



## Laurel Way Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	147570
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 January 2007
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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*

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](http://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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Laurel Way nursery is a privately run group which has been open since 1992. They moved into their current premises seven years ago. The premises are purpose built, formerly used for a school nursery class. The nursery has use of one main room that can be sub-divided and a art room. There is a securely fenced outside area with a paved space, safety surface, mature trees and shrubs.

The nursery serves an urban area in the London Borough of Barnet. There is a good cultural mix in the area which is reflected in the nursery's intake.

The nursery is open from 09:00 to 15:00 each day for 36 weeks of the year. Children attend either full or half day sessions. There are 39 children on roll from two to five years of age. Of

these 37 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

There are six staff currently working with the children. The provider holds a degree in Education and all other staff hold relevant childcare qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in a environment which places exceptional emphasis on promoting their all round wellbeing. They gain an excellent understanding of health and hygiene and become independent in their personal care. They willingly wash their hands at the appropriate times, such as before eating their snack or after engaging in messy play, with little prompting from staff. They confidently share their understanding of why they need to do this "so I don't eat any germs". Children access tissues when they need to, and are provided with gentle clear guidance to ensure they dispose of them safely in order to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria. They consistently play with, and handle clean toys, and equipment because established routines are maintained to ensure this. Children are set excellent examples by staff who are meticulous in washing their own hands and diligently clean the tables before and after meal times. If children are involved in an accident or become unwell their needs are expertly cared for by staff who have training in first aid. Effective medication policies are in place ensuring medication is stored and administered safely.

Children develop excellent attitudes towards healthy eating as they confidently make their choices from the broad range of wholesome and nourishing snacks available. There is a clear emphasis placed on providing fresh fruit and vegetables which is attractively offered in manageable sizes. This means that children eagerly fill their bowls with "crunchy cucumber, soft banana and triangle toast". The excellent arrangement for snack time ensures that children learn the vital relationship between healthy eating and growing. They are skilfully invited to help themselves to snack throughout the morning. As a result, children learn about their own bodies and eat when they recognise they become hungry and tell each other "oh I need a drink and some apple". They make independent choices about what, and how much they wish to eat and are adept at pouring their own water. Staff are effective in ensuring all children have visited the snack area throughout the morning. They make timely interventions to support children's discussion about how eating good food will make them "grow bigger and stronger". Children confidently clear away after they have finished, and diligently empty any waste into the separate recycling bins. As a result, they know and understand that the left over "toast is for the worms", and will be composted.

Children make excellent use of the outdoor area as it forms an integral part of the overall environment and choices offered to them to expend their energy when they wish. They engage in much energetic play as they gain control over their bodies and movements and learn to calculate physical risks in safety. They delight as they climb the small hill and use the slide to come back down. More adventurous children learn to roll back down. They balance along low

level beams and use balls as they kick and catch. They demonstrate a secure awareness of space as they manoeuvre safely around objects and one another. Children show their agility, as they coordinate their movements to match the rhythm of the music as it becomes faster. They learn about the effect activity has on their hearts, and are thrilled as they discover "its beating really fast". Some children consequently, slow down and take a rest when they realise they are tired and help themselves to a drink because they "are really thirsty now".

As a result of the clear focus and excellent practice, children learn the important links between healthy eating, exercise, and engaging in strong personal care routines to maintain their health and wellbeing. The exemplary practice followed by staff ensures a secure focus on supporting children's emotional health through a nurturing environment.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for very well in a clean, secure and well maintained environment which stimulates their interests. Children move freely and explore with confidence because substantial measures are in place to ensure their safety. The purposeful environment is highly organised to enable children to independently make informed choices. As a result, children have easy access to an extensive range of appropriate well maintained toys and resources that they take pride in caring for. They eagerly help to tidy away and quickly report any broken pieces to staff to dispose off. The nursery is very well resourced and equipped to reinforce a child centred approach. Much consideration has been given to ensuring the attractive displays of children's work, and posters are displayed at their level to ensure they develop a secure sense of belonging.

