

Lynton Childcare Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY257288
Inspection date	28/02/2008
Inspector	Alison Edwards

Setting address	85 Shilton Road, Barwell, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE9 8BP
Telephone number	01455 444110
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Registered person	Lynton Child Care Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

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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 provider must give a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must give a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Day Care and Childminding (inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 No 2300 Regulations 5 and 6).

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

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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?

Lynton Childcare Limited opened in 2003. It operates within designated areas of a residential semi-detached premises on the outskirts of Barwell in south west Leicestershire, serving the local community.

The nursery is registered to provide full day care for 18 children under eight years and offers nursery education to funded three- and four-year-olds. There are currently 33 children aged under eight on roll, including 10 funded children. School-aged children aged under 11 also attend before and after school and during the school holidays. The setting opens from Monday to Friday throughout the year within the hours of 07:30 to 18:00. Children attend a variety of sessions.

Children are based in three inter-connecting playrooms of the ground floor, with shared access to a further room. A cloakroom with toilet and nappy-changing facilities is available on the ground floor, with additional access to a first floor bathroom as needed. Office, meeting and staff cloakroom facilities are provided on the first floor, with kitchen facilities on the ground floor. There is an enclosed rear garden for outdoor play. A cat and cockatiels are kept on the premises as pets.

Including the proprietor and the housekeeper, there are currently nine regular staff. Of these, four hold relevant early years qualifications at level 3 and two hold qualifications at level 2.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy varied home-prepared main meals including nutritious ingredients such as fresh vegetables, so helping them to develop an appetite for healthy foods. For example, a toddler shows appreciation of a pasta bolognaise sauce including tomatoes and celery by holding out his plate for a third helping and older children talk about their favourite ingredients in a mixed salad. Morning and afternoon snacks also routinely include fresh and dried fruits and low fat and salt items such as rice cakes, again helping to contribute to a balanced diet. Hygienic arrangements are in place for the preparation of milk feeds. Provision of varied fresh vegetable purees helps to ensure babies are offered a healthy and nutritious weaning menu. Drinks such as milk, water or dilute squash are offered throughout the day, helping to ensure children take sufficient fluids.

Children are cared for in clean and well-maintained premises, so helping to maintain their health and well-being. Regular use of the large, secure garden for up to an hour every morning and afternoon enables children across the age range to benefit from extended periods of outdoor play in the fresh air. Staff follow hygienic nappy-

changing procedures to help minimise risks of cross-infection, such as using disposable aprons and gloves, together with disposable paper covers for the changing station. Older children begin to show growing awareness of their bodies and how to keep themselves healthy, for example as they talk about the need to ensure they have clean hands to stop germs getting into their tummies, or about how they feel after they have been exercising.

Good arrangements are in place to ensure staff are able to act in children's best interests in the event of any accidents or sudden illnesses. A rolling programme of training ensures that the majority of staff always hold a current first aid qualification and first aid supplies are accessible throughout the nursery, so helping to promote effective management of any accidents. Clear arrangements are in place to ensure that parents are aware of the need for exclusion of children with contagious or infectious illnesses, and to obtain clear written instruction for the use of any medication. Parental written consent is sought to enable emergency medical assistance to be obtained, thus ensuring any more serious incident can be dealt with effectively.

Children across the age range regularly participate in varied activities to promote their physical skills. Babies and toddlers develop their dexterity as they pat balloons, twist or press knobs on activity toys, or clap their hands together in simple action rhymes. They are helped to sit securely with padded baby nests and begin to explore moving in different ways as they slither and climb through a low tunnel or slide. Older children show growing hand-eye coordination as they scoop and pour sand, or as they manipulate pencils and brushes with increasing control. They develop their large movement skills as they move in response to different types of music, negotiate an obstacle course, or run and jump freely in the garden.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are usually settled and relaxed in the designated areas of this residential premises, where use of three inter-connecting base rooms and an additional central room, provide sufficient space for them to play, eat and relax. Suitable arrangements are in place to minimise the risks of children leaving the premises unsupervised because the front door and an additional security gate are kept secured, with access via a buzzer system. A stairgate is used at the base of the main stairs, so enabling staff to manage children's supervised access to the additional first floor bathroom facilities. Furnishings, such as cots, low tables and chairs and accessible storage units, are of good design and quality, enabling children to use them safely and comfortably. However, available space and furnishings are not always effectively used to best support children's play and learning at all times. For example, current lunch and teatime arrangements require toddlers to move out of their larger base room into the smaller baby room whilst additional tables, sometimes carried through from the pre-school children's room, are set up and then subsequently moved back. This, therefore, regularly disturbs the flow of many children's play and activities for a

significant period of time each day.

