

Leadgate Child Centre LTD

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY347260
Inspection date	07 August 2008
Inspector	Noreen Elizabeth Appleby
Setting Address	Leadgate County Infant School, West Street, CONSETT, County Durham, DH8 7PN
Telephone number	01207503656
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Registered person	Leadgate Child Centre LTD
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Leadgate Child Centre Ltd is run by a private company, limited by guarantee. It has been registered since 2007 and operates from rooms within Leadgate County Infant School. The children also have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 32 children may attend the setting at any one time. The centre is open each weekday from 07.45 to 18.00, throughout the year, excluding public holidays and the Christmas holiday period. It mainly serves the needs of children from the local community, although some children come from a wider geographical area. There are currently 18 children, aged from birth to four years, on roll.

The setting employs six staff to work with the children, of these, four staff hold appropriate level 3 early years qualifications and two staff are currently working towards relevant qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Good hygiene procedures are implemented by staff. Thorough nappy changing routines are consistently used. Food preparation areas and table tops are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray to minimise the spread of bacteria. Toys and resources are cleaned on a regular basis. In addition, children are learning sound personal hygiene routines as they are encouraged to wash their hands after outdoor or messy play activities, before they eat and after using the toilet. Therefore, present arrangements contribute towards keeping them free from infection.

A sick child policy has been drafted and information is appropriately shared with parents and carers, including notifying them about exclusion periods for communicable diseases. There are suitable arrangements for administering medication to children, including parental consents. Children's health is also supported if they have an accident in the nursery. Management state they ensure there is always a qualified first aider on duty to attend to children's minor injuries, although relevant certificates are not available for inspection. An accident log is maintained in line with regulatory requirements but entries do not always provide a comprehensive record of injuries sustained. Written permission is drafted with parents and carers allowing staff to seek emergency medical treatment or advice for their child, if the need arises.

Staff ensure children have plenty of fresh air by timetabling outdoor play into the daily routines. Children have suitable opportunities to explore natural materials, such as sand and water. They enjoy using a sound range of resources, such as wheeled toys, hoops and balls. They are developing a sense of space as they play with their friends and learn to coordinate their movements. They also have suitable opportunities to take part in quiet activities, or to rest, in line with their individual needs.

Children's dietary requirements are discussed and agreed with parents or carers, in order that any special requirements are suitably met. During term time children have school lunches, whilst during holiday periods staff cook children's meals. Menu plans show that children receive a broad range of suitably balanced, nutritional meals. Menus are currently being developed to provide more freshly cooked foods, thereby contributing more effectively towards children's good health. Children sit together for mealtimes and enjoy chatting with staff and each other about things that interest them. They are learning to feed themselves and to use good table manners. They have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day, which keeps them adequately hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy well organised premises which support their care, learning and play. The playroom provides a spacious environment which is suitably partitioned to provide individual activity areas for older children and a separate play space for babies and toddlers. Play areas are bright and attractive. A broad range of toys and equipment is available within children's reach. This stimulates children's interest and enables them to make individual choices. Children's artwork is attractively displayed, which gives them a sense of pride in their achievements.

Management ensure that the premises and equipment are maintained in good order. Staff conduct daily safety checks and take appropriate steps to minimise risks to children. For example,

concerns about shared use of the outdoor area have been discussed with the management team and staff ensure children's safety and welfare during relevant shared periods. Access to the provision is suitably controlled and closely monitored. A visitors record is maintained and there are appropriate systems for the safe arrival and collection of children. The emergency evacuation plan is clearly displayed. Children and staff practise regular fire drills to familiarise themselves with suitable procedures for keeping themselves safe. Staff use gentle prompts to encourage children to use hand-held tools and resources safely or to move around carefully, indoors and out. Children are also learning to keep themselves safe as they use appropriate road crossing routines when they go for walks with staff.

