside Children's Day Nursery is part of the national chain, Just Learning Limited. It opened in 2004 under the current management though it was first established in 1993. It operates from a two storey detached building in Blaydon, Gateshead and is close to other amenities, including schools, nurseries and leisure facilities. Children are based in eight rooms according to their ages and their developmental stages. All children have access to secure, enclosed outdoor play areas.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year. A maximum of 69 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 60 children on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for early education. Children who attend come from the local and surrounding communities. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties.

There are 15 part-time and full-time staff who work directly with the children. All staff hold early years qualifications. There are additional domestic staff. The setting receives support from local authority early education advisors.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Appetising meals and snacks offer children the nourishment necessary for their growth and their physical development. They enjoy eating dishes, such as traditional roast dinners, curries and pasta, and experience different tastes and textures as they do so. The children develop good social and communication skills as they sit together to eat. Through using utensils that are appropriate to their developmental stage, the children become increasingly independent and competent at feeding themselves.

Effective measures minimise the spread of infection and common illnesses. For example, children, parents, staff and visitors must remove their shoes or use covers over them before entering the main body of the nursery. Sensible arrangements are in place that deal with children who are ill and anti-bacterial sprays are used throughout the day to keep surfaces, toys and equipment free from germs. As well as this, the children have lots of opportunity to develop good personal hygiene. For example, they brush their teeth after breakfast and wash their hands after using the bathroom and before eating.

Beneficial activities offer the children the chance to practise a range of movements. They stretch, touch their toes and sit cross-legged. This helps the children to develop increasing control over their bodies. Ring games, such as 'The Hokey-Cokey', give the children a chance to move about in a more vigorous way. This shows the children that exercise is fun and boosts their fitness levels. Good opportunities are in place to encourage the development of self-help skills. The children dress themselves after physical play for example, and then sit together to discuss how they feel after being active. This raises the children's awareness of their physical reactions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Effective measures protect children and keep them safe on a day to day basis. For example, a closed-circuit television system monitors people seeking access to the nursery and allows staff to regulate this. Secure staff recruitment procedures and staff's strong awareness of child protection issues ensure that children are protected from unsuitable people and situations during their time at the nursery.

Although some parts need re-decoration, the nursery is well maintained and well organised in general. This allows children to move around freely and teaches them how to negotiate space safely. Children have easy access to a wide range of developmentally appropriate toys and resources. This enables them to make choices and minimises the risk of accidents as they do

so. Thorough cleaning and checking routines keep play items hygienic and safe for the children to use.

Fire drills are held frequently. These equip children and staff with the knowledge that they need in order to stay safe in emergencies. However, there is no completely secure method in place to ensure that everyone has taken part. Regular outings in and around the local community raise the children's awareness of hazards in the environment. They talk with staff about relevant issues before they go, road safety for example, and the need to behave well. These opportunities teach the children to take some responsibility for their own safety and wellbeing.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children take part in enjoyable, creative activities that give them scope in which to have fun and enjoy themselves. For example, they use all of their senses as they paint and manipulate food, such as jelly, yogurt and baked beans, and substances, such as 'gloop'. The wide range of play equipment available to the children includes construction materials, interactive toys and role play props. These items keep the children interested and engaged and encourage them to use their imaginations.

Very young children have opportunities to explore everyday objects, such as pegs, foam balls and spoons. This builds on the children's natural curiosity and encourages them to scrutinise things close up. Babies and children with limited vocabulary are encouraged to make attempts at speaking through the attentive way that staff listen to them. Staff talk to children throughout the day as they carry out routines, such as tidying up. This helps the children to link words with actions.

All children build good relationships with other children and with staff. Nearly all the children enter nursery happily, leave their parent or carer without any distress and quickly settle down to task. Children become aware that they are valued when staff show an interest in them and their recent experiences. Consequently, children are happy, settled and secure. Positive early experiences such as these boost the children's self-esteem and provide children with the skills that they need in order to form sound, later relationships.

Nursery Education

Children have satisfactory opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, they celebrate a wide range of festivals, including Australia Day, Burns Day, Christmas and Chinese New Year. The children become increasingly aware of their local community and significant people within it, through outings and through visits from people like road safety and community police officers, dentists and doctors. The children are competent users of information technology. They use computer games with confidence and through these, begin to develop other skills, such as colour recognition and counting.

Some of the children use mathematics spontaneously to establish facts. For example, they count how many children are standing in line. They use the language of comparison, such as 'bigger than', in conversations with their peers and to describe each other's personal attributes,

height, for instance. The children learn that time can be measured when they use items such as egg-timers. Similarly, by using scales and jugs during water and sand play, the children are encouraged to experiment with weight and measure.