Detailed risk assessments are now in place to underpin arrangements for children's safety, for example with regard to arrangements for the storage and use of cleaning materials, or for children's use of the garden. These underpin a range of sensible precautions which are taken to reduce potential hazards to children, such as the use of door slam protectors and electrical socket covers. Staff are sufficiently familiar with the identified procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency such as a fire, or a child being lost, to enable to act in children's best interests in such circumstances. Staff help older children begin to gain an understanding of some simple safety issues, for example as they talk with them about the reasons for not wearing trailing aprons or dressing-up clothes when climbing, or as they use stories such as 'Red Riding Hood' to touch on aspects of 'stranger danger'.

Staff recognise what child abuse and neglect mean and are aware of what to do in the event of any concerns about a child in order to safeguard their welfare effectively. However, the current child protection policy lacks clarity regarding the procedures to be followed in the event of any child protection allegation against a member of staff. This potentially limits the nursery's ability to manage any such incident in children's best interests.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children across the age range are settled and contented within the setting. Babies are often actively engaged in their play, for example as they handle cause and effect toys. Staff working with younger children use materials related to the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure babies and toddlers have a balanced range of experiences helping to promote their confidence, relationships and skills. For example, they develop their physical and communication skills as they are encouraged to respond to different facial expressions and develop a sense of their own identity as they explore mirrors and reflections. Staff are caring and affectionate in their dealings with children, so helping them to feel recognised and valued as individuals, for example as they respond sensitively to children's vocalisations and gestures during nappy-changing routines.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning for the nursery education programme is satisfactory. Senior staff are knowledgeable about the areas of learning identified in the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. They use this knowledge to develop a useful long-term programme of activities and experiences, linked to themes such as self-care, living things or stories, which provide generally balanced coverage across all areas of children's development. Short-term planning is helpful in identifying how specific stories, activities and experiences can be used to support particular learning objectives. Staff make use of ongoing observations of children's activities and stage of development to assess their progress. They are continuing to develop confidence in using this information to ensure that their short-term plans are

well matched to children's individual learning needs. Children are usually relaxed and confident in their dealings with staff. However, children's behaviour is not always managed well to ensure that they fully understand what is expected of them, or that they are actively encouraged in purposeful and sustained learning. Resources are not always used to best effect to promote children's sustained and independent learning. For example, some books are damaged and others are not well suited to children's stage of development.

Children are often sufficiently assured and confident to play independently or in small groups. For example, individual children enjoy experimenting with handling paint in different ways, whilst two children play together sorting out the money and flowers in the florist's shop. Children usually use equipment and play materials appropriately, for example as they use small tools to scoop sand and water, or as they fit plastic bricks together carefully. However, on occasion, some children quickly become restless during group times, so distracting other children from purposeful participation. Children are occasionally given confusing messages about what is expected of them, for example when a child engrossed in making chalk pictures is told by one member of staff that she can continue with this whilst other children go outside and is then almost immediately asked by another staff member to get ready for outdoor play.

Children readily talk to others on an individual basis about their experiences and needs, for example when a child describes her bed shaking in the previous night's earthquake, or when another asks a staff member to help her take off her coat. They sometimes begin to use language for simple explanations and ideas, for example when they observe melting ice, or talk about where the water that they put in the flower pot yesterday has gone to. Children show care and interest when handling good quality books which are made available to them at specific times, but make less independent use of the poorer quality books currently displayed in the book trolley. They are frequently encouraged to use purposeful mark-making and writing, for example within their pretend play. They begin to learn about rhythm and sound, for example as staff introduce structured clapping and rhyming games with them.

Children often independently use numbers in their play and conversation, for example saying that five currant buns cost £6, or telling a staff member that they love her '135 metres'. They sometimes independently begin to use number names in sequence to begin to count and sometimes use terms such as 'more' and 'less', for example when comparing different coloured cars parked on a road layout. They begin to compare and combine numbers in practical ways as they sing a variety of number songs, such as 'Five speckled frogs', or as they sort and group plastic animals by size or colour. They begin to learn about shape, pattern and size as they build with various construction sets and cardboard cartons, or as they sort clean socks by pattern and size.

Children undertake a variety of activities helping them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They begin to learn about their neighbourhood as they visit local facilities such as the school, library or shops. They learn about aspects of other cultures and the wider world as they taste foods from Greece or India,

dance to Chinese music, or dress in Indian clothes. They observe and explore how different substances behave and change, for example as they handle melting ice or make banana milkshakes, and begin to learn about aspects of the natural world through an 'autumn walk' or by observing spiders or caring for a snail. They become familiar with everyday technology as they use swipe cards in a till or as they use simple electronic toys. They are introduced to aspects of design and construction, for example during an adult-led activity to fold and fasten a Chinese lantern. However, resources such as hole punches, treasury tags, sticky tape and rubber bands are not consistently accessible to fully extend their independent exploration of construction and joining techniques.

Children enjoy acting out simple experiences such as buying or selling flowers or buns within role play areas. They sing a wide range of different action songs, respond to different types of music in dance activities and use musical instruments from different cultures. They enjoy freely using paint, chalk and crayons, for example as they mix different colours of paint together and begin to talk about how they relate to the colours of the pots of daffodils and primulas on the craft table.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are calm and affectionate in their dealings with children, so helping them feel included and at ease. Children are usually relaxed in their daily dealings with others, for example as younger babies smile and gesture as staff change their nappies. Children across the age range are able to exercise choice between a selection of activities at most times of the day, although current arrangements for meal times restrict the scope for younger children's free activity before and after meals. Older children are encouraged to develop growing independence in some routine tasks, such as changing their shoes or beginning to pour out their own drinks. Children begin to show growing recognition and care for others, for example when a pre-school child brings a bunch of artificial flowers to another child who has been briefly upset. However, children occasionally become very noisy at mealtimes, so potentially disturbing younger or more timid children in the group. Children are usually occupied and busy with their free-play and activities, for example as older children enjoy making models with dough, twigs and leaves. However, pre-school children occasionally lack clarity about what is expected of them at particular times, for example whether they are all expected to join in adult-led circle time, or to get ready to go out to play at the same time.

Staff pay careful regard to information about children's specific care and dietary needs, so helping to ensure children's individuality is recognised. Children across the age range are helped to recognise and understand their own identity, for example as babies explore their reflections in unbreakable mirrors, or as older children paint their own self-portraits and talk about their individual features. Some resources, such as play figures with different skin tones or mobility aids, are in use to help children recognise and respect individual differences. Children participate in some activities helping them become aware of different cultures and beliefs, for example with

regard to the traditions related to Chinese New Year. The setting has successful experience of supporting children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff are familiar with the value of close liaison with parents and other relevant agencies to promote inclusion in such circumstances. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Prospective parents receive a useful prospectus providing information about arrangements for children's care. A programme of preliminary visits enables new parents and children to become familiar with the setting and its staff. Throughout the nursery, daily diary sheets provide useful information about children's care and learning experiences, so providing useful written information for parents supplementing their informal discussions with staff. Newsletters and displays provide additional useful information about issues relevant to children's care, such as staffing changes, forthcoming nationally-agreed developments in early years provision and planned experiences for children and their learning intentions.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Newsletters and informal discussion with staff provide parents with some background information about the funded nursery education programme. Daily diaries and plans displayed within the playroom provide useful information about current themes and activities, with brief explanations of how these help support children's learning. These usually include details of some of the books and rhymes which are being used, so enabling parents to use these at home with their children if they so wish. Parents receive an informative written summary of their children's progress at regular intervals. Staff are currently exploring ways of introducing more systematic opportunities for staff and parents to review children's progress and the identified next steps in their learning to supplement existing informal discussion on arrival or collection.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who have undertaken robust clearance procedures and a systematic induction programme. This helps to ensure staff suitability and their understanding of their responsibilities for children's welfare. Effective use of regular supervision meetings and annual appraisals enable staff to identify individual skills and interests and ways in which they can develop these further to meet children's needs more effectively. The setting gives high priority to encouraging staff's professional development and works very closely with local training providers to support this. As a result, staff at all levels are confident in accessing relevant training to enable them to develop their childcare skills and knowledge. For example, newer unqualified staff members participate in apprenticeship schemes or intermediate level training, whilst a senior staff member is completing training for Early Years Professional Status. Staffing is organised to ensure that high adult-child ratios are maintained within the premises at all times. This helps to ensure there are effective contingency arrangements to maintain supervision of children in the event of any

