

The Lakes Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY277497
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Inspector	Anne Drinkwater
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Registered person	The Lakes Centre Limited
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Lakes Centre registered in 2004 and is owned by a limited company. It is located in the Orford area of Warrington. The nursery operates from four rooms in a purpose-built building and shares the use of the sensory rooms with the adjoining nursery school. All children have access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

A maximum of 75 children may attend the nursery at any one time and there are currently 83 children on role who attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year.

The nursery currently supports a number of children with additional needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 25 staff which includes the management team and support staff, the majority of who hold appropriate early year's qualifications.

The nursery receives support from a teacher from the Early Years consultant and has strong links with additional specialist when required.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from the risk of cross-infection due to the effective practices followed by staff. For example, they keep all toys and equipment clean, clean surfaces before preparing and serving food, wash their own hands regularly and carry out hygienic nappy changing routines. Children of all ages are supported well in their learning about good personal hygiene through reminders and supervised hand washing routines. Older children confidently manage their own personal care as they take themselves to the toilets and understand the purpose of hygiene routines.

Children's health is further promoted through documentation used to record details of any accidents, incidents and any medication administered, which parents sign for consistency of care. Staff attend first aid training to support them in meeting children's needs in the event of an emergency.

Children are provided with a nutritious choice of foods at snack time and lunch times to promote good health. For example, fresh fruits and freshly prepared meals, such as fish pie and vegetables are particular favourites. They have access to drinks, such as water or milk at all times to ensure they do not get thirsty. Staff are vigilant regarding children's individual dietary needs and meal times are relaxed and sociable occasions where children eagerly enjoy their meals and often ask for more.

Children's physical development is promoted well through planned activities which children can freely access throughout the day. They gain confidence as they learn to move with control and use their bodies in many different ways. Indoors they have opportunities to dance and sing, the outdoor environment is well planned to provide an extension to the indoor play areas, resources include using the large and small scale physical play provision, mark making, sand, water, exploring the environment, seeking out insects and the planting of vegetables to dig up and eat at a later date.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and their families are warmly welcomed into the bright environment where informative notice boards within the building keep them informed and staff are readily available to offer support. The decoration has created a calm, peaceful and homely ambience which helps create a strong sense of belonging for young children and their families. Photographs, colourful mobiles and low level displays of children's art work further enhance the attractive indoor environment. A wide range of suitable resources are available for children to choose from throughout the setting and high safety standards are maintained.

Children have many rich learning opportunities in the vibrant indoor and outdoor play area, where an extensive range of equipment and resources benefits children enormously. Here the attention to planning allows children to have many challenging learning opportunities that are imaginatively presented in stimulating practical activities, such as the indoor tent which is also the reading area for many children, the sensory rooms, the role play areas or in the outdoor areas where they plant and dig up the potatoes, construct with wood, explore the environment for insects or play in the water or sand.

Children are safe and secure in the well organised nursery where staff vigilantly follow good procedures to protect every child. Staff regularly explain and skilfully reinforce safety issues in a way that is appropriate for each child's level of understanding and maturity. This enables older children to accept responsibility for their own safety within the nursery because they recognise potential hazards and have a good understanding of the possible consequences of their actions.

Children's welfare is safeguarded. Staff have a good awareness of the indicators of child abuse. In the event of identifying a child protection concern, they have a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and the procedures to follow.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have fun and enjoy being together in the lively, friendly nursery. Babies happily explore and investigate a wide range of opportunities, such as playing with ice, water and paint. They gain confidence as they practise and rehearse recently formed skills and achievements in a supportive environment. Toddlers and young children eagerly choose where to play and learn to make decisions. Children make their needs known and can often be seen seeking out the staff to read a book in the indoor tent or for cuddles, which enables them to feel secure and totally at ease in the staff's company. Their art work is proudly displayed to celebrate their achievements. They enjoy a wide range of activities both indoors and in the outdoor areas which are well planned and an extension of the indoor play areas, these are freely accessible for the majority of the day. Children relate warmly to staff and other children and are able to indicate to staff when they need help or support. They begin to display responsible behaviour, such as helping to tidy up, taking turns and sharing.

Staff have a good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use it when planning. Clear learning outcomes are identified and plans promote flexibility to meet children's interests and preferences. However, planning is not always evaluated and children's individual learning intentions are not always identified.

Communication is given a high priority throughout the setting as staff listen and respond appropriately to children's speech and babies' babbling. Signs, gestures, facial expressions and some sign language are used to reinforce meaning and provide visual cues. Children enjoy sitting in a cosy group at circle time to share favourite stories and experiences. Children sing familiar action songs and rhymes and eagerly join in the lively dance and singing sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Strong consideration is given to providing children with resources, activities and discussion which raise their awareness of diversity. Children gain a positive attitude towards others and learn about the wider world. Diversity is reflected throughout the rooms in the form of posters, a variety of resources and planned activities. Children develop close relationships with staff and their peers; they feel valued because staff create an environment where they are treated fairly, equally and with respect.

Children with additional needs are well supported and fully included in every day events and activities within the nursery. Staff use some Makaton signs and the nursery have adapted, with

the help of speech therapists a programme called 'little voices' to help aid children's early communication skills.

Consistent messages are given to children from staff about behavioural expectations within the nursery which ensures that they learn to share, take turns and play in harmony. Children receive praise and encouragement for their efforts which promotes their sense of achievement. They are reminded not to shout when talking and to take turns listening to other children speak which promotes their respect of one another. Children act responsibly as they help tidy up, staff act as good role models and the frequent use of praise supports children's efforts and helps them to feel good about themselves.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents speak very positively about the provision and are happy with the care their children receive and comment on the homely, friendly atmosphere. Information is shared with parents before children join the nursery and good procedures are in place. Notices and newsletters keep parents up to date with current topics and nursery events. Parents are provided with information about the curriculum on offer, children's development and have access to other information, such as planning sheets and the children's learning journals.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The management team and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to continually improving the quality of care provided. They provide a clear direction for the setting's work, which is very successfully shared with all staff so that there is a willingness to adopt new ideas to improve children's learning and work hard to create a harmonious and effective learning environment. The nursery has good systems in place for checking the quality of children's experiences.

Staff appraisals are carried out and are used to identify future training needs. There is a strong ethos of both 'in house' and external training within the nursery which allows staff to further their professional development. Management and staff work well as a team and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This creates a very happy, homely and supportive atmosphere for children and their families.

Children progress happily and confidently through the different age groups in the homely atmosphere where everyone knows each other well. Children receive good levels of attention and benefit from a staff team who are consistent. The effective layout of the available space and resources enables children to participate in a range of activities and initiate their own ideas. This successfully promotes their play and learning and allows all areas of children's development, care and learning to be fostered effectively. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was made to develop strategies that allow children, throughout the day, the freedom to choose to play in the indoor or outdoor environment.

This recommendation has been successfully met as planning and observations show children freely accessing resources and opportunities both indoors and the outdoors. Visits to other

innovated provisions have inspired the staff to provide many imaginative and interesting ideas to inspire children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been one complaint since April 2004 this was in regard to Behaviour, National Standard 11 and Child Protection, National Standard 13. Discussion, examination of nursery policies and procedures and observation of care practice demonstrated National Standard 11 continues to be met. The evidence examined demonstrated that National Standard 13 was not fully met. As a result of this an action was raised requiring the registered person informs Ofsted that any future incidents will be reported without delay.

Ofsted is satisfied that the registered provider has taken appropriate steps to address the action. The provider remains qualified for registration.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

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 baby's have continued access to natural resources
- develop the use of planning and evaluations to ensure individual children's next steps are clearly identified.

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