

Lindens Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113578
Inspection date	20 May 2007
Inspector	Maureen Croxford
Setting Address	39 Highdown Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 1QL
Telephone number	01903 268919 or 07717132432
E-mail	toveyw@aol.com
Registered person	Wendy Tovey
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Lindens Pre-School Group opened in 1979. It operates from a freestanding building and an additional area on the ground floor of the proprietor's home. Children have access to the secure garden for outside play. Lindens Pre-School group serves Worthing and the surrounding area.

There are currently 55 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 40 nursery educationally funded children. Children attend a variety of sessions. The provision has procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are between 09:00 and 15:30 on most days. The provision employs nine members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, seven hold suitable childcare qualifications. Two staff are currently working towards a qualification at degree level.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of health and safety issues and follow the provision's health and hygiene routines which ensures that children are cared for in a well maintained and clean environment. For example, staff keep all surfaces and equipment are clean and hygienic. The management team ensure that the nursery's cat and rabbit do not pose a health risk to children. Children's good health is promoted as staff remind them to wash their hands after using the toilet, petting the animals and before snack time. However, children are not always protected from cross-infection as before snack time, several children use the same bowl of water to wash their hands.

Children are provided with a midmorning snack of water, milk, fruit and biscuits as agreed with parents and carers. Staff plan exciting and interesting topics with regard to healthy eating, which helps children to learn about the importance of following a healthy and varied diet. Snack times are used as regular and purposeful periods and time is planned for children and staff to be able to enjoy these as social occasions. Parents provide lunchboxes for children, which are stored appropriately in a refrigerator.

Staff create opportunities for children to enjoy a wide range of physical equipment with confidence and ease. Children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise and benefit from the very well planned sessions in the classroom and fully enclosed garden. During the inspection, the children enjoy playing outside, including physical exercise using large equipment and quieter activities such as weaving. All children are developing a good sense of spatial awareness, as they move around the setting with increasing confidence.

Staff have an excellent understanding of how young children develop, which contributes to their good health and physical development. They plan suitable activities for younger children to gain control of their bodies and acquire greater physical skills. The accident and medication records are complete and are signed by parents or carers. Children are reassured and taken good care of if they are unwell or have an accident as all staff hold current first aid certificates.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel extremely welcome as staff greet them and their parents at the entrance to the classroom. They are very happy and settle quickly into their activities. The premises have good safety features such a secure, fully enclosed play area. This ensures that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. Good use is made of all available areas.

Staff ensure that children feel valued as they display their artwork attractively in all areas of the provision. Children proudly show their work and discuss their achievements, for example, a four-year-old explains a collage to the inspector.

The premises provide appropriate space to offer a wide range of activities, which promote the children's development. The garden area offers children a very safe area for outdoor play. The appropriate deployment of staff and the well laid out room ensure that children are safe at all times.

Children are able to access their own resources and toys with ease and in safety, as staff set out a good variety of equipment before the children arrive. A good range of equipment is provided, including child sized furniture and soft furnishings.

Hazards to children are reduced as staff carry out regular risk assessments of the premises to minimise identified risks. All equipment is checked and cleaned regularly and staff ensure it conforms to safety standards to protect the children. Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff discuss the provision's rules with them. They are discovering that the provision has boundaries and limits, for example, they understand that they should not throw toys. Clearly defined procedures for the emergency evacuation of the building are understood by staff, who carry out regular fire drills.

Children are protected because all staff understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. Appropriate procedures, which staff put into practice when necessary, are readily available to parents. The provider is the designated person and staff understand the importance of confidentiality.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy the extremely stimulating range of resources and experiences provided by staff who plan, using Birth to three matters framework for younger children and the Foundation Stage for the educationally funded children. Staff plan a broad range of activities which enhance the quality of experiences offered to all children in their care. They carefully observe and record what children are able to do, which helps staff identify significant steps of achievement and shows what a child understands and is able to achieve. Activities are evaluated to ensure the individual needs of all children are met and their welfare promoted. Children benefit from staff working closely with parents and outside agencies, including the staff from the school and a mentor from the local authority. This helps to secure children's sense of belonging and emotional well-being.