sudden emergency or unexpected time spent with parents. Accessible and well-organised policies are in place, effectively covering most aspects of children's care and helping to ensure staff are able to act in children's best interests in most circumstances. Required documents, such as daily registers and children's personal and contact details, are methodically maintained and readily accessible, so helping to underpin the management of children's care effectively.

The leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. The setting is keen to make use of available mentoring and advisory services provided by the local authority, and readily participates in a local early education forum in order to keep abreast of current developments and practice. Staff undertake some very useful evaluations of the effectiveness of particular activities and events in supporting children's learning. Staff and management also draw up an annual development plan to identify priorities for overall continued development, for example with regard to specific aspects of staff training or planning systems. However, internal monitoring and evaluation is not yet fully effective in focussing on how well the provision meets children's needs and in pinpointing effective ways to enhance children's experience and learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of day care a number of recommendations were made to improve practice. The provider was asked to conduct a risk assessment, ensure detailed accident records were kept, ensure strategies were in place to assess staff skills and ensure hygienic nappy changing practices were maintained. The provider was also asked to ensure there were appropriate activities and resources to promote equality of opportunity and to manage mealtimes to enable children to develop their social skills. The provider was also asked to ensure there was a suitably qualified deputy and to ensure observations were used to plan activities and play opportunities to support children's individual development.

Detailed risk assessments and accident records are now in place, so helping to underpin children's safety. There is now a qualified deputy manager and a regular staff supervision and appraisal programme is now in place, so helping to ensure that staff are skilled and competent in their roles. Staff now carefully follow hygienic procedures during nappy changing, including changing their disposable gloves and the paper cover on the changing station between each child's nappy change, so helping to minimise risks of cross-infection. Resources such as play people with different skin tones and mobility aids, together with activities reflecting different cultures and beliefs, help to introduce children to aspects of equality and diversity. Throughout the nursery, staff make frequent observations of children's activities and skills and refer to help ensure that the planned programme of experiences and activities helps to meet children's developmental needs. Children begin to develop some social skills, such as handling cutlery or pouring out their own drinks at meal times. However, the current arrangements for meals do not fully promote children's social development. This is because younger children's free choice and purposeful activity is limited whilst one of their playrooms is rearranged before and after lunches and teas; noise levels are sometimes very high when all children are grouped

together in one room for meals, so potentially disturbing younger or more timid children. A further recommendation has therefore been raised relating to the arrangements for mealtimes.

Complaints about the childcare provision

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action to meet the National Standards. 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.

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 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):

- ensure the child protection policy reflects current national guidance with regard to the procedures to be followed in the event of any allegation against staff
- review use of indoor play space to ensure children have sufficient scope for free movement and varied activities, particularly with regard to arrangements for toddlers before and after meal times.

The quality and standards of nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- establish clearer and more consistent expectations for children's behaviour to more actively promote their purposeful and sustained engagement in both adult-led and child-chosen activities

- ensure children's learning across all areas is effectively promoted through ready access to high quality and stimulating resources, with particular regard to a range of small tools and fastening materials to promote children's awareness of design and technology, and to story, rhyme and factual books.
- further develop the use of internal systems to monitor and evaluate what it is like for a child at the setting and pinpoint effective ways to enhance children's experiences and learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2473) which is available from Ofsted's website:
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