

Lexden Lodge Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY307729
Inspection date 09/12/2008
Inspector Sarah Williams

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Lexden Lodge Kindergarten is privately owned and managed. It opened in 2005 and operates from a converted large house in the Lexden area of Colchester, Essex. The premises are easily accessible by ramps and a lift and have facilities on the ground floor. A secure enclosed outdoor area is available and shared by all children.

A maximum of 125 children aged from birth to eight years may attend the setting at any one time. The kindergarten is open five days a week all year round from 07:30 to 18:00. There are currently 216 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age group. The setting also offers care to children aged over five years to eight years. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported as well as those for whom English is an additional language.

This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the childcare register. There are 34 members of staff working directly with the children, 29 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and 7 are working towards a further qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Care and education for children at Lexden Lodge Kindergarten is outstanding. The setting recognises the uniqueness of every child and successfully provides activities and learning opportunities of the highest standard, enabling all children to make excellent progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

The setting actively includes all children and tailors their care to their individual needs. By continuously evaluating and assessing their practice the setting strives for improvement and builds on their established success to give children the best possible start. All aspects of care, welfare and education are very effectively managed.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- consider providing some domestic-style furniture in baby rooms to enable children to pull themselves up and for staff to sit comfortably when feeding or reading to babies.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management at Lexden Lodge is outstanding. Those in charge have exceptionally high aspirations for quality which is evident through ongoing improvement. The thorough and rigorous evaluation of all aspects of the provision and the forward-looking vision and plans for development are testament to the management's commitment to improvement. For example, the outside area has been developed considerably to provide an all-year-round learning environment for the children and there are further plans to develop a 'forest' area where children can be in touch with nature and propagate plants and vegetables, or simply explore and discover.

The partnership with parents is exemplary. Parents have access to high-quality, well-produced literature detailing all aspects of the provision and clearly setting out how they can become involved in their child's learning, development and welfare. Parents have frequent opportunities to express their views and ideas, almost all are very positive in their praise and gratitude to the staff and management in terms of their child's development.

Children's safe care and welfare is of paramount importance and all aspects are considered through day-to-day attention to safety and security aspects and a thorough and sound understanding of safeguarding issues. All documentation, policies and procedures are maintained to an exemplary standard and induction and staff training programmes ensure that all staff are able to provide efficient and high quality care, meeting children's needs. This includes children's healthy development: food and drink is exceptionally well presented and of excellent quality: organic, locally-sourced and seasonal produce is chosen whenever possible and kitchen staff adapt all menus to cater for individual dietary requirements and preferences whilst ensuring children receive a balanced and well-rounded, nutritious diet.

Risk assessments identify areas for attention or maintenance and these are dealt with promptly to eliminate risks and allow children to move about safely. Furniture and equipment is carefully selected to promote children's independence and encourage them to engage with the setting by accessing all resources and play materials as they wish, and to stow their own belongings securely in trays and on coat pegs and cubby holes, promoting a strong sense of belonging.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Lexden Lodge provides exceptional care and education to children in the early years age range. Children benefit from a well-established key person system: meticulously produced development profiles document the children's achievements and progress from the time they begin attending until they leave for full-time school. These contain a wealth of photographs and detailed, sensitive observations which show what children have done as well as suggest the next steps of learning. Parents are fully informed on a daily basis about all aspects of care including food, drink, sleep and play. Activities, designed to help children achieve the early

learning goals, are inspirational. The learning environment is carefully structured to encourage children to learn and develop at their own pace, becoming confident and raising self-esteem in line with their age and stage of development. A lovely example is in the toddler's rooms where, at singing time, pre-verbal children can select a toy as their way of choosing a favourite song which the whole group enjoy. Staff throughout are unfailingly respectful and sensitive when speaking and listening to children, always giving them time to express themselves and have their feelings and needs acknowledged.

Older children are largely in control of their own learning, guided and assisted by staff who remain unobtrusive but supportive at all times. Children make informed choices and decisions about what they would like to do and for how long: they demonstrate excellent concentration and perseverance. Children are seen to be cooperative, for example, two boys become totally engrossed as they create a 'milkshake factory' at the water tray: they discuss elaborate systems of pouring and filling the various containers, experimenting with tubing, funnels and jugs. Children may opt to play indoors or outside and staff are always willing to adapt or abandon plans to incorporate children's spontaneous initiatives, following these through to extract maximum learning. This is made possible because staff have very sound and secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how best to help children learn and develop through play-based activities. All children are included, those who are identified as having additional needs, whether because they have English as an additional language or have learning difficulties/disabilities have excellent support from within the nursery and from outside professional as needed.

All transitions, from children's initial introduction before they begin attending and at each stage as they move throughout the setting are very well-managed. This inspires confidence and reassurance for parents that the children's needs come first at all times. This in turn is reflected in the children's happy demeanour and confident approach to activities and routines: they enjoy lunch time as much as role play or music. Children are helped to become well-rounded and positive individuals with sound foundations and attitudes for their future success and well-being.

Overall, children's needs are exceptionally well met.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.