

Little Sneakers at Lodge Park

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY217547
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Inspector	Ann Doreen Burford
Setting Address	15 Lodge Pool Drive, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 7LH
Telephone number	01527 523279 or 07889 037592
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Registered person	Sneakers Childcare 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?

Little Sneakers at Lodge Park is one of three nurseries and eight out-of-school clubs run by Sneakers Childcare Limited. It opened in 2002 and operates from six rooms in a converted house. It is situated on a residential estate on the outskirts of Redditch town centre. A maximum of 34 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. They offer wraparound care for the local first school. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 51 children aged from one year to under eight years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery has procedures to support children with special educational needs, and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 10 staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a qualification. The nursery is part of the Oak Trees Children's Centre.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about healthy eating and the importance of fresh air and exercise. Many of the staff hold food hygiene certificates. Procedures are followed to ensure food is kept at the correct temperature. Hot food is probed before serving and the temperature of refrigerators are checked daily. This means children stay healthy because the staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. Children usually follow simple good health and hygiene practices when instructed by a staff member although they have limited understanding of independently washing their hands before meals and after using the toilet. All staff have first aid certificates as it is one of the compulsory training requirements. First aid and exclusion of children when infectious ensures they are protected in an emergency or from infection.

Children are very well nourished. An appropriate range of drinking cups are available for the younger children and they can all access drinks throughout the day. Pre-school children frequently help themselves to their drinks so they understand the need to stay hydrated. Staff are good role-models because they have water bottles too, so pre-school children observe and copy this good habit. Older children have a café style snack bar where they select the times they wish to have a drink and snack, this aids them taking responsibility for healthy eating routines. All the snacks and meals provided by the setting are nutritious. The weekly menu is displayed as parental information and the younger children have daily diaries so parents are kept informed about children's food intake. Parents can provide packed lunches and drinks for their child should they wish and these are stored safely to prevent contamination of high risk foods. Allergies and preferences are displayed with a small photograph of the child to reduce the risk of a mix-up so children have their health and dietary needs met because staff work well with parents.

Children's sleep patterns are discussed with parents and recorded on the entry sheets so this is respected by staff. When a child is moving from one room to another information of their rest patterns are shared. This means children have rest and sleep according to their needs. There is a good balance of quiet and active times. Younger children have a set time when they can go outdoors and enjoy the range of age-appropriate fun activities. When the younger children returned indoors the door from the art room is opened and the older children move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas to play as they wish.

Children have lots of wonderful opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They regularly walk to the local shops and to Lodge Pool to enjoy the lovely views and local facilities. The fully enclosed garden is well designed to give children many learning activities. They can lace ribbons, grow plants and look at the lovely laminated photographs which show children enjoying the garden.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a converted house where there is a relaxed atmosphere and children feel at home. The children have a base room that is equipped to meet the needs of their age group. Rooms are brightly decorated and create a stimulating environment. Children and parents are warmly welcomed by a staff member as they arrive. The indoor and outdoor areas are secure and safe. Children use a wealth of suitable and safe equipment which meets current safety

legislation. Additional equipment is available because they share resources with other settings in this chain, the local school as well as a toy library. This means children use a broad range of exciting toys that promotes their learning. The children also use a wide range of natural materials that stimulate their sensory perception both indoors and outdoors.

Children are kept safe on outings because of the high staffing levels. A poster is on display reminding staff the increased levels of staffing required when taking children on outings as well as using reins and safe walking strategies. Children learn to keep themselves safe for example, by helping to care for the rooms and keeping the play areas tidy to create a safe playing area. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised with the children. Staff regularly complete detailed risk assessments to reduce hazards without impeding the challenges for children.

