The Lighthouse
Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number  EY349272
Inspection date  12 May 2008
Inspector  Rhonda Foster

Setting Address  8 Warwick New Road, LEAMINGTON SPA, Warwickshire, CV32 5JF
Telephone number  01926 427 048
E-mail
Registered person  The Lighthouse Childrens Day Nursery Ltd
Type of inspection  Integrated
Type of care  Full day care

This inspection was carried out under the provisions of Part XA of the Children Act 1989, as inserted by the Care Standards Act 2000
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding. |
| The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding. |

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Lighthouse Day Nursery is a privately owned nursery which first registered in 2003; the nursery re-registered in 2007 because of a change in organisation status. It operates from two floors of a large Victorian town house in the centre of Leamington Spa. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The nursery serves the local area. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 49 children at any one time and there are currently 96 children from six months to five years on roll. Of these 25 are in receipt of funding for early years education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The nursery opens every weekday throughout the year except for bank holidays. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00 hours. Twenty part- and full-time staff work with the children and all of the staff hold an appropriate early years qualification.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children’s health is extremely well promoted. Staff follow thorough and consistent procedures that are documented and shared with parents. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to ensure children's good health is well maintained, such as an exclusion policy for children who have an infectious illness. All rooms, including the kitchen are spotlessly clean and well maintained. Extensive cleaning routines are followed to reduce the possible risks of infection. For example, staff use separate cloths to clean different areas, spillages are wiped up immediately, changing mats are wiped down with antibacterial spray and staff wear gloves when changing nappies. The nursery has achieved a ‘Kinder Heart Heartbeat’ Award from the local authority and following a hygiene inspection from the county council they achieved a gold standard for exceptional hygiene standards.

Children benefit from excellent health and hygiene routines. Staff actively promote regular hand washing through themes, pictures and discussion about germs. Younger children’s hands and faces are carefully cleaned with fresh, clean flannels and staff maintain extremely high standards of hygiene when changing nappies. These thorough and preventative measures protect children from cross-infection and ensure they stay healthy.

Children receive superb care if they become ill or have an accident whilst at the setting. There are correct and appropriate procedures in place. All staff hold a first aid qualification and the well-stocked first aid boxes are readily available for staff to use. There is a designated member of staff with responsibility for first aid boxes and eye irrigation kits. All parental consents are provided and any accidents are comprehensively documented. Records are shared with parents and accident records are evaluated by senior staff to identify any patterns in injuries or hazards in the environment.

Children receive excellent care routines which meet individual needs for rest and sleep in line with parents' wishes. Younger children are carefully placed in comfortable cots to sleep. The temperature of the sleep rooms and sleeping children are regularly checked by staff who are extremely vigilant, recording individual sleep patterns on a sleep chart. As a result, children sleep safely. All children, including babies, have many opportunities throughout the day to play outside and enjoy the fresh air. There is a stimulating outdoor area which is extremely inviting and children enjoy activities such as digging in the construction area, playing with the water tray, riding bikes up and down the path and balancing on beams as part of an obstacle course.

Consequently, children have plenty of exercise and accomplish many new physical skills whilst having fun.

Children’s nutritional needs are given high priority and they have an excellent understanding of a healthy diet. The setting is extremely careful to account for parental wishes and vigilant with individual dietary requirements. The cook is well qualified and prepares wholesome and balanced meals from high quality fresh ingredients such as tuna pasta bake, roast turkey dinner and vegetable curry. Mid-morning snacks and an afternoon tea is also provided. There are additional arrangements for weaning babies which includes carefully introducing new foods so that they become confident in experimenting with differing tastes and textures. Four weekly menus are carefully planned and information about meal choices is available for parents. There are excellent arrangements in place for meeting the needs of children with special diets or allergies to specific ingredients. Fresh drinks are regularly provided and older children are able

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to independently pour themselves a drink from the jug of water provided in their classroom. Consequently, children are well nourished and do not become dehydrated.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a homely, welcoming environment that is very safe, warm and spotlessly clean. The setting is within a converted Victorian building and spread across its three floors are; four classrooms, one craft room, two sleep rooms, two toilet facilities and a well-equipped kitchen. The office and staffroom are in the converted basement. All rooms are extremely well maintained, light and spacious. The classrooms and hallway have been attractively decorated with children's craft work, photographs and information for parents to provide a child-friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Children are able to hang up their belongings on personalised coat pegs and their outdoor shoes are placed on shelves whilst they play indoors.