Staff help children to develop positive relationships with their peers and respect their opinions. Children build warm relationships with all staff, who know them well, and offer them praise and encouragement when appropriate. Staff meet the children's needs through appropriate interactions which helps to promote their self-esteem, including good eye contact, conversation, listening to what they have to say and cuddles. They provide a warm and secure environment in which children are able to develop their confidence and independence.

Children receive many worthwhile opportunities to use all of their senses to explore a wide range of textures and media, such as sand, water, cooking and dough. During the inspection, children enjoy experiencing different textures while playing with shaving foam. Staff plan many exciting opportunities for all children to use their imagination. The children thoroughly enjoy using the home corner and dressing up in a wide range of outfits, which represent different genders and cultures.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is outstanding. Children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals and engage in a wide range of experiences and activities covering all areas of learning. This is recorded in photographs, children's work and written observations, which link well into the stepping-stones. The nursery staff are extremely

well qualified and experienced, and use their extensive knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan an extremely stimulating curriculum. As a result, children are well motivated and make excellent progress in their learning.

Staff complete an initial child profile which covers the early learning goals. They monitor children's progress effectively. Planning takes into account the starting point of each child, what more able children can do and how they will be sufficiently challenged. Evidence suggests that good procedures are in place for children with learning difficulties, enabling them to make very good progress towards individual targets.

Children are becoming increasingly self-assured and are confident enough to try new activities and speak in a familiar group. They play well together, develop very good relationships with staff and their peers, and are sensitive to the needs of others. They co-operate during play taking turns and negotiate which equipment they wish to use. Staff actively encourage children to work together in groups to enable them to relate to their peers. They are encouraged by staff to be polite and behave very well. Children are very polite, for example, a three-year-old says 'please' and 'thank you' when offered drinks and snacks.

Children are interested in their activities and show good levels of perseverance and concentration, for example, during story time, when a member of staff reads about 'Fred the Fire Fighter'. Children have an excellent attitude to learning and are purposefully engaged throughout the session. Activities and resources are easily accessible to children, which enables them to make choices about their play. Children are learning to dress and undress independently. They are able to put on outside clothing before going into the garden.

Children interact very well with their peers and staff and take turns in conversation, for example, when a group of three and four-year-olds talk about monsters that live underground, they respect each other's ideas. Children practise early reading and writing skills and are beginning to link sounds to letters. Staff encourage them to mark-make and the more able children use recognisable letters when writing their own name. Most children are able to use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters.

Excellent visual aids are available to children, including name labels and photographs. Staff encourage children to explain what they are trying to achieve and to reflect on past events. Children have very good access to a wide range of books including reference and fiction. They listen avidly to stories, which are very well read by staff, who extend their vocabulary which results in children exploring the meaning and sound of words.

Children count independently with confidence during daily routines and everyday activities. They say and use numbers in order and in familiar contexts. Most children are beginning to use one number name for each item they count and some select the correct numeral to represent a number of objects. Good use of number lines ensures that children see numbers as labels. Children use appropriate language such as 'more than', 'less than', 'smaller' and 'bigger than' when playing with the sand. They are able to recognise simple shapes easily, such as circles, triangles, squares and cubes during the craft activity. Staff support children and encourage them to compare and calculate during everyday activities.

Children receive many well-planned opportunities and activities to investigate materials and objects by using all of their senses. They find out about some features of living things, for example, growing and caring for plants and caring for the nursery pets.

Children use questions to discover and gather information about how things work. They are beginning to describe their own observations. Children have sufficient time and appropriate materials to explore different methods of designing and building using a range of materials and techniques. They have very good access to computers and programmable toys, which enables them to develop their keyboard and mouse skills effectively. Evidence shows opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the local community and people who help us, including visits from a nurse and the fire brigade.

