

# Litcham Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY365492
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 June 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Anne Walker
<b>Setting Address</b>	Litcham Children's Centre, Weasenham Road, Litcham, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE32 2QT
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<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Litcham Childcare
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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](http://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?

Litcham Childcare opened in 2008 and serves the local area of Litcham and surrounding villages. The centre comprises sessional and full day care, a holiday club, a breakfast, lunch and after school club. There are a variety of courses and drop-in support groups for parents, carers and their families. The centre is situated in a rural area and operates from a purpose built building on the same site as the village primary school. The children using the centre have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The centre is open from 07.45 to 18.00 each weekday for 48 weeks of the year.

There are currently 81 children aged from two to eight years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for early education. Litcham Childcare currently supports children with disabilities and additional learning needs. The setting employs eight members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. Two other staff are about to begin training.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are looked after in a clean, bright building where suitable standards of hygiene are maintained to protect their health. Cleaning routines for equipment, furniture and toys help minimise the spread of germs. The children understand the importance of washing their hands regularly. Older children can do this independently while younger children have support from adults who explain and demonstrate good practice for them. Most of the staff hold a current first aid qualification which means that there is always someone with appropriate knowledge to deal with any accidents that may occur. Parents are informed when accidents have happened but have not always signed the accident record to show that this information has been shared with them. A medication consent and record form is in place but it does not require the parent to sign to acknowledge that medicines have been administered. The lack of consistently clear information sharing could compromise the health and safety of children.

The setting has a healthy eating policy which it strives to implement. A wide range of healthy snacks are provided each day. These include fruit cereals and wholemeal bread sandwiches. The children enjoy these choices and eat well. They learn which foods they can eat lots of and which foods are 'treats' and are beginning to be aware of where some of their food comes from through planned activities such as cooking and talking with staff. Parents can choose to purchase a cooked meal or provide a packed lunch for their child. There is some information for parents to help them work with the setting to implement the policy but information about healthy lunch-boxes and where they are stored in the setting, needs developing to best promote children's health. Cooled drinking water is available at all times but pre-school children cannot always reach the clean cups in order to help themselves.

Outdoor play is readily accessible to children in the pre-school and out-of-school care. The young children enjoy being outside in the fresh air. There is a range of equipment to promote their physical skills including tricycles, balance beams, climbing equipment and slides. All these are accessed well and children show increasing control of their bodies and are keen to try new ways of going up and down the climbing frame either using steps or the climbing wall. They show excitement and pleasure at running as fast as they can across the field or moving their bodies to music.

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

The provision is good.

The childcare rooms are well designed and practical to use for children and their carers. Children's independence is fostered within a safe environment. They learn to take themselves to the bathroom because the toilets are directly off the playroom. They wash their own hands and choose additional play materials because furniture and resources are at their level and accessible for them. Indoor and outdoors are linked and children move from one to the other according to what they wish to do. The adults looking after children manage the environment well by having clear roles at each session and deploying themselves between the indoor and outdoor environments so that children are always directly supervised. For both pre-school and out-of-school care, the rooms are arranged so that children have space to move around and play safely. The children's security is given good priority. The building and outdoor spaces are secure with clear procedures for visitors. Childcare rooms are accessed by a coded entry system

and internal doors are on a buzzer release system which children cannot reach. Appropriate systems are in place for taking and collecting children from the adjacent school.

The furniture, play materials and resources are of good quality and in a safe, clean condition. Toys are suitable for the children's level of development. Where there are mixed ages in the out-of-school club, good attention is paid to where items with small pieces are placed and the supervision by adults. Some older children make decorations using small beads and this is done at a high table while younger children are generally at other activities. If they choose to do something at the big table they were always overseen by an adult.

Children's welfare is promoted because the adults looking after children understand their child protection responsibilities. There is a clear policy to guide their practice and details of who to contact if concerns arise are available.

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

The provision is good.

Children demonstrate a sense of ownership and confidence in their environment. Most pre-school children arrive happily, find their friends and immerse themselves in play. Those who need reassurance receive it so that they too are quickly engaged in something they find interesting. Older children arriving at the out-of-school setting, greet staff and other children. They talk happily, while having their snack, about their day or what they want to do. Young children introduce themselves to visitors and ask sensible questions about what that person is doing in their nursery. They have time to select their own choice of play and confidently access other items from shelves and cupboards if they want something different. After school children share ideas for activities in the holidays so that they are active participators in organising how they wish to spend their time.

Sessions provide sufficient time for children to explore at their own pace with adults close by to observe and support them. Children enjoying the dressing-up were keen to have 'wands' so materials were brought outdoors to the dressing-up area for children to make them. They find cars from a drawer and take these into the sandpit having made roads by using a scraper tool to move and shape the sand. Daily routines promote their independence well. At snack time they make their sandwich, cut their fruit and pour their drinks. Aprons are readily to hand and children put them on when taking part in messy activities. Adults plan suitable activities for the youngest children that fosters their all-round development through practical play, for example, when they have cereal for snack they are encouraged to count three spoonfuls to put into their bowl.

Before and after school care is relaxed. Although some play is out and adults plan some activities, they respond to the children's ideas and interests. There are comfortable sofas for them to rest on or read, which makes the room feel homely. They often take part in cooking activities in the adjoining kitchen and space is provided for them to do their homework if they wish.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The adults looking after children work well as a team so that an adult is always on hand to support them where needed. Staff have an appropriate knowledge of the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' and plan activities across the six areas of learning. They build good relationships with children and organise the environment indoors and out in an attractive way which demonstrates awareness of how young children

learn. Consequently, children are interested and keenly engage in all activities that are provided, as well as initiating ideas of their own. Group times are not always as purposeful as the children's independent play. They are sometimes undertaken at times of the day that do not enable them to listen and concentrate most effectively, or ensure that there is sufficient challenge for the oldest children.

The children count and recognise number as they have their snacks, take part in cooking activities, and through interactive games on the whiteboard. Number lines are evident in both outdoor and indoor environments. They explore shape and measure through sand and water play which is always available. The children are developing a small garden and help staff remove the weeds ready for planting. They learn about composting materials and observe whether their strawberries are ripening. Their creativity is fostered through a wide range of media including computer graphics as well as more traditional paint, dough and collage. They enjoy expressing themselves through music and dance as well as role play. They build rockets with construction materials and join with friends to create scenarios. The children have frequent opportunities to mark make with brushes, sand and crayons. Suitable activities help them see writing as a means of communication. They create cards and pictures for 'Fathers Day', making keen attempts at signing their names.

Regular observations are made about children's progress towards the six areas of learning and staff take this information to planning meetings to help them decide what to do next. In aspects of maths and communication, language and literacy, they do not always differentiate sufficiently to provide a range of challenges according to children's individual needs, particularly for the oldest children. Children have good opportunities to re-visit and practise what they know but are not as consistently provided with opportunities which challenge their next steps in learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The individual needs of children are collated at registration and through regular discussions with parents. Staff listen and are interested in children's talk about other events in their life, which helps children to feel valued and secure. There are systems for sharing information between school and the setting. Staff taking children into school after breakfast club or collecting them at the end of the day take account of any events, large or small, which could impact on their enjoyment and ability to participate. A key-worker system provides a link for parents of young children to raise any concerns or day-to-day issues. This helps to ensure that children settle and make the best of what the setting has to offer. There are good strategies in place to support children with disabilities and additional learning needs. The staff work with the parents and a variety of agencies to provide appropriate support so that children access all the activities alongside their peers. There are play resources and activities that develop children's awareness of their own culture and other cultures in order to develop respect for people's similarities and differences.

Children behave well. They understand the boundaries and expectations explained by the adults, for example, how to get on with each other by being kind and sharing toys. Adults are good role models for the children and work consistently as a team so that children know what is expected of them. In the out-of-school care, children of different ages mix well. Younger children are confident in their dealings with older children because the older children treat them kindly and show them respect. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents feel comfortable and confident to share and receive information with the setting and are happy that staff act on any concerns that they raise. Parents are able to influence the running of the setting by becoming a committee member. There is a parent handbook with helpful information about the setting but not very much about the curriculum that is followed. This limits the usefulness for parents of displaying the play planning, as it is harder for them to place it in context. Parents are aware of the 'Learning Stories' but do not regularly look at them, or contribute to them, in order to help staff plan activities which will support children's individual next steps in learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are looked after by adults who have been checked to ensure that they have the necessary skills and are suitable to care for young children. Appropriate systems are in place to induct new staff and volunteers and to appraise staff's skills and training needs. This ensures that the setting keeps abreast of requirements and changes in the childcare field and can support children's welfare and development. Children benefit from the good levels of adult attention as the setting generally exceeds minimum staffing requirements and has suitable strategies for managing staff breaks and illnesses.

All required records are in place so that children's needs are known and their safe care is agreed with parents. Registration documents are comprehensive and state clearly who is responsible for the child and who can collect them. Written consents are requested from parents and there are suitable systems to inform staff where necessary. Daily attendance registers are clear and demonstrate who is present at any given time. They show that registration conditions are being met. Records are stored confidentially so that children and their families privacy is respected. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is good. The manager, project co-ordinator and the committee work together to support staff and ensure that they have sufficient skills and the resources to assist children's play and learning. Regular meetings are held to exchange information and resolve issues quickly as they arise. The staff team plan together and responsibilities are delegated each day so that children are supported in all areas of their learning. Managers use the observations and discussions with the advisory teacher to monitor the quality of their provision and reflect on how to move forward.

## **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 log may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- further promote the good health of children by ensuring that parents always sign accident and medication records to acknowledge an entry and monitor the healthy eating policy to ensure it is fully implemented.

#### 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 the planning of group activities to ensure they meet the needs of the children, are well planned and offer suitable challenges for those taking part
- improve the use of assessments to more clearly identify and set challenges for older children, especially in relation to maths and communication language and literacy
- develop the partnership with parents so that they are more involved in their children's learning and have increased opportunities to share what they know about their child.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)