Children have access to an excellent range of high quality safe and suitable equipment. They are also able to explore natural materials such as pebbles and wood which have been carefully selected by staff. Babies enjoy exploring safe objects in a treasure basket. Classrooms have been carefully planned to provide a cosy and comfortable environment where children can move around easily and select resources of their choice. Toys and resources are attractively presented, promoting children's independence and decision making. For example, babies are able to crawl on the floor and push along toys from a large basket, whilst older children enjoy rummaging through the dressing-up box to find their favourite items. In the pre-school classroom resources are stored in various trays that are clearly labelled with pictures and text. Equipment and toys are routinely washed and checked by staff to ensure that they are safe and hygienic for children to play with.

Children are cared for in an extremely safe environment where staff take positive steps to minimise all potential risks. Effective fire precautions are in place and the emergency evacuation procedure is practised regularly with the children to ensure they know what to expect in the event of a fire. Daily risk assessments are conducted by staff before children arrive and as activities are tidied away. This compliments written risk assessments that cover the whole premises and ensures that children stay safe. Safety equipment is used according to the age and needs of the children attending. For example, safety gates are positioned at the top and bottom of stairs and safety harnesses are placed on babies when they sit in low chairs to eat their lunch.

Children's welfare is protected by knowledgeable and experienced staff who have attended in-house training on child protection and ensure that children are their first priority. A concise written statement, that refers to current guidance on safeguarding children, is given to all parents. This is underpinned by a clear explanation about staff’s on-going duty to protect the children in their care from any potential harm. A designated member of staff who has attended training is responsible for this area. Consequently, the correct procedures can be quickly put into practice should there be concerns raised about a child.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy, settled and involved in a broad range of exciting planned activities and spontaneous events which support their development and overall learning. Warm, trusting and caring relationships between adults and children are evident. Babies are given plenty of

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space and opportunity to move, roll, stretch and explore the colourful environment. Crawling babies can develop their movement skills as they climb across soft play blocks and pull themselves up to stand. They start to recognise things about themselves and discover what they look like in low-level mirrors. Their senses are stimulated through play with wonderful textures such as baked beans. Babies’ needs and preferences are carefully monitored by staff who sensitively respond to them. As a result, they feel emotionally secure.

Toddlers and three-year-olds are encouraged to try out new experiences. They enjoy getting fully involved in stimulating practical activities such as playing with jelly and squealing with delight as they splat it with their hands. Staff work very closely with the children and help them to make connections with other experiences, to recall past activities and encourage them to talk. Considered planning is in place which follows the ‘Birth to three matters’ guidance and children’s personal interests.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have a very clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. The planning covers all areas of learning and incorporates all areas of the classrooms. Each child has an individual learning plan that links clearly to the stepping stones, identifying personal targets on their learning journey towards the Early Learning Goals. Planning is carefully considered and staff assessment of children’s progress is used to inform future planning.

Staff help children to consolidate and extend their learning by using open questioning about what they are doing and can see whilst taking part in activities. Children are encouraged to think and make links in their learning as resources have been skilfully set up to enable children to make connections. Staff maximise on all learning opportunities.

Children’s behaviour is extremely good throughout, promoting an optimum learning environment. The day is paced extremely well and balanced between children making choices about how to spend their time and adult-led activities. Children are purposefully engaged in their play, know the environment well and confidently access resources of their choice from the extensive range on offer.

Children have many opportunities to develop their attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning. For example, they enthusiastically come together to play ‘Greedy Gorilla’ where they learn to identify healthy foods and enjoy feeding ‘junk’ food to the ‘greedy gorilla’. Children are becoming increasingly independent as they take themselves off to the toilet and wash their hands afterwards. They also have access to a refreshments table where they can pour themselves a drink and select a snack. Children are very confident in their early writing skills and use various types of media such as alphabet stamps to print their name.