They enjoy a wide range of planned, challenging physical play opportunities both inside and outside, including travelling over and through climbing and balancing equipment. They are able to adjust speed and change direction to avoid obstacles, mount steps and climbing equipment using alternate feet. Evidence shows they are developing increasing control when using equipment for throwing, catching and peddling.

Children receive many opportunities to explore texture, colour and shape. During the inspection, children use glue sticks, paintbrushes, scissors, chalks and pencils, which helps to develop their manipulative skills. Children enjoy worthwhile activities, which allow them to use their imagination in role-play, art and music. They enjoy singing simple songs and nursery rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff provide an extensive range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world, for example, through topics such as Divali, Harvest Festival, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Good displays, planning and photographs show that children are offered many opportunities to find out about other cultures and religions. Staff use resources including books, role-play and dolls, which reflect diversity to help children appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences. All children in the nursery are valued and respected as individuals by staff, who take great care to ensure that all children are included. Children benefit from the very well planned activities and an extensive range of resources.

Evidence suggests that the provision has very good procedures in place to offer support to children with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Staff are extremely proactive in supporting children with individual needs, which develops their sense of belonging and their self-esteem. Staff work closely with parents and carers to ensure that children's individual needs are met.

Children's behaviour is very good and they recognise the difference between right and wrong. Staff help children to be polite, considerate and understand why some behaviour is not appropriate. As a result, children know what is expected of them and show high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Children show care and concern for each other and play together cooperatively, sharing, taking turns and assisting one another. Staff praise and reaffirm their achievements, guiding their social and moral values.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents actively contribute towards their children's learning and development because they are fully informed of the daily activities. The provision implements a highly effective induction session and offers parents and carers well-written information, which includes the policies and procedures. Further information offered includes guidelines for parents, a prospectus, a regular newsletter and notice boards. Further information is offered on the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and Birth to three matters framework. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents and staff regularly discuss the progress of all children using the children's assessment records. They also share information informally on a daily basis as staff make time to talk to parents. Systems are in place to ensure that all parents' comments and concerns are noted. This lists the steps to be taken if a parent has a complaint. The provision offers parents the opportunity to join the mother helper rota. Various social events are held throughout the year including a beach picnic and outings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Most staff hold appropriate childcare and teaching qualifications, and all have experience of caring for children. The on going training programme contributes to the children's development, health, safety and well-being. Staff deployment and their knowledge of child development is excellent. Staff work well as a team and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them on a daily basis, which helps to promote positive outcomes for children.

Children make good progress in their learning due to the experience of the staff who extend activities naturally. Staff organise the daily routines and layout of the room appropriately. They ensure that children are well occupied and engaged with many worthwhile play opportunities.

All legally required documentation is in place, up to date and shared with parents, where appropriate, including records, register, accident and medication records. All policies and procedures are readily available to staff and parents.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are outstanding. The provider and supervisor are responsible for the day-to-day running of the nursery and have an excellent understanding of the requirements of the registration and inspection process. They have ensured that all those working with children in receipt of funding for nursery education have good knowledge of the curriculum guidance.

The provider closely monitors the quality of teaching, which helps to ensure consistency. Staff are encouraged to attend training to meet the needs of the staff and the nursery. The management is committed to improvement of the care and teaching provided for the children and strongly support the staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provision was asked to address two recommendations. An action plan was put into place and the recommendations were addressed.

The provider was asked to ensure the complaints procedure includes the address and telephone number of the regulator. A comprehensive complaints procedure is in place which includes the address and telephone number of the regulator. This ensures that the welfare and safety of children is supported.

The inspector recommended that correct information should be provided to parents and carers in the prospectus, relating to regulation and inspection and the Foundation Stage of learning. The prospectus has been reviewed and very good information is offered to parents with regard to the inspection process and the Foundation Stage. This includes inspection reports, invitations to parents' sessions and well-written information in each area of learning, which ensures that parents are aware of the progress their children make.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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.

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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):

- ensure that hand washing procedures are further developed for children to ensure that they are protected from cross contamination and the spread of infection.

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