

Learning Land

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY276710
Inspection date	24 January 2008
Inspector	Valerie Block
Setting Address	65 Derwent Street, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 2DW
Telephone number	01900 601 222
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Registered person	Hilary McCarron
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?

Learning Land Private Day Nursery is owned and managed by a private owner. It opened in June 2004 and operates from a converted building in the middle of Workington, Cumbria. A maximum of 96 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 throughout the year, except for two weeks over the Christmas period and bank holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 122 children aged from four months to under eight years on roll. Of these, 33 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the town and surrounding area.

The setting employs 15 regular childcare staff. There are 13 staff, including the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's first aid and emergency needs are fully met as most staff have a current first aid qualification and each play area has a fully stocked first aid box. The baby area has an additional first aid book containing extra information as to how to treat young babies, ensuring that they are safe. Medical needs are met by the appropriate documentation that includes parents' consents for medication and a detailed record of administrations. Accident records are maintained correctly and are signed by parents, ensuring that children's needs are met.

Children's health needs are, in the main, well promoted as staff follow good hygiene practices and follow detailed and effective policies and procedures. For example, they wear disposable gloves and aprons during nappy changing. However, aprons are not always disposed of or cleaned between each nappy change and this could cause cross-infection.

Children begin to learn about keeping themselves healthy as they are encouraged to wash hands after visiting the toilet, use tissues and wet wipes after blowing their noses and clean their teeth after mealtimes. They understand that they are getting rid of germs that could make them ill.

Children recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active and all have drinks after physical exercise. They handle tools safely and with increased control as they use scissors with increasing confidence to cut fringes in paper and use tools to make shapes with the play dough. They move confidently and safely when outside in the play area where they play on scooters and bikes, steering around their friends and equipment. They thoroughly enjoy working together to play games with a parachute, as they learn to coordinate their actions and enjoy being together.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a warm, welcoming and safe environment where there are written risk assessments that are regularly reviewed. Children learn to keep themselves safe because staff talk to them about the safety procedures, for example, holding onto the banister rail on the stairs. Furthermore, when firemen visit they learn about the dangers of using matches.

Staff carry out daily checks on the outdoor area and maintain a safe and secure environment for the children. Necessary safety features are in place and include security cameras and safety gates. Effective procedures include the good supervision of children at all times, regular fire drills and security procedures.

Children are very safe when out on trips and walks as the nursery ensures that risk assessments are carefully done. They also ensure that they keep information about what clothes the children are wearing in case a child becomes lost. The children wear nursery sweaters with the name and telephone number of the nursery on as an additional safety precaution.

Children make free choices from very suitable, safe and interesting play equipment. Children make their own decisions as they chose from a range of resources stored in low units and clearly labelled plastic boxes.

Children are safeguarded as staff understand their role and responsibilities in child protection. Many of the staff group have attended child protection courses as the manager gives this training priority when staff first take up their posts.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children really enjoy and achieve as staff plan a range of interesting activities and experiences. Children's individual care needs are well known by staff, and children are well cared for by staff who treat them with warmth and sensitivity.

Staff working with babies and children under the age of three have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are using this effectively to plan children's activities and monitor their progress. All children have a very good range of activities that support all areas of learning.

Staff give babies very good access to play equipment and activities. They also plan interesting activities for them, such as placing ice in water trays to challenge children's senses and interest in the natural world. They also have provided a cosy corner for children where there is sensory equipment and treasure baskets with objects that babies enjoy exploring. Staff support their learning well. They go into the cosy corner with the babies and use a pastry brush from a basket to gently stroke their faces saying, 'What does this feel like?' and 'This is tickly and soft isn't it?' Therefore, children's vocabulary is extended.

Children in the toddler area enjoy well read stories and poems that encourage their love of books and this increases their understanding of sounds. This prepares them for future work learning the sounds of the alphabet and forming words from sounds. Children busily move around their play areas with confidence, helping themselves to activities and toys on offer and are actively engaged in their learning showing confidence in their carers and surroundings.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress in all areas of learning considering their starting points. Children's needs, skills and interests are identified through discussion with parents and the information passed from other groups in the nursery. Staff take detailed regular observations of children's learning to assess their progress and plan well for the children's future learning. They plan using themes and the seasons as well as children's interests. The staff identify children's progress according to the stepping stones and know the next steps for learning for each child. They have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage as they regularly attend relevant courses and receive advice from the local authority teacher advisors. Each child has an assessment folder that is available to parents and this includes all their work, photographs, observations and development profiles.

The staff's teaching methods include the use of questions to challenge and support children to achieve as much as they can. Children's knowledge and understanding are extended as staff sit with the children and talk to them whilst they play. The teaching methods retain children's interest and help them to become focused and resist any distractions. The lay out of the premises is such that it is difficult for children to access all the activities on offer simultaneously and this means that children's independence and choice are curtailed. Staff encourage children to think ahead and plan their time so taking some responsibility for their learning. At the beginning of sessions children choose an activity area from the planning board. This has, however, led to

children choosing one area of the nursery and then not leaving that area for some time. This inhibits their free flow throughout the areas and their opportunities to make connections in their learning. Children's behaviour is well managed as staff reward children with praise effectively. They also use reward stickers that the children are very proud to receive.

