

Sir Leslie Martin Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY276594 |
| Inspection date | 10 October 2007 |
| Inspector | Sarah Elizabeth Howell |

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| Registered person | Alison Lynn Thompson |
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| Type of inspection | Integrated |
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| Type of care | Full day care |
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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?

The Sir Leslie Martin Day Nursery is owned by Alison Thompson. It opened in November 2003 and operates from a single storey premises in Hartford, near Northwich, close to local schools and amenities. There are three home-base rooms where children are cared for in age related groups. Children also have access to an enclosed outside play area. A maximum of 35 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 19.00.

There are currently 31 children on roll, 17 of whom receive funding for early education. There are currently no children attending who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven members of staff including a cook. Five child care staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting maintains close links with Local Authority development workers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The setting very effectively promotes children's healthy development. Staff employ a range of excellent procedures which help to keep the setting very clean and minimise the risk of ill health due to cross infection. For example, nappy changing routines are of a very high standard and the baby room is a shoe-free zone to protect babies who spend much of their time playing on the floor. Standards of food hygiene are also excellent and procedures for keeping children safe by respecting their dietary requirements are very thoroughly reviewed and maintained.

Staff are vigilant in monitoring children's health and call parents quickly if they feel a child is becoming unwell. Managers and staff follow rigorous procedures for giving and recording the administration of children's medication. Staff actively support children in developing a range of good hygiene habits. For example, children understand that blowing their noses and putting their hand over their mouth when they cough stop germs from spreading and all children are learning the importance of hand washing after using the toilet and before meals.

Children enjoy a wide range of nutritious and freshly prepared meals and snacks. Staff work closely with parents to encourage children to develop good eating habits and to introduce them to a wide range of types of food. They sit and eat with children encouraging them to eat, helping them to learn good table manners and providing good support for children as they learn to eat with knives and forks. Staff actively encourage children to drink water which is readily available within each room and at meal times. Staff use very good age appropriate explanations to help children learn why water is an important part of a healthy diet.

The setting also provides very effective support for children to develop their physical skills and abilities and to enjoy being active. Good use is made of space and equipment both inside and outside to enable children to enjoy large scale play opportunities and to learn to negotiate and share space with others. Babies enjoy lots of floor space and a well organised environment with attractively arranged resources which encourage them to move around and find the things they want to play with. Toddlers and pre-school children have very good opportunities to play outside and explore their local environment and staff encourage children to relish opportunities to be active and to understand how this helps their healthy growth and development.

Very effective settling in procedures and the use of consistent staffing arrangements within each home base room provide children with very good support for their emotional development. Staff work very closely with parents to be well informed about children's established routines and individual needs and use this information well to help children to make secure and comfortable transitions into the nursery, and between home base rooms. In addition good use of key workers helps children make secure attachments to their carers and develop the confidence to become more independent in their play and interaction with others.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff warmly welcome children and their parents into the nursery each day. Parents explain that staff's friendly approachability makes them feel very welcome and comfortable in the setting and they value being able to talk to staff whilst settling their children in at each session. As a result children generally separate comfortably from parents and are quickly distracted by

the attractive choice of activities set out in their home rooms. Space is used effectively throughout the nursery to meet children's needs for play, relaxation and sleep. Children's play rooms are well organised to provide opportunities for different types of play and attractive displays of children's art and craft work shows parents the types of things children do to support their enjoyment and learning.

The range, quantity and quality of play materials and equipment is excellent and their organisation actively promotes children's independence and free choice. Large amounts of child sized furniture and equipment also enables children to sit together and enjoy sociable mealtimes, although in the baby room the organisation of high chairs sometimes prevents young children's social interaction. Babies enjoy choosing between brightly coloured manufactured toys and intriguing homemade resources, such as the sensory bottles that staff have made for them. In addition staff explore the use of everyday objects that children find around them in the natural environment to provide stimulation for children's imaginations. For example, children have made a cascading leaf display using the vast amounts of leaves they have collected from their outdoor play area and their love of stick collecting has lead to the creation of a huge fish construction made entirely out of sticks.

Provision for children's safety and well-being is also good. Staff work together well as a team and provide effective supervision for children at all times, for example, when using the large outdoor trampoline and when on walks in the local area. Regular risk assessments of the premises and good security arrangements also effectively keep children safe. Arrangements to minimise the risk of fire related emergencies are also good. Staff practise evacuations at regular intervals with children and all new staff learn about the arrangements for fire safety as part of their induction into the setting. Staff explain that children learn about what staying safe means to them through age appropriate discussion, planned activities and sometimes through visits from agencies, such as the police and fire brigade.

Staff also keep children safe through a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in relation to child protection. They observe children closely and monitor both their development and their well-being. They are generally well informed about the range of possible indicators of abuse and neglect and would not hesitate to seek appropriate advice and guidance from a senior member of staff if they had a concern about a child in their care. The nursery manager and the owner have the lead roles in relation to child protection and both are very experienced in working with parents and other relevant agencies in relation to child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff plan and provide a wide variety of activities to support children's enjoyment of their time in nursery. Their enthusiastic involvement in children's play keeps children engaged and interested in what is provided and enables staff to get to know children very well. They make good use of their insight into children's dispositions, abilities and needs, using this to plan and develop activities and experiences which they know children will enjoy. Staff working with children under three make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to inform the planning of activities for this age group and to help them monitor children's developmental progress. Information about the framework and how it is used is shared with parents through visual displays and daily feedback.

Staff working with babies and toddlers demonstrate their good understanding of children's very early development and how best to provide support for this. For example, staff working

with babies spend lots of their time in face to face interaction with babies, encouraging and promoting early communication through recognition and positive response to infants facial expression and the sounds they make. They closely observe what children do and share these observations with parents and liaise with them about how to plan for children's next steps.

Children in the toddler room benefit from the very close involvement of staff in their play. Effective support from staff is helping them to develop their social skills as they are encouraged to share, take turns and enjoy playing together. Staff know the children in their care well and are able to provide a good balance between adult and child lead play. For example, they quickly recognise when children are losing interest in an activity or are feeling tired and use a change of pace or activity to reengage children's interest and enthusiasm. In addition staff make very good use of the outdoor play area both to provide for children's enjoyment and learning and to diffuse any tensions that begin to arise as a result of age related difficulties with behaviour.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff involved in implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum work closely together to plan and provide a wide range of interesting activities covering all six areas of learning. Children are sometimes asked to contribute their ideas to the planning process to ensure that activities are relevant and of interest to them. Activities are effectively differentiated to provide diverse challenges for children. For example, a planned painting activity helps some children develop their knowledge of primary colours whilst others are encouraged to anticipate what happens when these colours are mixed. In addition staff work closely with parents to support children's development and learning, for example, giving parents ideas about activities they can try at home with their children.

Staff spend time observing children closely in order to become more aware of their interests and learning dispositions. They effectively use the information from these observations to inform their planning for further learning and to help them adapt their teaching methods to meet children's varied learning styles. For example, staff recognise that children benefit from being able to direct their own learning to quite a large extent, for example, choosing their own toys and developing their own interests. However, they also initiate group activities to help children develop their social skills. For example, enabling children to develop their listening skills and become more confident in sharing their thoughts and ideas with others. This provides children with very good preparation for school.

Managers and staff regularly review and evaluate teaching methods and activities to assess how effective they are in helping children to enjoy learning through play. For example, a counting and colour matching activity is evaluated to see how successful it was for the children involved. Staff identify that it meets most, but not all, of the learning objectives and use this information to help them review how this could be done better next time. As a result staff are developing good self assessment skills and recognise the role these play in helping them to provide better support for children's enjoyment and achievement.

Assessment of children's progress is also good. Staff use spontaneous and planned observations to help them to monitor and record children's development in relation to the stepping stones. This information is used to keep children's profiles well maintained and up to date. Parents are informed about the profiles and are encouraged to discuss them with staff whenever they want to. Although at the present time they are not directly involved in contributing to their children's profiles. Children's work is attractively displayed around the room and sent home on a regular

basis which also helps to keep parents informed about what children are doing and the progress they are making.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting. Their good behaviour and positive relationships with staff help to ensure that they make the most of the learning opportunities available to them and make good progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff work very effectively in partnership with parents to be well informed about children's dispositions, needs and starting points. For example, staff in the baby room ask parents to provide detailed information about children's daily routines and established patterns of care so that they can use this detail to help them support infants and young toddlers in making secure, settled transitions into the setting. All staff are skilled at observing children as they play and using these observations to help them to provide focused individual care and support for children's learning. Children are actively exploring the similarities and differences between their own and other cultures and faiths through interesting planned activities and through the close links the setting maintains with four nurseries in India.

Although at present no children attend who have learning disabilities or difficulties the setting has an inclusive approach to working with all children. The building is designed to promote good access for those with disabilities and managers and staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to creating an environment where all children are valued and enabled to fulfil their potential. Managers explain that some staff are very experienced in caring for children with specific needs and are skilled at liaising closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that children get the best support for their needs.

Staff provide excellent models for children's behaviour. They work very cooperatively together and show kindness and respect in their communication with both children and adults. They promote children's good behaviour through recognition, praise and the use of stickers which children love to receive. As a result children's behaviour is generally very good. They play well together, enjoying each others company and beginning to show care and consideration for each others needs and feelings. Staff use a range of age appropriate management techniques to ensure that inappropriate behaviour does not disrupt children's enjoyment of play. In addition, they work closely with parents to support children in overcoming specific problems in relation to behaviour.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents comment that they value the consistently good communication they have with managers and staff, which helps to keep them well informed about what children do in the setting and the progress they are making in relation to their development and learning. Staff value daily verbal exchanges of information with parents to help them to work in partnership to meet children's needs and respect parents' wishes. In addition parents enjoy a wealth of information through newsletters, displays of children's work and photographs of activities and outings which help to extend their knowledge and understanding of how children's enjoyment and achievement is effectively promoted within the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Thorough recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure the suitability of staff working with young children. Very good procedures for induction ensure that new staff quickly become familiar with the settings policies and procedures and work well as part of a committed team. Ongoing suitability is effectively maintained through staff's access to appraisal, support and direction from managers and good access to training. For example, at present staff and managers are working closely with SureStart to plan ahead for the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage within their setting. In addition they are working closely with parents to keep them well informed about these developments. Good arrangements are in place to provide cover for staff sickness and holidays which actively promotes continuity of care for the children attending.

The manager works very closely with staff in effectively implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum. For example, supporting them in planning for and evaluating the activities provided to support children's development and learning. As a result staff are developing very good skills in these areas, for example, evaluating the effectiveness of planned activities on a monthly basis and experimenting with involving children's ideas in the planning of activities and themes. In addition managers have also begun to monitor the effectiveness of the work being undertaken with children through the use of a monitoring tool which the local authority have provided. This is being used effectively to identify areas for improvement, for example, highlighting issues about how to provide effective support for toddlers where behaviour is an issue. Managers explain that this is an ongoing process to help them to continually look at how they can improve on the standards and services they provide for children and their families.

A high standard of record keeping and documentation is maintained within the setting which ensures the efficient and safe management of the setting and actively promotes the welfare, care and learning of children. For example, the systems for recording accidents and medication are very thorough and ensure that children's health and safety needs are very effectively monitored. Children's developmental profiles are very well maintained so that they can provide up to date and relevant information for parents about the progress children are making within the setting. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures informs staff practice and is shared with parents. However, the setting's child protection policy is not consistent with all the requirements of the National Standards.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection in 2004 a recommendation was made in relation to developing staff's awareness and understanding of Special Educational Needs in relation to their work with young children and their families. Staff receive ongoing support from experienced senior staff in relation to this area of child care practice and are very clear about the importance of observing children closely so that they can monitor children's development and share their observations with parents. As a result staff are skilled at identifying developmental issues and work closely with parents, managers and other professionals to ensure that children receive appropriate support in relation to their needs.

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.

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 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):

- review and update the child protection policy in line with the National Standards.

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):

- consider developing the role that parents play in contributing to children's developmental profiles.

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