Children are well protected because the staff understand their role and responsibilities in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Staff have accessed relevant training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect and have the Local Safe Guarding Board guidance to use as a reference.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's learning and enjoyment is promoted because the staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff have embraced the 'Birth to three matters' framework and make it work effectively to enhance the younger children's progress. They have widened their understanding by accessing further training and support from a specialist advisor from the local authority and the baby floor supervisor has researched and implemented additional ideas from the internet and further in-depth reading. The sharing of ideas between staff and rooms has also enhanced the wonderful experiences for the youngest children. The planning for this age group is exemplary. All the staff complete observations and assessments of the children which informs the planning so children continuously make good progress in their learning. The layout of the observation records aids staff's understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The prompts in the observation records, such as 'what does this mean' and 'what else can you do to help' further aids staff's ability to support the young children's learning.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. Staff are making positive use of the new mentor teacher system within the local authority to help them understand new educational initiatives. Staff complete comprehensive observations to inform children's assessments. They use this information effectively in the planning so children's next step in their learning is identified and met. There are suitable procedures in place to ensure children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. There are suitable strategies in place to support children with English as an additional language. Staff set simple rules in collaboration with the children. Most children know and understand about the need for these. There is a timetable which is applied flexibly. The outdoor area is designed so children to have a wide variety of learning experiences.

Personal, social and emotional development underpins children's positive attitude to learning. They select many of the resources for themselves and have many opportunities to lead the

play. This means they are becoming autonomous learners. Children are confident and have high self-esteem especially because of the effective key worker system and planning of activities around children's personal interests. Children play cooperatively together, for example they share a large cardboard box and put it over their heads and walk around together. The staff cut a hole so they could see where they were going and they took turns to be in the front.

Children's communication, language and literacy skills are well developed. Children are confident talkers and initiate conversations. Staff have completed training on 'Nursery Talk' which is a health promotion promoted by speech therapists to improve their understanding of supporting children's speech. Children benefit from staff's understanding and sensitive implementation of this promotion. Staff ask open ended questions and give children lots of time to think and formulate their answers. Children understand that their opinions matter. Children enjoy group story times and can re-tell parts of the story. They look at books and ask relevant questions of staff to help them understand what is happening in the pictures. Children understand that their emergent writing has meaning through their imaginative play. They write lists in the role-play area using pencils and clip boards.

Children are becoming competent mathematicians. They have the opportunity to use number and see its use in every day life. At registration they count how many boys and how many girls are present so are learning to identify the numerals and compare numbers. Posters with numerals up to 20 with corresponding number of illustrations clearly displayed so children are starting to count. They choose to play with board games where they can sort and count items. There are exciting activities that catch children's imagination such as using the programmable toy 'Bee-bot' to find shapes and colours. Children say the shape and colour they want to send the 'Bee-bot' to, then they count how many squares it needs to move and press the buttons the corresponding number. This aids children learning the names of two dimensional shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world is widely promoted. They explore confidently and learn effectively through practical hands-on experiences. They have opportunities to observe, question and explore their natural curiosity as they grow and tend plants in the garden. These provide children with wide opportunities to use their senses, ask questions and build on what they already know. They have good opportunities to design and make things with a variety of different shaped and sized re-cycled material such as boxes and shredded paper. They enjoy celebrating a range of festivals and are learning to value differing lifestyles. A parent has decorated and adapted a trolley so children regularly take items in it to the re-cycling bank to help them understand how to protect the environment. The photograph albums of special activities in the setting encourages children to celebrate their own personal experiences history.

Children's creativity is valued and encouraged. Their art work is proudly displayed around the setting and included in displays about topics. For example, in the art room they have created a three dimensional jungle scene. A range of art materials is readily accessible in the art room. Children join in with favourite songs as well as learning new ones. Staff use 'Melody Monkey' to help children learn a sense of rhythm and tone. They enjoy using their imaginations in role play such as they have a created a school classroom where children like to be the teacher. Children often take their imaginations outside to the play area where they use the cars and ride-on toys as part of their games.

Physical development is good. Children move safely around the well-organised rooms. They are developing their spatial awareness because of their participation in suitable activities such as playing in the ball pool. Children love the freedom in the well-organised outdoor area; they push, pull or pedal a variety of toys. During inclement weather they use the soft play sensory

area on the first floor of the building to jump, crawl and just enjoy the aesthetic atmosphere created by the subdued lighting. They are developing their hand and eye coordination as they use a variety of equipment such as when playing with dough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children receive appropriate support through the effective keyworker system and deployment of staff. Their individual needs are identified through in-depth discussions with parents and then every reasonable step is taken to help them make progress. The design and implementation of the new procedure for planning for all children is a particular strength in helping staff to identify children's next step in their learning and their individual needs. Lovely photographs displayed around the nursery help children to feel a strong sense of belonging and celebrate their experiences. Children's home culture and language are respected and observed in the nursery. Children get involved in local and national events to celebrate the diverse community. They learn about different festivals and celebrations in a positive manner.