Children's safety is given very high priority. Staff are extremely vigilant and ensure there is always a high ratio of adults to the number of children to allow them to be supervised effectively at all times. Very good security ensures that all visitors are monitored and recorded, extra precautions are taken to ensure children are collected only by authorised persons, such as the use of photographs. The use of detailed risk assessments ensure activities, premises and equipment are checked for safety and necessary steps are taken to reduce any identified risks. Children gain an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, through the effective role modelling of staff and consistently clear explanations offered to them. As a result, they know how to hold scissors safely to protect themselves and others. Older children confidently alert one another to possible risks and dangers, they are aware that "if you jump off that there is a very, very long drop to fall and you will be hurt". They confidently follow the safe options and explain "we don't run inside because we could hurt someone, but we can run outside if we want". They know what to do if they need to evacuate the setting in an emergency as fire drills are practised regularly to reflect the patterns of attendance.

Children are securely protected by staff who have a clear understanding of their duties in safeguarding children. Senior staff take a lead role for child protection and there is a comprehensive procedure in place to follow. Staff attend regular training to ensure they are aware of keeping children safe from harm.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children have a wonderful time at the setting because staff are highly skilled and have an exceptional understanding of their needs. They use the Birth to three matters framework well to provide outstanding care for the children. As a result, children are busy enjoying an excellent range of inviting malleable resources such as sand and play dough to promote their senses. They benefit from the inspiring use of action songs and rhythms to stimulate their language and foster effective communication skills. Children benefit from well considered arrangements to help them settle into the nursery, and excellent systems to consistently monitor their development in order to nurture their interests to ensure progress.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and children are progressing extremely well. Children are highly motivated and eagerly participate in a wealth of stimulating purposeful play. They successfully acquire important skills and knowledge in an environment where staff are committed and skilfully use a wide range of teaching and questioning techniques to extend thinking and learning. Children learn to make decisions, develop confidence and become more independent because staff have adopted a holistic approach. As a result, the play areas are organised well to accommodate the different ways they learn. This enables children to successfully initiate their own play and staff are effectively deployed to support children. They carefully frame questions to support and extend thought processes. Children receive exemplary support because staff are particularly skilled at knowing when to stand back to let children discover things for themselves. Staff have an exceptional understanding of the needs of the children and this enables them to make timely interventions in order to reinforce learning.

Staff meet at the beginning of each day to ensure children are offered rich and stimulating experiences. They skilfully use an evolving theme to encourage the children's participation and enable their ideas and understanding to blossom. In this way, children learn to consider and think about how the story of "The mushroom in the rain" makes them feel, which then forms the basis of other activities offered. Much careful thought and emphasis is placed on ensuring children's natural curiosity is built on to promote their interests in order to sustain high levels of involvement and learning. Both the indoor and outdoor environment is carefully prepared at every session to ensure individual needs are met by building on what children already know. The clear emphasis on practical process based play ensures children are enthusiastic learners who are having lots of fun. They confidently express their needs and relate well to each other and adults. They are forming firm relationships as they share, take turns and work co operatively inviting each other to come and play.

They sustain high levels of concentration and persevere in their chosen tasks, such as building a marble run, and completing puzzles. They develop excellent self help skills, as they competently dress for outdoor play, learning to tie their toggles and change their shoes. Building independence forms an integral part of the nursery, as a result, children confidently make choices about their play, they ably label their own work, and pour their own drinks. Children listen attentively; speak clearly and confidently as they engage both adults and their friends in conversation. They articulately describe what they like about their doll at show and tell time

and choose a friend to be next without being prompted. Children become quickly absorbed when looking at books, and keenly participate in the interactive story times to describe "grumpy" and "happy". They are encouraged to notice print and the sounds of letters in words and successfully recognise their names for snack time. Children have excellent opportunities to develop writing skills through a variety of exciting opportunities, such as messy play, they write lists and letters to the "teacher" during their imaginary play, forming recognisable letters. Children make rapid progress in mathematics, they count confidently during whole group activities, to show the number of children present and slices of toast they may need. They experience weighing, sorting and pattern making through enriching practical activities, for example, sorting and cooking. They benefit from consistently hearing mathematical language which they successfully repeat to describe, colour, size, shape, length and quantity. As a result, children paint rainbows in the art room and spontaneously count the number of colours whilst painting, others count the number of "splashes" in their painting which makes their rainbow. They accurately seat the correct number of men to match the corresponding number on the cars. They successfully negotiate how many children can play in any one area to ensure their turn. Children recognise numbers very well and delight as they confidently call up their friends to "come to the babies party", as the telephone number is called out. Children solve practical problems as they engage in sophisticated building play. They successfully work out that they require a "bigger house" so "three more big blocks" are needed. Teaching is very strong and staff ensure that simple sums can be fun as children sing "five current buns". They are thrilled as there are fewer and fewer children left standing. Children have excellent opportunities to investigate and explore a range of materials using their senses both indoors and outdoors. They help to plant new "vegetables" for their patch in the garden, they skilfully use electronic timers to support one another in turn taking. Children control the computer mouse with ease, they are competent users of the tape recorders. They spend time investigating the use of buttons on the tape recorders, and understand which ones will enable them to listen to their favourite song again. Children strengthen fine motor skills as they cut, handle small objects and squeeze pegs with increasing control. They develop a good understanding of time, culture and beliefs as they share their experiences, and acknowledge a range of festivals. Children delight in the rich creative opportunities in both two and three dimensions, which they freely explore on a daily basis. They eagerly cut and paint and play with sand, water, and use an array of collage materials to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings. Children frequently engage in imaginative play to mimic their observations of the world around them. They receive good support to extend their experiences further as they securely take on different roles in the domestic play area as they arrange "a party".

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

All children are valued and play a full part in the nursery. They share their thoughts, feelings and ideas confidently in an environment which seeks their contributions and supports their individuality. There is an exceptional emphasis placed on building children's self esteem and confidence. As a result, children are consistently engaged in activities that strengthen their skills of co operation in which they learn to respect themselves as well as each other. The

exemplary use of stories enables children to learn how "the mushroom can grow to protect all it's friends". Children have extensive opportunities to learn about the world around them through, displays, resources and by participating in activities. The nursery is strongly committed to inclusion and staff are conscientious about undertaking relevant training, working closely with parents and seeking advice from outside professionals.

Children's behaviour is impeccable. Staff have a superior understanding of behaviour management which ensures children successfully learn to resolve minor conflicts independently. Staff are skilled in using praise and provide strong role models to pro actively manage children's behaviour. As a result, children help each other to work out whose turn it is next. Older children take responsibility for their own behaviour and apologise for accidents without being prompted.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. It contributes significantly to the children's wellbeing and enriches their time at the nursery. The highly effective settling in procedure ensures that children and their parents can experience the nursery in full at first hand over a gradual period. In addition, the comprehensive parents pack ensures parents have an accurate understanding about the planning methods in place, for example, Birth to three matters framework and Foundation Stage. A wealth of information regarding their child's individual needs is documented upon entry and the ongoing exchange of information guarantees secure partnerships. Notice boards and regular feedback ensures parents are made aware of how children spend their time at nursery. Children's developmental records are available for parents to view upon request outside of the programmed parent consultation meetings. Parents are able to participate fully in their child's learning. Staff exchange books and resources with them, and they are invited to get involved whenever possible, to bring their specialist skills, interest and culture into the nursery. Children benefit greatly because they know that their parents are actively involved in their care and education.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children develop very well and relish their time in the highly organised and vibrant nursery environment. They benefit from a team of extremely motivated staff who work together harmoniously and are committed to providing outstanding childcare and education.

A comprehensive operational plan which includes all required documentation is in place and contributes to the children's health, safety and wellbeing. Established, induction training, regular staff meetings and individual support meetings are in place to ensure staff are secure in their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.

Leadership and management of the setting is outstanding. The manager has a clear vision and ethos for the nursery. All staff have considerable knowledge of the Foundation Stage, and of how children learn. There is a strong commitment to improvement throughout the team which is instigated by the manager who inspires staff to continually monitor and review practice in the setting. Therefore, staff are keen to continually update their knowledge and skills by regularly attending a variety of training. The staff team are established and motivated, their individual skills and experience is valued and some members of the team have taken an additional responsibility to support their own development. The excellent leadership and commendable

dedication and hard work of the whole staff team ensures that children have lots of fun and learn rapidly.

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

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

The nursery has made excellent progress in addressing the recommendation raised at the last inspection. The child protection policy has been developed and now includes a procedure to be followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff, and staff are very secure in their knowledge of this aspect.

There were no recommendations raised as a result of the last inspection for nursery education, however, the nursery agreed to continue with plans to develop the large outside play area. The nursery have given much consideration to this aspect, and children enjoy a fully developed outdoor area. They have very good choices from the vast range of stimulating options selecting from the kicking and catching of balls to use of the sensory music area.

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

Since 1st April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)