Children are making very good progress in their mathematical development. They enjoy a broad range of activities which enable them to learn about shape, space and weight. For example, they learn about volume as they play with containers in the water tray and practise counting as part of using computer software. Children are able to be very creative and express themselves through exciting activities such as role play, where they are able to be workmen and dig in the mud looking for worms.

Through messy play children have many opportunities to experiment and observe change. For example, they are able to mix ingredients to make ‘flubber’ which they enjoy squishing through their hands. The staff also effectively use opportunities like this to introduce descriptive
language. Consequently, the children enjoy expressing themselves whilst taking part in stimulating activities that emphasise the process and not the end product. Consequently, children are making excellent progress in all areas of development.

**Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children’s individuality is highly valued and staff nurture children well by providing positive support, praise and close attention. For example, in the baby room staff give babies their full attention, sitting with them as they make eye contact and responding with smiles. The nursery key person system is used most effectively by staff to help children know they have someone caring for them who thinks they are special. Key persons work closely with parents to gain detailed information about children’s needs, starting points and personality. Comprehensive records detail all requirements including parental details. Consequently, all children feel included and their differences are acknowledged extremely well.

Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through a broad range of exciting activities. For example, festivals such as Easter are celebrated where children make Easter bonnets and for Chinese New Year they watch a DVD about China. They are also developing an excellent sense of community as they visit the local primary school to watch plays. Parents are also sourced for cultural knowledge and professions, such as physiotherapist and musician, that can be shared to enhance children’s understanding and learning.

The nursery has an extremely positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff follow a clear policy which reflects the Code of Practice and is specific to the nursery. A designated member of staff has responsibility for acting on any concerns raised about a child’s progress and putting in place a clear plan to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children’s specific needs are comprehensively met, well documented and shared with parents and other professionals. Consequently, children receive the best support and are provided with continuity of care.

Children’s behaviour is very good. Staff are excellent role models. They are calm and patient with the children and courteous with each other. Age- and developmentally-appropriate techniques are used to manage children’s behaviour in accordance with the written statement. For example, the pre-school children get a real sense of pride as they place stickers on a reward chart for positive behaviour and staff praise them all the time. Consequently, they are learning to manage their own behaviour. Children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff have built up close relationships with parents and carers, ensuring that through daily rapport they are able to support parents through children's stages of development. Parents are invited to regularly discuss their children's progress with the key person. Children's individual learning plans include observations and examples of their work and clearly identifies their next step in learning. These records are routinely shared with parents and their comments are included. Parents are given a wealth of information about the nursery and the Foundation Stage through a variety of different methods including, a prospectus, monthly newsletters, key person leaflets, daily diaries, parent notice board and displays of activity plans. The comprehensive policies and procedures are readily available and parents are regularly asked for their feedback. Overall, parents are kept well informed and there are excellent systems in place to ensure there is shared understanding of
children's individual needs, likes and personalities between home and the nursery. As a result, parents are extremely happy about the excellent quality of care provided by the nursery.

**Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children’s care is outstanding due to the high levels of commitment shown by the manager and staff. They are motivated and work extremely well as a team to the greater benefit of the children. Comprehensive policies and procedures are specific to the nursery, reflect current legislation and underpin all aspects of excellent practice. Rigorous recruitment and staff suitability procedures ensure that children are cared for by suitable adults who have a thorough understanding of how children develop. The manager and staff are highly qualified and demonstrate a strong commitment to their on-going professional development. Provision of in-house training provides a wide range of courses that are mandatory for staff.

The manager has a clear understanding of the National Standards and her responsibility to comply with these and the conditions of registration. A comprehensive operational plan underpins all areas of practice and is extremely well organised. Documents and records are effectively organised and stored securely to maintain strict confidentiality.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The manager is also the proprietor, she oversees and monitors the provision very closely. Staff meet regularly to discuss the curriculum planning and monitor children’s progress towards the early learning goals. They work closely with an advisory teacher from the local authority to ensure that the nursery education is evaluated. Staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, working extremely well to form a strong team. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and regularly reviewed. Overall, children’s needs are well met.

**Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

**Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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

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