Children with learning difficulties or physical disabilities are very well supported by dedicated staff who are proactive in their approach. There is a strong commitment to working closely with parents and this aids the early identification of any additional needs a child may have. Staff have built a strong relationship with health and education professionals to enhance the care of all children.

Children understand responsible behaviour because of the clear simple positive rules such as helping each other, good listening, good tidying and good behaviour. These rules are discussed with the children to help them understand right from wrong. Children are rewarded with stars and stickers for achievement and good behaviour which are displayed in the rooms to celebrate children's success. Children are mostly well behaved considering their age and stage of development. Children's spiritual, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the close working partnership with parents. They are provided with a wealth of information about the setting and its provision through posters and a detailed prospectus. There is an annual formal parents' evening as well as an open door policy so they can see their child's records at any time. Informal daily chats with parents quickly identifies any concerns and staff respond with sensitive ideas to help and support all the children. Daily diary sheets are used for the younger children to keep parents informed about personal care, sleep patterns and food intake as well as their enjoyment and participation in activities. Suggestions and ideas are often shared with parents on how they can get involved with their child's learning such as healthy eating. However this is not always consistently applied for all themes and topics. Special celebration or open days are organised where parents are welcome to visit and play.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced because of the committed, enthusiastic staff team. The recruitment and vetting system ensures children are well protected and cared for by adults with knowledge and understanding of child development. Most staff are qualified, or are working towards a qualification and frequently access ongoing relevant training. This professional attitude of the management and staff means children's care is enhanced and they make sound progress. The organisation of the rooms and deployment of staff ensures children have a wonderful experience

in a homely atmosphere. All the record keeping and documentation promotes children's care and education. All the written policies and procedures are frequently reviewed to ensure they meet current legislation and reflect best practice. The setting is part of Oak Tree Children's Centre therefore the registered person and her staff are pro-active in building close working partnerships with many different professionals from health and education which further enhances the opportunities and care of children and their families.

Leadership and management is good. There is a clear management structure which underpins the smooth running of this setting. The management is supportive and caring of the staff. They are a wonderful team caring of each other, children and parents as well as being highly motivated and aim high for quality care and education. The day-to-day management of this setting is inspirational through both of the managers' quiet and endless enthusiasm. There is a system to evaluate the nursery education based mainly on the adult-led activities. This usually identifies areas for improvement but it is not always completed which reduces the setting's ability to identify its own strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. The managers do spot checks themselves and discuss with staff at meetings what they can improve. The setting has forged a strong partnership with the mentor teacher from the local children's centre which has helped them make ongoing effective improvements. They have made many links with other providers and other professionals to help them make improvements. They are always willing to try new initiatives and access many relevant, training sessions. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to improve behaviour management strategies in the pre-school room. The organisation of the ground floor play rooms has greatly enhanced the experiences for the pre-school children. There is now a room for 'Little Learners' for the two and a half year olds which has improved behaviour because the activities in the pre-school room can be geared towards the correct age ability. Protecting children's health has been improved because staff now clearly record which children have food allergies and the action to be taken in case of a reaction. This is made clear on a list in the kitchen and includes children with special dietary requirements based on preference of religious considerations.

Nursery Education.

The provider was asked to improve children's opportunities to make choices. The layout of the rooms used by the pre-school children enables them to lead the play and access many of the resources for themselves. This has improved their independence and choice. They were also asked to introduce a system to evaluate the nursery education. A strategy has been introduced to evaluate activities which influences future improvements but it is not always completed. It was also agreed to expand the planned use of the outdoor environment to include all areas of learning. This has been done to great effect. Children freely move between the indoor and outdoor areas and access a broad range of activities and resources.

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 the 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):

- improve the opportunities for children to understand simple hygiene procedures.

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 the opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning
- improve the evaluation system to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the setting.

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