



Longacre Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY269941
Inspection date	16 November 2005
Inspector	Jane Wakelen
Setting Address	28 Pilgrims Way East, Otford, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN14 5QN
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Registered person	Longacre Childcare Ltd
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Longacre Day Nursery opened in 1998 and operates from a large detached house with two baby rooms on the ground floor, one of which is a sleep room and two rooms on the first floor for the pre-school children, aged two and over. It is situated in Otford, Sevenoaks. A maximum of 19 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 68 children aged from 3 months to 5 years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports 3 children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine staff. Of these, five staff including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and two staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, tidy environment where good hygiene procedures, such as cleaning the changing mats after each child and staff using gloves, ensure children are protected from the risk of cross-infection. Children learn the importance of personal care routines, such as hand washing after using the toilet and painting, through guidance from the staff. They develop personal independence taking themselves to the toilet and washing their hands. Documentation is in place regarding medical records and accidents which ensure parents are kept informed and children's welfare is promoted.

Children are provided with a varied menu of healthy options for meals, snacks and access to drinks regularly throughout the day. They learn to make choices and learn which foods are good for them and why through discussion with staff. Meals are prepared on site and ensure children's dietary requirements are met and their individual likes and dislikes taken into account when planning the menu. Parents' views on the menu's have been sought to ensure the meals remain varied, healthy and meet all children's requirements.

Children benefit from excellent outdoor facilities in the large garden. They have opportunities to plant and dig vegetables, play on the swinging tyre and learn to balance on the climbing frame. They have a choice of large equipment to learn new skills, such as pedals, or throwing balls. They have trees to watch change with the seasons and handle natural materials, such as sand, fir cones and pebbles. Children develop their fine motor skills using a range of tools such as tweezers, spoons for rice and peg puzzles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well protected from hazards because staff carry out thorough risk assessments both inside and outside. Children learn about the dangers around them and how to keep themselves safe through careful, simple explanation from the staff. Good security procedures are in place, such as a password system for the safe collection of children. All visitors are greeted on arrival and only enter when a member of staff answers the door ensuring children are protected from strangers.

Regular fire drills are carried out and recorded to ensure children are taught about the importance of emergency evacuations through careful discussion.

Children have sufficient space to move around and are divided by age groups. They access a range of safe and appropriate resources, many of which are stored on low level shelving to enable children to access equipment independently. Other equipment is rotated to provide children with a change, however, there is insufficient equipment available to meet all abilities and attract children's attention.

Staff have a good understanding about child protection procedures and have attended training, to ensure procedures are adhered to and followed. Documentation is in place and contains the necessary information if any staff have concerns about individual children, thus protecting children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are grouped with their peers into two groups. They develop good relationships with staff and each other, learning to share and take turns. Staff interact well with the children and help them gain their independence in self-care skills such as putting on coats, shoes and visiting the toilet.

The under two's have toys put out for them and are able to access a few other toys from low level shelving. They develop in confidence becoming familiar in their environment, but are not always engaged and interested in their play. They have limited opportunities to explore and experiment, which results in them losing interest in the few activities available to them. Staff are not yet using Birth to Three Matters effectively which impacts on the lack of stimulating activities. The over two's have two play rooms to use, one for general play and the other with Montessori equipment. Unfortunately, the Montessori room is not available at all times due to a lack of qualified Montessori trained staff. Children have limited opportunities to develop their creative and imaginative skills through lack of planned activities which prevents some children reaching their full potential.

All children benefit from regular outdoor play, gaining fresh air and developing their large physical skills, such as balancing, climbing and throwing. They use a good variety of toys to maintain their interest as well as learning about the natural world, such as their vegetable patch.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a fair understanding of the Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to develop plans. However, observations of children's development and progress are not used to plan children's next steps or inform future planning, which results in activities not providing a challenge or meeting the needs of the more able children.

Children are confident communicators and build good relationships with adults and children. They are beginning to identify some letters of the alphabet and are able to

offer words that begin with the letter of the week. Children choose to look at books and use the picture to help identify the story. However, they have limited opportunity to identify familiar words or their name because staff do not use routine practical activities to promote children's literacy skills. Children lack confidence in writing their names and lack resources to encourage mark-making for a purpose, such as labelling their work.