Children enjoy their day as they enter the nursery with confidence, pleased to see their friends and staff members. They are relaxed and confident about joining in circle times and talking aloud in the group. This a strength of this setting. Children also sit and concentrate quietly, listening to staff and their peers, showing respect for others and interest in their learning.

Children listen and respond with enjoyment and attention to stories, joining in to echo repetitive refrains and asking questions about the story. At the end of the story the book is closed and the staff ask them to tell them the story. Together the children retell the story showing they have paid attention, understand the sequence of events and are confidently able to communicate the story to one another. Children are making a good start towards reading. They are able to pick out their names on labels and recognise individual letters. Children write using paintbrushes forming letters that are in their name and some more able children are able to write their own names on their craft work. Children do not, however, choose to enter the book area to select books as the area is insufficiently inviting at present and this prevents them developing their love of reading and interest in books.

Children use numbers frequently and can reliably count up to and beyond 10, which is well demonstrated as they count during circle time. They count the number of boys and the number of girls and then count everyone so starting to understand addition and subtraction. When a late comer arrives they are able to add one on to the number of children in the circle. They understand about space, shape and measure as they play with measures in the water tray and replace tools at the sand and water tray to silhouetted places on shelves.

They learn about the world as they go out on nature walks as the seasons change and together with staff they make books about the their observations. Children talk about the leaves coming off the trees and how they made paintings with the leaves they picked up. Staff very regularly take children out on trips and recently they have visited an aquarium. Children talk about putting their hands in the water and the creatures they have seen. They enjoy playing in their own aquarium in the role play area. Children use technology equipment when they play with the computer, telephone and CD player. Children confidently describe how the ear phones for the CD player work and where the wires go. Children are confident to use the computer mouse and move objects around the computer screen successfully so learning about how things work.

Children enjoy being creative as they paint freely and gleefully point out their representations of the playground to staff. They also enjoy choosing materials to add to their collages from readily available materials. Children, therefore, are beginning to appreciate the joy of expression.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a clear understanding of inclusion and work with parents and other agencies to support children with specific needs. Children are learning about the wider world and their community. They participate in a variety of activities and experiences that promote diversity.

Children fundraise for children in need so learning about helping other children. They behave very well and are supported by patient, polite staff who model good behaviour for the children to copy.

Parents are made very welcome and their views are important to the setting. The setting regularly asks parents to give their views anonymously using a written questionnaire. There is a good amount of information exchanged about the setting and the children for the benefit of the children and their parents. Parents of all children are provided with a daily diary and this advises them of individual care routines and activities the children have participated in. Parents are very happy with the care their children receive.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The parents of children receiving nursery education advise that they are more than happy with the progress their children have made and with the information exchange at the nursery. Parents are informed of the curriculum and know about the areas of learning. There are information boards that keep parents informed of current activities, regular newsletters that advise parents on how they can promote learning objectives at home and daily written diaries about activities the children have been involved in. Also there are regular open evenings where the staff are available to talk about children's progress.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn about their community and the wider world as they welcome visitors from the local emergency services and other professionals such as nurses. Children help to tidy up toys, listen to each other during circle time and share toys and equipment, showing concern and respect for the people around them. Children are encouraged to take responsibility to help others as they participate in taking turns as a 'VIP' at each session. This means that they help the staff and the other children throughout the session. They wear a badge to show they are special and are invited to be first in any queue as recognition of their role.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the nursery having effective organisational procedures. For example, all staff are qualified or working towards a suitable early years qualification. Training needs are looked at and planned for on a regular basis.

Children are safe as the nursery has systems in place to ensure adults with the children are suitable and there are safe procedures in place to ensure children are supervised well. Discussions with prospective staff members at interview times are not always sufficiently documented to evidence this. There are good deployment and contingency staffing arrangements in place to ensure that children receive the level of care and supervision they need.

Children's welfare is promoted through well organised documentation. Policies, procedures and records are well organised and all required records are up to date.

Leadership and management are good. Staff are working well as a team and the nursery education supervisor and staff participate in regular meetings to meet children's needs. They have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and continually go on courses to keep abreast of developments and to increase their skills. Staff are monitored through appraisal, staff meetings and daily dialogue with the owner. Together they are keen to receive advice and support from the local authority advisors and they act on their recommendations. Currently

they are looking to alter the premises that the nursery education children use to improve their learning environment. The nursery has recently embarked on improving their general performance by becoming involved in a quality assurance project.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was agreed that record keeping be reviewed and that water be made accessible to children throughout the nursery session. Both of these matters have received attention and children's needs are met.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received concerns in relation to National Standards 6, 7 and 14. Ofsted investigated the concerns by visiting the provision on 11 August 2004. Actions were raised and completed by the provider satisfactorily. Ofsted is now satisfied the provider remains qualified for registration.

Ofsted received concerns in relation to National Standards 1, 4 and 8. The Complaints, Investigation and Enforcement Team contacted the provision. The provision provided an investigation response regarding the concerns raised. An inspector also visited the service on 27 September 2007 and actions were raised and completed within one week. Ofsted is now satisfied the provider remains qualified for registration.

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.

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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):

- review record keeping procedures to ensure that there is evidence to support recruitment suitability procedures
- review nappy changing procedures to ensure cross-infection is minimised.

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):

- review the organisation of the reading area to encourage the children's interest in books
- continue to consider the use of space and teaching methods to enhance the continuous play provision so that children's independence and confidence are enhanced as well as their overall learning.

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