

The Learning Tree Nursery & Kids Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400124
Inspection date	17 April 2007
Inspector	Ann Doubleday / Josephine Ann Northend
Setting Address	Behind Carlton Miniott Community School, Carlton Miniott, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 4NJ
Telephone number	01845 526478
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Registered person	The Learning Tree Nursery & Kids Club
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Learning Tree has been registered since 1994 and is sited in two mobile buildings at the rear of the primary school in Carlton Miniott. The facility is managed by a voluntary committee of parents. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery and Kids Club at any one time. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round.

There are 91 children aged from two to 11 years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local and surrounding areas. The setting supports children with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. The nursery receives the support of the Local Authority and they are currently working towards the North Yorkshire quality assurance scheme.

There are six members of staff working with the children. Most of the staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's physical development is supported well, with opportunities to play outdoors each day. Children enjoy the out of doors and use a range of appropriate resources including wheeled toys, tyres and large crates. They also have opportunities to take part in creative and imaginative play outside. Children can rest or be active according to their individual needs. They are beginning to learn the importance of good hygiene through daily routines. Children are encouraged to wash their hands regularly before meals and snacks and after using the toilet, and understand why they need to do so. However, they cannot access soap independently, this means good hygiene practices are not fully promoted. Staff set a good example as they use protective gloves during nappy change procedures. This prevents the spread of cross infection.

Good standards of cleanliness are maintained to ensure children are cared for in a warm, clean environment and the effective use of a sick children's policy prevents the risk of spreading infection. Parents are very aware of the policy in place. Procedures are in place for the recording of accidents and medication. However, the accident record for the Kids club does not fully promote confidentiality as there is more than one recording to a page and the medication records are not signed by parents to acknowledge the entry. These procedures do not fully promote good practice. First aid requirements are met, as two members of staff hold a relevant first aid qualification and one is always on duty.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet through the promotion of healthy snacks. Staff are aware of and meet children's individual dietary needs. All children are offered fresh fruit each day. Drinks are available throughout the session on request, but can not be accessed independently, this means that children who do not ask may remain thirsty. Children bring a packed lunch and these are stored appropriately, this ensures food remains fit to eat.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and welcoming environment where their art work is displayed. A risk assessment is undertaken and most risks are identified and minimised. There is a health and safety statement in place. There are clear fire procedures displayed and a fire drill is practised regularly with the children. However, one of the exits in the second building is not always kept clear and the smoke alarm in this building is partially obstructed by a display. This means children are not fully safe in the event of an emergency.

Children can independently access a good range of developmentally appropriate resources, which are well-organised in child-height furniture. There is a clear uncollected child policy in place and the security of the main childcare room is appropriate. Visitors to the centre are monitored and a visitor book is maintained. This means children's safety is promoted.

The welfare of children is protected. Staff have a sound understanding of their role and responsibilities under child protection and have completed child protection training. There are child protection policies and procedures in place which are shared with parents and staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery, they arrive happy and settle well. They are making good progress. Close and caring relationships with staff increase the children's sense of trust. They are beginning to develop positive relationships with each other. Communication skills with children are well supported through good adult to child interactions. They encourage them to talk about what they are doing and sensitively support their language development.

Staff have a sound understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are using it well to plan an interesting and varied range of activities and for the assessment of children's progress. This means children's personal, social and intellectual development is well fostered and supported. Activities and play opportunities are purposeful and developmentally appropriate resulting in children being motivated and interested. Children's self esteem is developing as a result of the staff encouraging and praising them and valuing what they have to offer.

Children that attend at the beginning and end of the school day are integrated well into the setting. They have snack when they arrive after school and then settle quickly to their chosen activities. They are involved in the decision making, for example, as they choose what activities they wish to participate in and talk positively about what they like to do at the Kids Club. A plan of the activities for the out of school is in place for school holidays and includes outings to local places of interest.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. They enjoy their time at nursery and achieve well because staff use their good understanding of the early years curriculum to provide appropriate challenge for all children. Staff have received some Foundation Stage training and are confident in the delivery of the curriculum. A broad and balanced range of activities are planned across all six areas of learning in order to meet children's individual learning needs. Assessment records which link children's progress to the stepping stones are in place, and are dated to show children's progress. The manager is currently responsible for the assessment records and knows the next steps for children's learning. Staff use good questioning skills to challenge children and further extend their thoughts and ideas. They involve themselves appropriately in children's activities and offer good support and praise to them. However, the use of time is not always managed well, as children have to sit and wait for long periods when they are all grouped together.

Children are confident in their play and learning. They are generally well behaved and learning to share and take turns. They have good relationships with staff and are developing their relationships with each other. Children talk about their own families and are developing a good understanding of other cultures and beliefs. They learn about the local community through the use of interesting resources, visitors to the setting and planned activities. They know the days of the week and confidently describe features of the weather.