Children are beginning to use mathematical language in their play, such as 'I'm doing the large Thomas puzzle.' and 'let me be first'. They compare objects and look at similarities and differences, such as the fir cones and learn simple estimation, through guessing how many potatoes they will find on one plant. They are able to match, sort and sequence colours, shapes and pots and can name many shapes. Children sing number rhymes and are beginning to recognize numbers by sight but have little opportunity to use number in practical, everyday routines, such as snack time. Children are beginning to understand what items float and sink when playing in the water with an adult. They handle natural materials, such as sand and water and feel the mud when digging in the garden. They enjoy looking at the creatures in the soil, such as the worms and centipede and learn about their habitat through clear explanation from the staff.

Children show enthusiasm when different activities are introduced and show good concentration at self-chosen activities. They use previous experiences to act out roles in the home corner, although due to lack of resources and staff support, they soon lose interest. Children enjoy messy activities and access a range of resources, but many creative activities have an end product, which prevents children experimenting and exploring, learning the different properties of the various materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a sense of belonging and grow in confidence as staff encourage children to settle and participate in activities provided. Staff respect and value children as individuals and obtain full information in writing from the parents, about the child, to ensure their individual needs can be met. Children begin to gain an understanding about diversity in society as they celebrate different festivals and learn about different languages, such as French. They have limited opportunities to learn about people with disabilities due to a lack of resources.

Children behave well and staff recognize and praise positive behaviour. Children understand the expectations and boundaries of the setting and the older children help the younger children to follow the rules, such as sharing toys. Staff work with the children to encourage them to solve disputes on their own and therefore learn to manage their own behaviour; thus ensuring children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Effective systems are in place to ensure parents have clear communications between home and the setting, to ensure children's needs are met and information about their day and events are given to parents in the

form of a daily diary. Parents receive information about Birth to Three Matters and the Foundation Stage and how this will affect their child within the setting. Parents are invited to open evenings to view their child's folders and talk with the keyworker. They receive policies and procedures for the setting which identifies the role of the setting and the care it provides and regular newsletters informing parents about future events.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an organized, homely environment where they have the opportunity to mix with siblings during the day, such as outdoor play in the garden. Routines are very structured during the day, which sometimes impacts on the learning environment, preventing children having time to finish their activity. Several times during the day all the children are grouped together, which impacts on the care of the children in a negative way, especially after lunch, when new children are arriving and feeling quite vulnerable in the busy environment.

Children are kept safe because staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff have an effective induction programme and have regular appraisals to monitor their progress and are encouraged to attend training courses to further their personal development.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the nursery and has a clear understanding of her responsibilities. She reports to the co-ordination team, who aids the manager in her role and provides support for staff cover, training and administrative tasks. Several new staff have recently started at the nursery and effective monitoring systems are in place to ensure the practice meets regulations and the Foundation stage and Birth to Three Matters framework are fully implemented in the nursery. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider has followed the previous recommendation regarding developing staff's knowledge of child protection procedures and arranged training for all the staff. This ensures children's welfare is promoted at all times.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004, there has been one complaint relating to National Standard 2: Organization about the inappropriate organization and deployment of staff, National Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play and National Standard 5: Equipment about insufficient resources and activities for the children, National Standard 4: Physical Environment, about the inadequate temperature control throughout the year, National Standard 8: Food and Drink about meals being poor quality and insufficient amounts and National Standard 11: Behaviour about the inappropriate behaviour

management. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit and found no evidence to substantiate the complaint regarding National Standards 3, 4, 5, 8 or 11. However, staffing levels did not meet National Standard 2 and an action was set to ensure staffing ratios and qualification requirements were implemented and maintained. The provider has completed an action plan to address this action. 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):

- provide a good range of resources for children to experiment with and explore, to further develop their understanding, imagination and creativity
- develop staff's understanding of Birth to three matters framework, to ensure children under three have a stimulating and varied programme of activities

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):

- ensure staff understand fully what children are to learn from the activities provided and that they provide extension and a challenge for the more able child
- ensure observations and assessments of children's progress are used to plan children's next steps and inform future planning
- use everyday, practical routines, to promote children's confidence in their literacy, writing and numeracy skills.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk