

Little Oaks Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218450
Inspection date	25 January 2008
Inspector	Mary Anne Henderson
Setting Address	Oakley House, 544 Etruria Road, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 0SX
Telephone number	01782 637513
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Registered person	Little Oaks Day Nursery Ltd
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 satisfactory. 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?

Little Oaks Day Nursery opened in 1988. It operates from seven rooms in two converted buildings situated in Staffordshire. A maximum of 58 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 all year round. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 75 children from under one years to under five years on roll. This includes 15 funded three-year-olds. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are currently 22 members of staff working with the children, 19 of whom hold early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. Five members of staff are undertaking early years training to NVQ Level 2. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about healthy eating. They have a varied diet including meat, fish, pasta and vegetables and they have a range of fruit each day for snack times. They also enjoy drinks of water, milk or juice with their meals and they have free access to drinking water throughout the day. Children's independence is promoted because the staff encourage them to use suitable cutlery and to pour their own drinks. Children enjoy social interaction with their peers and the staff during meal times as they talk about their family life.

Children enjoy playing in an environment that is maintained and clean. They are aware of the need to wash their hands after painting, after visiting the toilet and before they eat. Children's welfare is promoted well because the staff are first aid qualified and they have sought written parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice for all children on roll.

The children are learning about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a good range of indoor and outdoor activities and use a range of small and large equipment to develop their muscles. For example, they climb, balance, run around in the fresh air, ride on tricycles and undertake obstacle courses in the outdoor play areas. All children also enjoy regular walks to places of interest such as the local parks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Premises are welcoming for parents and their children. There is a range of children's work on display for parents and their children to enjoy and information for parents is displayed around the nursery. Children use a range of equipment and toys suitable to their age and stage of development. The layout of the space encourages children to help themselves to the resources thereby promoting their confidence and independence. A range of suitable equipment is available to meet the physical needs of the children attending, for example, there are buggies, toileting equipment and a range of cots and soft bedding.

The safety of the children is maintained. Staff use a risk assessment format which includes areas, equipment and toys. However, a broken plastic bin has been overlooked and collected rainwater in some of the children's outdoor toys had not been removed before the children were taken outside to play, thereby possibly compromising children's safety. The children learn about personal safety through activities and by having visitors to the nursery. They are also involved in regular evacuation practise with the staff.

Children's welfare is maintained because the staff have attended child protection training. Staff know what to do and who to contact should they have a concern about a child in their care and they have the current Local Safeguarding Children Board contact numbers at hand. There is a child protection policy in place to keep parents informed of procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

To support the development of younger children, the staff have attended training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Key workers observe the children and use the development cards

to ensure the children are progressing in all areas of their development. Children share and turn-take with their peers and the younger children are keen to help each other at tidy up time. They are well behaved and they have regard for each other. The children are involved in a good range of free play and planned activities. For example, they enjoy stories, circle time and imaginary play. Young children have lots of opportunities to be involved in creative activities and messy play throughout the day.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children access a range of resources because they are low-level and kept in labelled boxes thereby encouraging them to make their own choices. However, not all resources are made freely available to children during their child-initiated play times, for example, the glue and paints and equipment to promote learning in information technology, is not easily accessed by the children at these times. This possibly compromises their learning. Children are interested and join in as they learn about and name the different parts of their body, supported by the staff. Children enjoy being responsible and caring for themselves as they put on and take off their own coats and know to go and wash their hands before eating and after messy activities. At times, children challenge each other over the resources, and are not always aware of the needs of others and their feelings at these times, thereby possibly compromising this area of children's learning. Children find out about the world around them as they explore a range of festivals around the calendar year. They explore imaginary play as they use the small world people, dressing up clothes and dolls and equipment in the home corner.

Children access books in an inviting book corner where they can relax with their peers. They enjoy story time with the adults and listen and join in with the stories. They listen and take it in turns to talk, supported by the staff. Children use equipment and resources that promotes their mathematical understanding, and staff encourage them to explore 'one more', 'one less' and grouping concepts. All children practice handwriting as they use sheets that encourage them to write letters and numbers, thereby building their knowledge of the alphabet and numbers from one to 10. The children enjoy joining in with stories during story time with the staff. Children explore shape, space and measure as they enjoy playing with sand, water and cooking activities. Children look at the concept of time as they plant seeds and plants and watch them grow.

Children are finding out about the world around them as they explore and investigate their surroundings. They go on local walks to look at the wildlife and trees and bring leaves back to look at with their peers. Children enjoy making three dimensional creations with junk and glue during planned activities. The children have begun to look at and identify the uses of every day technology through planned activities. They look at equipment for weighing and baking and they play with tills and telephones during imaginary play. Children climb and balance on the small and large equipment to develop their small and large muscles. Children also enjoy using a range of tools such as knives, cutters, pencils and scissors. They like to dress up and walk around the play areas with their dolls and chat to other children and the staff as they pass by.

