

The Learning Tree

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Lesley Sharples

Setting address Unit 7, Whitehills Business Park, Whitehills Drive,
Blackpool, FY4 5LW
Telephone number 01253 699599
Email checkmate@dsl.pipex.com
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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 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.

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Description of the setting

The Learning Tree nursery is privately owned and was registered in December 2005. It operates within a purpose built setting in Blackpool, situated on a business park. The nursery serves the local and wider areas. The setting is on two floors with the under two's based in two ground floor rooms and older children in three rooms upstairs. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the nursery, incorporating a separate area for younger children.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It operates each weekday, all year round, apart from Christmas Day and Boxing Day. It is open from 7.30am to 6.30pm and children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. Registration is for a total of 124 children. There are currently 91 children attending who are all within the early years age range and occasionally offers care to children aged over five years to eight years. The nursery provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds and supports children with special educational needs/disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

There is a staff team of 17 practitioners including the manager and Early Years Professional. All have appropriate childcare qualifications apart from one member of staff who is undertaking NVQ Level 3. There are also three support staff who do administrative work, cook and housekeep. Advice, support and training is gained from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are making rapid progress in their learning and development, totally supported by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff. Their individual welfare and safety is mostly assured within an inclusive environment where their uniqueness is valued. Partnership with parents and others is very strong. The staff team are energetic, motivated and committed to continuous improvements through self-assessment, which have a positive impact for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- carry out a full risk assessment for each type of outing, to identify hazards and minimise risks to children (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

28/01/2011

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- - further develop learning and development opportunities within the outdoor play spaces.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded as the designated staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities relating to any child protection concerns. There are robust procedures for the recruitment of staff and suitability checks completed and recorded as required. All documentation is in place in relation to records and these are well maintained and organised. Children are kept safe and secure on the premises, as there are stringent measures taken. For example, regular reminders are sent out to parents about not letting anyone enter the setting without a member of staff present to check them out. However, risk assessments for each type of outing are not completed, which is a breach of the welfare requirements.

Self-evaluation is effective and takes into account the views of others, including staff and parents. Areas for improvements are identified and worked towards, such as the outdoor play space, which evidences the leadership's ambition and drive to continuously strive for excellence. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been fully implemented, which contributes to better practice. They are working towards the Lancashire Quality Award and invest heavily in the developing professional needs of the staff team, both on degree courses and in-house training. As a result, staff take pride in their work and this is reflected in the children's high achievements. Indoor play spaces are inspirational, extremely well-organised to maximise learning opportunities and reflect the attention given to ensuring an inclusive setting for children and families, promoting equality and diversity throughout. Equipment and resources are expertly and attractively arranged to enable full and independent access for children of all ages. The deployment of staff and the improved key person role means that individual children's needs are fully met.

The setting works hard in establishing positive relationships with parents and carers and other settings where children attend. Parents speak in glowing terms about how much their children love the nursery and express their gratitude in many thank you cards. They know their child's key person and have full access to their child's learning journeys. Special evenings are arranged to as well as having open days where parents are invited to see how staff implement the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents are invited to contribute by bringing in recyclable items and share home experiences and news via home-link sheets, some bringing photographs of celebrations and days which are put on display boards. Activities can be taken home to continue the learning, should parents wish to.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are extremely happy in this nursery and are making excellent progress in their learning and development. The staff team are all qualified apart from one who is currently studying. They have a full understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use documents well to support children's learning. They are led by an Early Years Professional who totally supports the staff and researches widely to make continuous improvements in children's learning. Children's learning journeys are a joy. They commence with full information from parents about their child's starting points in an attractive format and this continues throughout. Observation, assessment and planning for next steps is fully monitored so all six areas of learning are covered equally. Fully annotated examples of children's work and photographs illustrate the written observations. Planning is guided by identifying what activities will help children progress, which results in maximising children's potential.

Children really enjoy exploring their bright, visually stimulating and interesting learning environment. Babies can reach interesting mobiles, have a wealth of choice in treasure baskets to discover and can easily access books in a cosy area. Technology begins at an early age with simple, programmable toys and older children use the computers with confidence. This supports their future social and economic well-being. There is a clear balance of adult-led and child-initiated play which promotes independence and choice. Children choose to make a railway track and staff sensitively support them. They persevere when problem solving how to fit their train onto the track. Staff continually encourage and praise their efforts whilst introducing vocabulary and suggestions to develop children's thinking and learning, for example, 'where is the yellow one?' Themed areas make learning fun and purposeful such as the building site with diggers and bricks and hard hats. Creative development is thoroughly enjoyed and supported by well thought out resources to develop their imagination, especially when making three dimensional models. Although a windy and wet day, children are encouraged to enjoy outdoor play and to dress appropriately for this activity. They gleefully run about, choosing bikes to ride on, playing games that develop children's cooperative skills and happily show how they can easily ascend the climbing wall. Opportunities for language development are included outdoors with 'talking flowers' where children can converse with each other through microphones. Children learn about living things as the nursery has a pet hamster and flowers and produce are grown outdoors.

Children's good health is promoted very well. Children show competence in following self-care routines such as washing hands and there are effective procedures for preventing cross-infection. For example, hygienic practice when changing nappies and thorough cleaning schedules. Children enjoy sitting together in the dining room and have named placemats, tablecloths and flowers on the tables. They eat freshly prepared meals cooked on site. Snacks include exotic fruits such as water melon and pineapple and they freely access water to keep hydrated. Children feel safe as they enjoy secure relationships and established routines.

Older children learn about keeping safe through prompts for discussions and photographs which show nice hugs. They learn from the police who come to talk about stranger danger and road safety. A display in the entrance area informs parents and supports further partnership working. Children are happy and confident; they use lovely manners and their behaviour is exemplary, which contributes to establishing firm foundations for their future.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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