

# The Learning Tree- Sissinghurst

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspector** Sue Taylor

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**Type of setting** Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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 - Sissinghurst is one of two privately owned nurseries. It opened in 1998 and moved to its current location in the grounds of Sissinghurst Church of England Primary School in 2011. It operates from a purpose-built building and children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. It is open each weekday from 9am to 12 noon and until 3pm on Tuesday and Wednesday, during school term times only. There are plans to open on Monday afternoons from January 2012.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children aged from two years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 28 children in the early years age range on roll, most in part-time places.

The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are six members of staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification at level 2, with the manager and a member of staff at level 4. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children settle quickly into the child-centred environment where their individual care needs are met well. Overall, the systems in place and positive links with parents and others support children's learning. Children make good progress in an extremely well resourced nursery. The staff team are very confident about what they need to do to develop further and demonstrate a good capacity for continuous improvement.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- strengthen the involvement of parents and others in contributions to the development records and in supporting individual children's next steps.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

The staff are fully aware of the effective procedures in place for identifying any child at risk of harm and liaising with the appropriate people. Appropriate written

policies shared with staff and parents, enable all to be well-informed of the nursery practices. The thorough recruitment process helps ensure that adults are suitable to work with children with Criminal Records Bureau checks obtained. The child-friendly premises are secure and safe, supported by risk assessments and daily checks.

The staff team regularly review the nursery's self-evaluation document. It shows a good awareness of the nursery strengths. Decisions on areas for development are clearly made with the aim of improving outcomes for children. For example, there are firm plans to introduce a computer programme to improve the monitoring of children's achievements. Processes for managing the performance of staff and for their professional development are used exceptionally well. The owner/manager is very successful in inspiring the staff team and effectively communicates outstanding ambition and drive. Morale is very high with a very strong belief in the nursery's success.

The staff have a good knowledge of each child's background and needs. This helps ensure children's care and learning needs are met well. Each child's key person is fully aware of their individual progress, with the records in place enabling the identification and narrowing of any achievement gaps. There are some resources and activities that support children in gaining positive attitudes and behaviours towards people who are different to themselves.

The nursery environment is very welcoming with a layout that encourages children to make exciting choices about their play. They can go to the toilet when they need to or play outside when they want. The extensive and interesting range of resources is made easily available to all children. Children's outcomes in their learning are clearly attributed to the excellent use of these resources, including the effective deployment of staff. Children clearly benefit and thrive as a result of the setting they are in.

A highly positive relationship with parents and carers is well-established helping staff meet the needs of each child's. The views of parents and children are valued. They are well-informed about their children's achievement, well-being and development. However, they are not routinely engaged in supporting their child's next steps, enabling them to make effective contributions to the assessment processes.

Partnerships with others are well established and make a good contribution to children's achievement and well-being. Where children attend other Early Years Foundation Stage settings, there is regular communication. As a result, the staff are able to support and promote children's continuity of learning and care. Additional support is sought for individual children when this is recognised as a need.

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

The staff's good practices and knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage supports and promotes children's learning and development. Key persons have a good awareness of where their key children are in their learning, identifying and supporting their next steps. The enthusiastic staff team create an atmosphere that actively encourages children to want to get involved in activities. As stated in the nursery's own self-evaluation record 'children enjoy their learning and this can be seen through high levels of wellbeing and involvement.' Planning includes children's choices, free play and adult led activities with key persons being responsible for ensuring individual learning and development needs are supported.

Children engage in a wide range of physical activities, both indoors and out, increasing their understanding about the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Outdoor play is very popular with good space for energetic play and using ride on toys. The artificial grass means that children can go out in most weathers and the created 'mound' with its tunnel and slide is imaginative. Children's creative development is encouraged with free painting or craft work. Some children show sustained interest in following a music and movement CD to the end after others have moved on to another activity.

Children play games such as 'What's the Time Mr Wolf', supporting their numeracy skills. Children are beginning to readily recognise letters and numbers in different situations. They share books with their friends or a member of staff, and most listen intently to stories being read or on the CD player that they operate themselves. There is a wide range of books for children, although the organisation is not the most effective to promote easy self selection or aid easy finding of a favourite. Children's keenness for exploration and investigation is a strength of nursery. A range of different interesting items, both man-made and natural, are easily available. Children spend time looking to see how things work and move. As a result of the excellent resources and staff support, children's progress in obtaining skills relating to information and communication technology is developing well. Overall, children are very well equipped with the skills they need in order to secure their future learning.

Children bring packed lunches and parents are requested to provide ice packs to prevent these spoiling, particularly in warm weather, as there is no cold storage. Children benefit from being able to access drinking water when they want from the low level water fountain. The snack bar is popular with children enjoying a range of healthy foods. In particular they like to try the foods they helped grow outside such as tomatoes.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They willingly share toys and resources with others or take turns, showing good cooperation skills. They engage in some activities and experiences, which help them value diversity and respect other people's differences. All children show a strong sense of belonging. They are confident and settle well, displaying positive levels of confidence and self-esteem. Children know what is expected of them and can demonstrate a clear

understanding of how to stay safe as they play. They practise fire drills and use a range of tools such as scissors safely.

## 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

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

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
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