There are sufficient opportunities for children to develop their communication skills. For example, during story time they listen attentively, and throughout the day the children talk spontaneously and clearly about experiences that are important to them. The children have access to a wide range of books. However, many of the books are not appropriate to the children's developmental stage and do not encourage the development of literacy skills. As well as this, although the children have access to pens, pencils and other markers, there are insufficient opportunities for them to practise writing in meaningful ways, for example, during role play.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have reasonable knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Alongside of this, they build on what children already know through making daily observations of the children, which they use to plan activities across all six areas of learning. These offer sufficient challenge to children of all abilities and enable children to make sound progress towards the early learning goals. A key worker system means that staff know children well. It enables them to present new experiences to the children in ways that they know will work best for individual children.

Plans are clearly linked to the stepping stones. They include learning intentions and required resources. Although plans do not include details about how activities can be adapted to suit children with specific needs, staff discuss this and make appropriate provision to ensure the inclusion of all children. Themes are used to explore a range of topics, such as 'Winter' or 'Transport', as fully as possible. Defined play areas encourage the children to focus on their chosen activity while the balanced daily routine offers children a mix of quiet and busy times.

Staff use a range of teaching methods to get the best from all of the children. For example, they elicit lively responses from many of the children during group discussions and activities. One-to-one work gives staff the opportunity to focus on individuals, which enables quieter and more reserved children to demonstrate what they know and have learnt. However, staff often miss valuable opportunities to extend the children's learning during spontaneous and planned activities, such as role play and craft activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have sufficient opportunities to form positive views of most aspects of diversity. They see colourful wall posters of people and landmarks from other countries, for example, which raises their awareness of culture and ethnicity. Small world characters and several jigsaws depict images that challenge gender stereotypes. However, there are insufficient items to raise children's awareness of disability and people with differing abilities.

Sensitive intervention from staff helps children to understand acceptable ways in which to behave. Children learn that their actions have consequences through clear and straightforward explanations that they receive from staff. Positive personal qualities, such as kindness and

consideration, flourish in an environment where the children are taught to think about the feelings of other people. This approach teaches the children right from wrong and fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive good quality written information before their children start the nursery. Once children have started attending, regular newsletters, dedicated notice boards and daily discussion with staff keep parents informed about the children's needs and preferences. The use of daily diaries informs parents of very young children about important facts such as nappy changes, sleeps and feeds. Suggestion boxes encourage parents to express their views and opinions about the nursery. In questionnaires some parents make positive comments about the staff. They describe them as being 'kind and friendly'.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Documentation is well organised and readily available. It is stored securely on site to protect privacy and confidentiality. Records are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain up to date. Consequently, policies and procedures are clear and up to date. However, records are not monitored with sufficient rigour to ensure that routine procedures, such as fire drills, include all personnel.

All staff working directly with the children hold suitable qualifications. Regular participation in further training ensures that staff remain abreast of current trends in childcare. Recent courses that staff have completed include 'Birth to three matters' and child protection. Staff show good awareness of staffing ratios. This helps them to keep children safe on a day to day basis.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff show clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they work together well. Regular staff meetings provide staff with a forum to discuss issues regarding the children's care and education.

Staff understand the importance of working with parents and ensure that the children's development files are available to parents should they wish to see them. In addition, staff liaise with other professionals, such as early education advisors from the local authority, to meet the needs of the children as fully as possible.

Staff show an awareness of what needs to improve. For example, they have identified weaknesses in the design of the pre-school rooms, which have a direct impact on how the children play and learn. Management are supportive of the nursery staff and recognise that they work hard.

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 provider was asked to make improvements that related to health, resources and recording. As a result, the provider now ensures that children use paper towels to dry their hands with to prevent cross contamination. Children now use crockery and cutlery that is appropriate to their developmental stage. In addition, daily observations are made which help staff to plan activities that help children to make progress in all areas of their development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 1 2004, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 2: Organisation. Concerns were raised over staffing ratios at the beginning of the day. Ofsted investigated and the provider was asked to take actions in order to meet the National Standards. These were to maintain a daily record of the children's attendance, which included the times of arrival and departure and the names of the staff present. In addition, the provider was asked to put measures in place to ensure that all staff were fully aware of their roles and responsibilities, including the need to maintain required ratios.

As a result, the provider implemented a daily record of children's and staff's attendance, which includes the times of arrival and departure. All staff now receive a copy of policies and procedures, which details their roles and responsibilities, including their remit to ensure that staffing ratios are maintained correctly. Staff now sign a document to state that they have read and understood the information. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps, the provider remained qualified for registration at the time that the investigation was closed.

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):

- increase and make available to children a range of resources to raise their awareness of disability
- ensure that records are monitored sufficiently, to ensure that all staff and children take part in regular fire drills.

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 children's access to developmentally appropriate texts
- extend children's opportunities to use writing in meaningful and spontaneous ways, during role play, for example
- provide staff with training and guidance to help them to recognise and exploit spontaneous opportunities to extend children's learning.

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