



## Linslade Child Care

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** EY236111  
**Inspection date** 14 July 2005  
**Inspector** Susan Marriott

**Setting Address** c/o Linsdale Lower School, Leopold Road, Leighton Buzzard,  
Bedfordshire, LU7 2QU

**Telephone number** 07957751919  
**E-mail** linsladechildcare@hotmail.com  
**Registered person** Sandra Ridge  
**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](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 good. 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?

Linslade Childcare opened in its present location in 2002. It offers wraparound day care for children aged from 2 to 8 years. Children up to the age of 12 years can attend the group before and after school and during the holidays.

The facility is open all year round from 08:00- 18:00. At the time of inspection 97 children attend the provision throughout the week. Their hours of attendance vary to suit the needs of the parents. The setting makes provision for children with special

educational needs and those who speak English as a additional language. There are 21 children in receipt of nursery funding. The children all live in the local area and most attend the local Lower School.

The nursery is based in its own building within the grounds of Linslade Lower School. It has two large airy rooms and access to outdoor play space.

There are 14 staff working with the children on a regular basis, plus other holiday cover staff. Over half of the staff are suitably qualified with one staff member currently awaiting final assessment in order to gain a level 3 qualification. Staff receive support from a development worker and teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because practitioners effectively adhere to clear, well structured health and safety procedures, which are consistently applied. Accident and medication procedures are robust and ensure that children receive appropriate care. The staff tidy up as they work, cleanse tables with bacterial spray after each use and clean the kitchen and toilets periodically throughout the day. This prevents the spread of infection and supports high levels of cleanliness within the childcare environment. The fish tank is spotlessly clean as the staff support children's learning to care for living things. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. They know for example, that it is important to wash their hands prior to eating and after using the toilet. However, children do not always learn about the reasoning behind keeping clean and healthy because plans do not include health education and staff do not always extend this aspect of children's learning.

Children benefit from a nutritious and healthy diet. Children attending the breakfast club can choose from a selection of toast, cereals and yoghurt. The pre-school provides them with a varied choice for snacks and these comply with all special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. The use of snack time as a learning experience for children is limited because children cannot always pour their own drinks or serve themselves with snacks. The setting encourages parents to supply a healthy packed lunch for children or they may have a cooked lunch in the school canteen. Children learn to make healthy choices and become accustomed to the busy school environment with the benefit of sensitive support from familiar staff. Water is available for children to access and extra water is offered at snack time. However, this was not available when the children returned inside from outside play on an exceedingly hot day.

Children explore, test and develop physical control in daily indoor and outdoor experiences. Older school children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise and delight in the challenges of a versatile range of activities. For instance, children tackle after school club games and obstacle courses enthusiastically. However, plans

do not provide sufficient evidence of how the physical skills of children in receipt of nursery education are developed and progressed over time.

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

The provision is good.

This well run and effectively monitored childcare provision gives high priority to children's safety and welfare. Both rooms are bright and welcoming, clean and well maintained and thoughtful curtaining and soft furnishings make the environment homely and inviting for children. Wall displays are bright, stimulating and reflect the recent learning experiences of the children. For example, a display about 'Growing' reminds the children that seeds, compost, flower pot and a watering can is needed to produce a flower. Children use a sufficient range of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate resources which are well organised in child height furniture to encourage independent access. Practitioners explain safe practices in a skilful manner, such as the need to pick up items dropped on the floor, so that other children do not fall or hurt themselves. This helps children of all ages to learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Security systems are good and practitioners help keep children safe because they fully understand and comply with health and safety requirements. Supervision is realistic and allows flexibility in preparing and organising activities and the environment. Before outside play, the staff fully prepare the outside area for the children and complete their risk assessment. This ensures that children can move from one activity to another without having to wait. Children demonstrate an understanding of staying safe as they prepare themselves before going into the sunshine, although no shady area is currently provided to enable children to shelter from the sun on a hot day. Children fetch their sun hats, and parents ensure their children have had an application of sun cream before arriving at the provision. Staff support children well and meet their individual needs. Staff know what to do in the event of an emergency and children practise their evacuation plan with suitable frequency.

Child protection procedures are robust and children remain well protected. Strong recruitment and induction procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience, training and vetting checks. Children remain the primary focus of care in this well organised and well managed setting. Staff are vigilant in their practice and are confident in their knowledge of child protection, reporting concerns appropriately to senior staff. The child protection coordinator ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children make sufficient progress in learning, leisure and personal development because of the care, effort and varying complementary skills of the practitioners

which underpin the setting's childcare practice. Children enjoy their time at the setting and have lots of fun. Children make sound progress in the development of their language skills because of the positive interaction and staff engagement in conversations. The before and after school provision is of particularly good quality and children settle to a range of appropriate activities whilst the radio plays softly in the background, enhancing the calm and relaxed atmosphere for children at either end of the school day.

Pre-school children enjoy a wide range of suitable play based activities with good interaction and levels of involvement from the staff. For example, as part of a topic on growth, children cultivate their own lettuce, carrots, radish, spring onions and broad beans from seeds in tubs on the playground. They water them, care for them, pick them and eat them. However, weak planning causes the setting to rely heavily upon the varying strengths and skills of individual staff members to enrich activities. Some activities become overly adult directed which results in children receiving experiences of variable quality and relevance. Staff vary in their ability to draw learning from play and the needs of the children under 3-years-old are sometimes left to chance. Staff do not record children's starting points when they enter the pre-school from 2 years and 6 months, and this does not support meaningful assessments which track children's progress and inform the next steps in learning. Although staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, they do not yet use this to inform their planning for children under 3-years.

#### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Most children are generally interested in the play based activities and are keen to learn. The children know that the manager will shortly be travelling to China and they will be able to share the experience via e-mails and photographs sent back to the provision. Regular music sessions with a visiting volunteer engage the children's interest and enthusiastic participation. They sing confidently and join in with the actions. A child requested a favourite song, wiggled her ears and said 'Oh no, my ears are not tuned into that song now - I've forgotten it'. This shows that children are sufficiently confident and assured to work and play independently or in groups. Relationships are secure, behaviour is good and this enables learning to take place. However, some staff are unclear about the intended outcome of children's learning which results in some activities lacking focus and direction. For instance, children cut out pictures pre-selected from a travel brochure to make a postcard. Not all children understand the concept behind what they are doing and plans do not guide the staff member to adjust the activity appropriately. Children are suitably aware of others and know that they may have differing beliefs, cultures and traditions. They have reasonable levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration and use all their senses to explore a range of experiences. Overall, most children make acceptable progress towards the early learning goals given their capability and starting points.

Teaching is generally appropriate for all children because practitioners understand children's needs and provide a sufficient range of activities and experiences. They have a reasonable range of teaching methods and an adequate understanding of how young children learn and progress. As part of the holiday theme, children listen intently to the story of 'Sam's Sandwich' and gain confidence as they join in with

familiar sections. Staff familiarise children with new words whilst looking at the texture board, discussing how different items can be described as crunchy, soft, stretchy and scrunchy. However, practitioners have a widely varying knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plans do not provide enough support to guide less confident staff in delivery of the learning programme. The staff do not fully understand how to plan an effective programme of learning using the stepping stones which results in minor gaps and a rather haphazard coverage of the six areas of learning. There has been limited progress since the last inspection in addressing this issue.

Assessments are orientated towards the production of a 'record of transfer' based upon lists of skills arranged under the six areas of learning. However, the records do not effectively track children's progress against the stepping stones and are not used to determine the next steps in children's learning. Staff make satisfactory use of their time and resources to support children's learning. Monitoring procedures are adequate, but are not always used to identify ways to improve teaching.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children from all backgrounds and children with special needs are warmly welcomed in the provision. Practitioners ensure that the resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others. Skilled staff implement reliable systems to ensure that children with specific needs receive appropriate support in the setting. This enables them to join in with all activities and make acceptable progress given their age and starting points. Children are well behaved and polite in response to the consistent expectations of caring practitioners. The manager ensures that staff provide a warm welcoming and homely environment and prioritises the welfare of the children in attendance. Children take turns and show concern for others. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. There is a wealth of easily accessible information for parents, but this does not include sufficient information about the educational programme for funded children. Practitioners are conscientious and welcoming to parental input. Parents value the openness and honesty of staff and maintain a daily dialogue. This supports the appropriate sharing of information in sensitive situations. Parents are complimentary about the level of service provided. However, they do not actively contribute towards individual assessment records and this limits the two way sharing of information between parents and practitioners to enhance children's learning. This potentially hinders children's progress in the setting and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The good quality of organisation and the satisfactory leadership and management of the nursery education safeguards and promotes children's care and welfare. The mature and stable staff team are suitably experienced, qualified and committed to the concept of quality childcare and education. They ensure that children benefit and enjoy their time at this welcoming provision. This promotes generally positive outcomes for children. A dedicated administrator, who is able to release the staff from paperwork to give their time and energy to the children, completes the management team. Although persisting weaknesses in planning and assessment systems limit the quality of nursery education, exceedingly well organised and comprehensive documentation relating to the care standards, underpins the efficient operation of the setting. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

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

At the last Children Act inspection, a recommendation was made to ensure the child protection policy includes the procedure to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff. This procedure has been included within the child protection section of the complaints policy.

At the previous inspection of nursery education, three issues were raised. The setting was to improve the planning to incorporate stimulating, meaningful activities designed to help the children make progress in all areas of learning. A new schedule of planning and evaluation has been devised to include advance daily plans with a focussed activity and support was sought from the advisory service. Planning and assessment systems continue to confuse the staff and hitherto, have proved ineffective in raising the quality and standards of nursery education. The setting has purchased a new bookcase in response to the recommendation to develop a suitable environment in which children can explore a variety of print and books. The setting has taken delivery of a new role play screen and has yet to relocate the book area to fully meet the recommendation. The third recommendation required the setting to develop a system that enables children to make choices and become independent learners with access to a variety of equipment and materials. The setting has always allowed the children to move freely between activities which have been planned for each session. However, the manager does not feel that she is able to fully implement this in her setting because of the range and type of childcare offered.

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

Concerns were raised relating to Std 6 (Safety). An internal investigation was conducted by the provider. Following the internal investigation, Ofsted agreed to take no further action on this matter.

## **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 satisfactory.

### **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):

- reinforce children's knowledge and understanding of good hygiene practice and provide more opportunities for children to operate independently at snack time

#### **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):

- extend staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage; plan activities to ensure all aspects of the early learning goals are given due emphasis and provide sufficient detail to guide staff in delivery of an effective learning programme for children.
- ensure children's assessments correlate more closely to the stepping stones and are used to plan the next steps towards the early learning goals.
- develop information provided for parents about the Foundation Stage to support the extension of children's learning at home

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)