



The Learning Tree Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY224261
Inspection date	12 October 2005
Inspector	Gillian Cubitt
Setting Address	Calley Down Crescent, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 0EG
Telephone number	01689 800 780
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Registered person	The Learning Tree Pre-school
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 good. 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?

The Learning Tree Pre-school opened in 2002. It is located within the child care annex of Rowdown Primary School. The Pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 59 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes funded 3 and 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The Pre-school supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The Pre-school opens five days a week during the school terms. Sessions are from 08:45 until 11:15 in the morning and 12:15 until 14:45 in the afternoon. Children can also attend the lunch club.

There are seven full and part-time staff work with the children, of these two have a relevant early years qualification and five staff are working towards a recognised child care qualification. The Pre-school receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership(EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a good selection of healthy meals throughout the day, they look forward to fruit as part of their morning and afternoon snacks. Children willingly wash their hands before going to the snack bar where they sit down and share bananas, pears and apples. A three-week meal plan ensures children, who stay for a midday meal, have a nutritional balance and variety. These are fresh each day, taking into account each child's specific dietary needs. Some children prefer to bring their own lunches and, although staff do not have any input into the contents of children's lunch boxes, they encourage them to eat savoury before their sweets. Drinks are available throughout the day and children help themselves to the drinks dispenser when they are thirsty.

Staff lay the foundations for children to learn good hygiene practice by establishing good daily routines. Children observe staff clean tables before and after lunch to minimise the spread of germs and they use antibacterial wipes to clean the faces and hands of the younger children.

Children have plenty of fresh air as they run and play games in the outside play area, which is freely accessible to them throughout the day. Children also have comfortable armchairs where they sit and relax to look at books or just observe their friends. Staff provide a range of physical and stimulating play experiences and children enjoy extending their inside play to outside, especially in their craft activities and other imaginary games such as building space ships from crates. Children know that they have to protect themselves from the varying climate. They put on hats in the summer and when it is chilly, they help themselves to their coats.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff operate to strict safety procedures which ensures that any risk to children is minimised. Children have the freedom of well planned, balanced play areas where they are free to explore and investigate their toys and activities in a safe environment. Staff make children aware of the necessity to walk whilst inside to prevent accidents. Children listen attentively and observe the rules as they queue before leaving one room to another. Children know that they have to be careful when

moving outside equipment such as bricks and crates as they try out new ideas in their physical play. Staff however are vigilant in their observations and continuously supervise children whilst having fun with their outside activities.

Children are well protected by informed staff who have clear policies to follow for child protection. They give children's welfare their first priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are contented and happy. They smile as they come into the building and greet staff before they eagerly set off to look for new activities that are displayed. Children develop their confidence as they happily play with their friends. They choose age appropriate activities such as water play, painting, small world toys and outdoor equipment. Staff draw upon their knowledge of Birth to Three Matters framework to provide variety for children under 3 years, however this is still in the early stages and staff are not yet using it in their daily observations and planning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. All children make progress through access to quality materials and resources. Staff prepare planning which ensures children have plenty of activities available; this, together with the variety of resources, nurtures children's positive attitude towards learning. Many children show interest in the water canal where they see how water flows through pumps, watch boats float and other materials sink. Staff make the most of the seasons to raise children's awareness of changes in their environment as colours change and leaves fall. They enjoy collecting leaves and comparing different textures as they work on their leaf rubbing exercises. Outside, children enjoy activities that promote their skills both in climbing and running. Staff chalk lanes on the play surface and children recognise numbers as they choose a lane to participate in a race with their friends. They also take their creative skills into the garden area as they make space ships with crates and build houses with bricks. Paints of various colours are freely available for children to create their own designs using brushes or their hands to make patterns. Children develop their social skills as they chat with staff and friends during the buffet snack time; they also like to participate when staff read stories where staff question children effectively so children begin to understand and relate to events. Staff make regular written observations on what children do, although this is not always effectively linked to future planning for children's individual needs. As a result, staff occasionally miss opportunities to extend children's learning appropriately especially when children become engrossed in their free play activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff welcome children as they enter the pre-school which helps them to settle and look forward to their day. Children develop good relationships with their peers as they

