



The Laurels Child Care Company Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337804
Inspection date	09 March 2007
Inspector	Judith Anne Hodgson
Setting Address	Laurel Avenue Children's Centre, Laurel Avenue, The Woodlands, Durham, DH1 2EY
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Registered person	The Laurels Child Care Company Ltd
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Laurels Child Care Company Ltd has been registered since 2006. This day care provision operates from a Children's Centre within Laurel Avenue Community Primary School in Durham. The provision has use of two purpose built childcare rooms and the associated facilities of the school.

The group is registered for 26 children under 5 years; of these, not more than 6 may be under 2 years. There are currently four children on roll. It operates from 08.00 to 18.00 for 48 weeks of the year and supports the local and wider community.

Two regular members of staff work with the children. Both members of staff hold relevant early years qualifications. They are supported by a bank of other staff who hold relevant childcare qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about being healthy in a number of ways. They understand the need for regular hand washing and use the bathroom facilities independently. Staff share hand washing routines with children, providing good role models to ensure effective cleaning. Low level wash basins, paper towels and liquid soap are available for children's use and this effectively promotes children's independence in self-care. There is written information for parents that provides good advice about the exclusion of ill children from the setting. This helps to keep the environment for children healthy and free from cross infection.

Snack and tea times are very well organised to allow children time to enjoy a range of healthy options as part of a social occasion. A snack menu is displayed for parents information which ensures continuity of care. Staff and children sit together at snack times to encourage social skills and good manners. Children are involved in preparing their snacks which has a positive impact on their independence. For example, children make toast shapes and discuss the food with staff. Children are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water throughout the session from the snack table and are offered sugar free squash with their food. This positive approach helps children to understand the effects of a healthy diet.

Children's health and welfare are well protected. The first aid box is well stocked and the manager ensures there is always a member of staff trained in first aid present at each session. Parents are notified of any accidents, which enables them to watch for any symptoms which may develop. Parents have provided consents in relation to medication and emergency medical care which benefits the children's well-being.

Children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise due to the wide range of activities provided. They use a good range of equipment to develop their skills. For example, the youngest children confidently try out new skills, such as climbing stairs and using ramps on the indoor climbing equipment. They ask for help by holding out their hands and set their own limits within the safe environment. Older children move around the rooms freely, showing good awareness of space. There is a wide range of resources to support the development of the children's fine motor skills, such as inset puzzles, threading toys and bead frames. These activities help children to keep in good health. The outdoor area is not yet in use as it is awaiting development and has not been safety checked so staff provide children with physical opportunities in the fresh air by visiting the local park.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a well organised spacious environment, which is set up to enable them to move around and play safely. They have access to a very good range of toys and equipment, which are appropriate to their age and stage of development. This includes child height furniture for table top play and a comfortable book corner which enables them to sit and read comfortably. Children are able to make independent choices of playthings as the range of good quality toys

and activities are placed within easy reach. Staff check resources regularly to ensure they are safe and clean them if necessary.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and well maintained environment. For example, there are buzzers on doors, both external and internal, and all visitors and parents sign in and out. They are greeted by a member of staff who answers the day care centre door buzzer. The identification of any visitors is checked and their presence is recorded in the visitors book. These robust steps ensure children's security. Staff carry out thorough risk assessments regularly on all areas of the provision to identify and minimise any risks to the children's safety and they have a daily visual check before children are admitted. Safety equipment, such as high door handles, socket covers, door finger guards and radiator covers, reduces potential hazards and keeps children safe.

Children are well protected as adults have a good understanding of how to keep children from harm. They are able to recognise the possible signs and symptoms of abuse, know to record any concerns and refer these to the designated child protection co-ordinator. All staff have attended child protection training. They are aware of their responsibility and of the reporting procedures and are confident to respond if concerns are raised about a child's health, safety or welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the setting and are well occupied. They have access to a very good range of resources and equipment, suitable for their needs. They settle well on arrival and choose from the activities and toys available for free choice. Both play rooms are bright and inviting with interesting and stimulating activities.

Staff have a sound understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have planned the resources for the very young children to support appropriate activities. The children enjoy exploring the treasure baskets which contain an assortment of coloured and textured objects made of different materials. Babies and toddlers enjoy lots of physical contact which enables them to feel secure and play contentedly. However, limited vocal interaction between the staff and the babies means that opportunities for progress are lost.

Activities available for the older children are largely child initiated and include mark making, musical instruments, sand and water play. A role play area gives the children opportunities for developing their imagination and the areas of clear floor allows lots of space for construction activities. The children access all areas of the playrooms freely as they explore the resources and are learning to share their activities with each other.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are highly valued as individuals and feel at ease in the setting as they are welcomed by friendly, familiar staff. Staff find out as much as they can about the children before the placement begins which ensures that parents' preferences and children's routines are followed.

For example, useful information is gathered in the application pack and parents are invited to attend with their children until they are settled. Children feel good about themselves because staff know them well and show they are interested in what they do and say by listening to them. They value children's attempts and achievements with appropriate use of praise and encouragement. The children behave well as they respond to the expectations of the staff.

All children are welcomed at this setting. Information from parents is sought to enable staff to provide for children's individual needs. Staff have experience of working with children with learning difficulties which has a positive impact on their care. However, resources that reflect positive images of difference within society are very limited and therefore hinders children's awareness of diversity.

Information shared with parents includes a parents handbook containing details of some policies and procedures. This includes the complaints procedure. Details of the child protection procedure is not shared with parents at the onset of care and contact details of the regulator are incorrect which means that parents do not have all the required information. Staff exchange information with parents each day at the beginning and end of the care session. This dialogue fosters effective relationships with parents, addresses any health or behaviour issues and ensures continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

A friendly and welcoming environment makes parents and children at ease. Children are cared for in two well organised playrooms. Staff work together as a team and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which ensures children have a stimulating environment in which to play and learn. The setting manager organises the staff to ensure that correct adult to child ratios are kept throughout the care session.

All of the required documentation is in place. This is suitably organised and stored securely to maintain confidentiality. The registration certificate is on display and the conditions adhered to. Robust systems are in place for employment of new staff and an effective induction procedure has been developed, which includes health and safety, and developing understanding of the child protection policy. All of the staff who work regularly with the children are qualified. Any unvetted person present is not allowed unsupervised access to the children.

The space in the nursery is well organised to allow a wide range of equipment to be available to children each day, affording them a good choice. Staff deployment ensures that the children are given support in their play throughout the sessions.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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.

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 that the child protection procedures are shared with parents before admission to day care
- amend the information to parents to include the correct telephone number of the regulator
- develop a range of activities and resources to increase children's awareness of differences and the wider world
- ensure that the outdoor areas are made safe before use.

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