Staff are positive role models for children. However, at times there are missed opportunities to encourage the younger children to have an awareness of the feelings and needs of their peers. There are also missed opportunities for all children to receive praise for their achievements such as managing to complete an outdoor obstacle course, thereby possibly compromising this area of children's learning. Children are praised as they work together to tidy up or help each

other with jobs. Staff talk quietly with each other and the children to ensure a relaxing and accepting atmosphere for children where they can hear and be heard. The staff spend much of their time directly with the children joining in with their play. The staff team have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and they understand that children learn through play. They provide sufficient time, resources and equipment to extend children's learning and promote progression. However, the staff do not ensure the children have access to a broad range of equipment and resources so that children make informed choices about what they want to do during their child-initiated play time, thereby possibly compromising this area of their learning. Staff work effectively as a team and talk to each other about the children and any planning and assessment issues. Planning and assessment is satisfactory and the plans include what the children will get out of the activities. The planning is informed by what children can already do and the areas the children need to develop further. There are strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language. The staff have previous experience of caring for children who may need further support in these areas and they would seek the support of parents and other professionals to ensure consistency and the inclusion of all children on roll.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children respond to any positive strategies used to manage their behaviour, for example, they receive stickers for putting on their coats and shoes and smile at the staff as they receive their reward. Younger children are praised by their key workers throughout the day and the younger children behave appropriately. However, at times staff miss opportunities to praise the older children, who at times, become challenging with their peers. Children explore festivals through creative activities. For example, they make cards and paint and draw pictures as they learn about Christmas, Easter and Divvali. The children play with a range of resources that positively reflect diversity including positive images of people with disabilities and people from various cultural backgrounds. There are sound strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure consistency and inclusion of all children on roll. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There are positive relationships between the parents and the staff. Parents receive verbal and written feedback about their child's day at the nursery. They can stay and settle their child in at the start of the day. Parents access informative notice boards which are situated around the nursery. Parents have free access to the policies that outline the service provided.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The staff keep the parents informed about their child's developmental progression through discussion, appointment meetings with the key worker and through free access to their child's file. All parents receive the group's prospectus which outlines their aims and objectives. Parents also receive a regular newsletter to keep them up to date with issues including current themes and fund-raising events.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children are cared for by staff who are qualified and experienced. Procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are sound thereby ensuring children's welfare is maintained. Documentation is kept up-to-date and signed by both parties, including accident, incident and

medication records. The register shows attendance of children and the staff and all visitors are required to sign the visitors book after their identity has been thoroughly checked. This maintains children's welfare.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The management and staff team have little opportunity to have formal meetings to discuss issues about the strengths and possible weaknesses of the nursery education. For example, the staff have not evaluated the impact on children following action taken after the last inspection. This possibly compromises children's learning. Staff attend training as supported by the management. The staff talk to parents at the time of entry, observe children at play and forward plan for children's individual needs to ensure progression throughout their pre-school years. All staff and the management have a sound understanding of the concept of equality of opportunity and they work well together to ensure the inclusion of all children. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection, the nursery was asked to address a number of key issues and recommendations. They were asked to ensure the continued development of the staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. The staff on roll at the time undertook a range of training courses relating to the Foundation Stage Curriculum. However, those staff no longer work at the nursery. The nursery is currently seeking further training for the staff now working with the nursery-funded children on roll to ensure children's needs are met. The nursery was also asked to increase opportunities for children to develop, initiate and manage their own tasks during routines and activities. This was addressed. Children are now encouraged to be involved as helpers, to pour their own drinks and to further their skills in putting on their own coats and hats before going out to play. The nursery was asked to continue to develop the assessment procedures, making links to all six areas of learning and to share these with the parents. This was addressed because the staff introduced new assessment records. These now link to the early learning goals and the six areas of learning. The assessment records are shared with the parents through discussion, ongoing verbal feedback and through meetings between the parents and their child's key worker. All staff also send home a written diary sheet each day for parents, outlining the activities undertaken by their child during their day in the nursery. This keeps parents informed of their child's ongoing care and development.

The nursery was asked to continue to help children respond to boundaries of behaviour, not only to demonstrate compliance, but also to begin to understand the need for self-discipline and the consideration of others. The nursery partly addressed this by ensuring relevant staff attended behaviour management training. However, at times there are still missed opportunities to ensure children are praised for their efforts to behave well. This possibly compromises children's learning in this area of their development.

The nursery was asked to devise and implement procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff. This was fully addressed. Staff have attended the Local Safeguarding Children Board training. The staff have also updated the child protection policy ensuring it includes the procedures to be followed in the event of such an accusation. Children's welfare is now maintained. Finally, the nursery was asked to obtain written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice. The nursery sought the written parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice for all children on roll. Children's welfare is now maintained.

Complaints since the last inspection

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. Concern was raised with Ofsted that food given to children was too hot for them to eat and that inappropriate behaviour management had been used. An allegation of a Child Protection nature was also made and this was referred to the appropriate agency, who investigated and found no evidence to support the allegation. We carried out a visit to investigate the issues raised and National Standards 1: Suitable person, 2: Organisation, 6: Safety, 8: Food and drink, 11: Behaviour, 13: Child protection and 14: Documentation were covered. There was no evidence to suggest any breach of standards 1, 6, 8 or 13; however, there was evidence to suggest breaches of standards 2, 11 and 14 and actions were agreed as a result. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- identify and minimise possible hazards in the indoor and outdoor areas.

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):

- improve children's access to a broad range of resources and activities during child-initiated play times, in particular, resources to extend their knowledge and understanding of information communication technology
- improve staff's understanding of behaviour management issues ensuring consistency in managing both children's challenging behaviour and their positive behaviour
- improve the programme to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education provision.

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