share their toys and participate in games. Through accessing plenty of resources that depict different cultures and needs, such as dolls, puzzles and books, children learn about diversity. Staff welcome children with special needs and work with outside agencies to ensure that children's needs are met. Staff also help children to be aware of others by setting good examples of behaviour and children respond appropriately, saying thank you when they are offered snacks and meals. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral and cultural development.

There is a satisfactory partnership with parents. Parents see their notice board in reception and know where to access information such as menus and policies, although they do not have easy access to weekly planning. Parents have daily contact books which help with the continuity of care. However, parents' do not share their knowledge of what their children do at home which limits the two-way partnership to support children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision of resources and systems to ensure that pre-school children make progress is sound. Staff follow clear policies and procedures which ensures children's wellbeing and safety. Daily routines are set in place with the aid of the operational plan which helps children to feel secure and to settle quickly as they know what to expect in their group activities and play.

Leadership and management are good. The committee oversees the running and organisation of the pre-school. They support the current manager and staff in their roles to provide children with a safe, secure and a stimulating environment. Staff are clear on their individual roles of responsibility as well as their duties within the team. Through appraisals, staff are encouraged to take part in training opportunities to improve their knowledge in childcare and development. They actively participate in training for Birth to Three Matters framework and the Curriculum Guidance for the foundation stage. Staff are constantly improving their methods in recording and updating their skills in observations. At present they make many observations on children and prepare targets for children's next steps in their learning. However this occasionally loses focus, as targets do not always link directly to observations made. Staff however plan an effective free-flow play with a comprehensive range of activities that are appropriate for all children's ages and abilities. As a result, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were six recommendations from the last Children Act inspection in 2004. These were to improve safety by displaying the fire evacuation plan, making effective use of the risk assessment and organising space so children can move around easily. They were also asked to obtain written permission from parents when seeking medical advice and the manager was asked to have a named member of staff who is responsible for behaviour management.

The committee prepared an action plan detailing how each recommendation would be met. The space within the pre-school has now been re-organised and staff have a clear fire evacuation plan displayed. Risk assessments are carried out each day. Parents are now asked to give permission to staff if the need arose where urgent medical advice is required. There is now a named member of staff for behaviour management.

The last education inspection resulted in four key issues. These were to evaluate the large group story time and the grouping of children, looking at children's individual needs especially during transitional periods during the day. They were also asked to make modifications to their role-play area and improve the programme for mathematics. An action plan was prepared and time scale set to work on these improvements. Story time is now split into two groups based on age and ability. This means that the children enjoy their story time more. Children are now more aware of numbers as they are seen throughout the nursery and staff include counting as an everyday activity. The role-play area is now more resourced and it is linked to the current theme so children can extend their learning. The daily organisation and grouping of children has been re-evaluated so children have worthwhile activities during transitional periods of the day.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last Children Act inspection there has been one complaint in June 2005. This related to National Standard 13, child protection, when staff failed to notice an injury to a child's eye and they had not made any record of the injury in their incident book. An Ofsted inspector made an unannounced visit in July and found that on the day staff had not followed their usual reporting procedures, although generally their methods of recording were acceptable. As a result, a recommendation was made for staff to update their knowledge of child protection and to ensure that correct procedures are maintained when recording incidents. Staff prepared an action plan which revised staff's awareness of child protection and the recording of incidents. The provider remains suitable 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):

- develop planning and observations for children aged 2 to 3 years in line with the framework of Birth to three matters
- involve parents in the programme of healthy eating so that they can participate when preparing packed lunches

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):

- improve staff's observations on children's activities so that they are able to link their notes on what children do with the next steps in their learning
- use targets effectively to extend children's knowledge by effective questioning in their free-flow play activities

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