Children's welfare is adequately prioritised regarding safeguarding procedures. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of issues and they have a satisfactory understanding of how to report any concerns. This is further reinforced through a formal child protection policy, which is suitably communicated to staff. Therefore, sound plans are in place to ensure issues are promptly reported and appropriately recorded, in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery. Staff know their individual routines well and they are attentive to their daily needs. This contributes towards their comfort and care. The children are suitably grouped, according to their individual ages or stages of development. They enjoy a suitable mix of adult-led and self-initiated play opportunities. A relaxed and friendly atmosphere helps them to develop the confidence to form good relationships with staff and peers. Staff demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of how young children learn. They are currently developing a planned approach to support children's learning more consistently, across all areas of their development. They carry out observations which are stored in the child's individual file. However, there is no system for working with parents and carers to establish what children can already do, or to methodically track children's progress. Therefore, children are not always effectively challenged and extended, which results in missed opportunities in their learning.

Nevertheless, children benefit from a broad range of play activities which they enjoy. Babies and toddlers are developing language and cognitive skills as they look at picture books with staff, who promote key words and animal sounds, which some children copy. They are becoming more mobile as they crawl or use push-along walkers to help them toddle around, exploring their environment. Some enjoy building brick towers with staff and they delight in knocking them down. Others tap or shake musical instruments enthusiastically to make a variety of sounds. Older children are developing creative skills as they paint or design their own picture label for their coat hooks. Some enjoy exploring cornflour paste and making footprint pictures. They are developing an appreciation for books as they listen to stories and talk about the illustrations. All children enjoy songs and rhymes. Some join in enthusiastically with actions or repeated refrains, which helps them to develop language and counting skills. Staff allow the children to explore and develop at their own pace, yet they provide appropriate support and encouragement to make the activities enjoyable and fun.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their families are equally valued within the setting. Staff know the children well and strive to meet their individual needs, which contributes towards their continuity of care. They have a positive attitude towards caring for children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. They plan to work closely with parents, carers, agencies and professionals to ensure each child's needs are effectively met. Children have good opportunities to be included and contribute towards the life of the setting. For example, they make individual choices or suggestions about activities they enjoy and they are encouraged to help to tidy up before lunch. This enables them to develop a good sense of belonging. They access a suitable range of multicultural resources, which helps them to learn about diversity and the wider world.

Staff use good behaviour management practices with children. They set and sensitively reinforce age-appropriate boundaries, using clear speech and direction. This helps children to understand what is expected of them. Consequently, children behave well. They are learning to share, take turns and to have consideration for one another. Staff provide encouragement and purposeful praise, which enhances children's confidence and self-worth.

Good working relationships are maintained with parents and carers. An introductory leaflet is given to new families, to identify business arrangements, routines and practices within the setting. Some policy statements have been drafted and others are currently being developed to inform parents of procedures within the setting. The group registration certificate is displayed on the parents' noticeboard along with other relevant information. Staff work with parents and carers to draft children's personal records and contractual information, including several written consents. They use informal verbal updates and diary sheets to discuss relevant issues with parents and carers and keep them informed about their child's learning and care. Comments received from parents indicate that they are happy with present arrangements and that their children enjoy attending the group.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from regular daily routines which are based around their individual needs, such as mealtimes and rests. Premises are well organised to provide children with a safe, stimulating environment and a broad range of toys and resources. Children are happy and settled as they make individual choices and develop the confidence to initiate their own play and learning. Suitable staff-to-child ratios ensure children have adequate support and attention.

Sound recruitment, induction and vetting procedures ensure staff are suitable for their roles. Written contracts, job descriptions and performance management systems are currently being developed to ensure staff are well supported. Basic staffing information is held within the setting, which meets regulatory requirements. However, comprehensive staff files are held within the school office, so information relating to staff qualifications, training and first aid certificates is not readily available for inspection. Staff demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment towards their roles. They are currently developing their knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which they will implement within the setting from September 2008, to enhance children's learning and care.

Suitable recording systems have been set up to support the childcare arrangements, in line with mandatory requirements. The register of attendance, parental contracts, medication

documents and children's personal records are appropriately maintained and basic information is recorded in the accident log. Some formal policy statements have been drafted and others are currently being developed to support the operational plan and identify practices and procedures within the setting.

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

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.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- develop the accident log by clearly detailing any injuries sustained
- improve children's learning and progress by ensuring activities build upon what children can do and ensure they are sufficiently challenged and extended
- continue to develop recruitment and personnel procedures and ensure relevant staffing information is readily available for inspection.

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