Children are developing their communication skills; speak confidently and clearly, ask simple questions and initiate conversations. They are encouraged to talk about what they are doing. Their communication skills are supported well by staff, who use good questioning to support children's learning. Children are linking sounds to letters well as they use jolly phonics and recognise the initial letter sounds of their names. They are beginning to develop their writing skills in the mark making area; they hold pencils correctly and form recognisable marks and

letters. However, mark making is not extended to other activity areas. Children recognise their own name and the names of some of the other children in the group. They listen and participate well at story time.

Children show curiosity and persist for extended periods of time at activities. They show good interest in their environment and living things, for example, they care for plants, and make a swamp from soil and water. Children use their senses to explore a variety of materials, for example, as they describe the texture of clay. They construct well, often with a purpose in mind, for example, as they make stairs from bricks. Children are developing some good self-care skills. For example, they learn to wash their own hands and pour their own drinks. However, they do not access their own drinks or soap in the bathroom independently. They are developing a secure knowledge of health and bodily awareness, as they understand why they need to wash their hands before eating and know they need to put on a jumper when it is cold outside.

Children move around safely and confidently, they use tricycles and scooters well and competently balance on beams. They are developing good levels of hand and eye coordination as they handle small tools and equipment such as paintbrushes and scissors. They are developing a good sense of space as they sit together on the mat at circle and story time and negotiate wheeled toys in the outdoor area. Children use programmable toys confidently and have regular access to computers. They are developing their understanding of number and count reliably up to ten and beyond by rote. They recognise some numerals and use simple problem solving in every day activities and number songs. For example, as they add and take away objects and work out how many they have now. Children are beginning to recognise and name simple shapes and are using size and positional language well.

Children use their imagination well in their play. They sing spontaneously at times throughout the day and join in their favourite songs. They have regular access to musical instruments and use them rhythmically. Children recognise and name many colours and mix them to create other colours. They have good access to a range of creative resources.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed and staff ensure resources are readily available. Children learn about the local community as they take part in some outings within the local area and receive visitors to the setting. Planned activities are undertaken and a good range of resources are available reflecting other cultures and races. For example, children have celebrated Chinese New Year and joined with the school to learn about the African culture. This helps increase children's awareness of diversity and develop a positive attitude to others. The staff's understanding of each child's needs is used well to encourage a sense of security and belonging. There is a clear special needs statement in place and there is an identified special needs co-ordinator who has received relevant training. Children with physical disabilities are integrated well and all children are included in activities.

Children are generally well behaved and polite in response to the expectations of staff. There is a clear behaviour management policy in place which promotes the use of positive behaviour management strategies. Children are learning to share and take turns. Their understanding of right and wrong is increased through the gentle reminders they receive from staff. This means children's spiritual moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the two way sharing of information about their needs and daily routines. Parents information is displayed on a notice board, they receive a newsletter regularly and have access to the settings policies and procedures. Parents are involved in the initial assessment of their child within the Foundation Stage curriculum. They receive weekly written feedback and a report at the end of the term. Parents receive written information about the Foundation Stage and are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Space is laid out to support play opportunities for children, which contributes to them being happy and settled. Children are able to move around confidently and independently. They initiate their own play and learning well. Adult-to-child ratios are met and there is a key worker system in place. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. There are robust staff recruitment and vetting procedures and clear induction procedures in place. This ensures children's welfare is safeguarded.

Most of the required documents are in place and are stored confidentially. However, as the children's record sheet has recently been updated, some of the consents from parents have been omitted, for example, consent for outings and for seeking medical advice in an emergency is no longer included. Most policies and procedures are in place, they are shared well with staff and made available to parents to appropriately promote the welfare, care and learning of the children. However, the written child protection policy does not include the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good and promotes the children's learning. Most of the staff have early years qualifications and all staff have a sound knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum. The management promotes staff attendance at relevant training. The knowledge gained by staff is used to enhance children's care and welfare. Staff appraisals are undertaken annually and regular staff meetings are held. This enables the manager to identify the strengths and weakness of the provision. She is enthusiastic and a good role model to the staff team. She has a strong understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and promotes the achievement of all children. Consequently, children's progress towards the early learning goals is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure hygiene routines followed by the children are extended to include hand washing before snack time, to develop the complaints policy to include Ofsted contact details and to extend the uncollected child policy to include lost children.

Hygiene procedures have been improved as children now wash their hands before snack time. However, the complaints policy does not include Ofsted contact details and a lost child policy has not yet been fully formalised.

At the last education inspection the provider agreed to improve the way the area outdoors is used so that children have activities throughout the year which will promote all areas of learning and to increase opportunities for children to improve their large motor skills. They also agreed

to improve opportunities for children to be creative in a spontaneous and undirected way and make snack time a more meaningful experience for children.

The outdoor area is now used to promote many areas of learning, for example, as children have access to creative and imaginary play outdoors throughout the year. They now have many opportunities to improve their large motor skills both indoors and outdoors.

Children now have opportunities to be creative in a spontaneous way as they access the messy play area independently. Snack time has improved as the children are now involved in taking turns to give out the snack and to pour their own drinks.

Complaints since the last inspection

A complaint was received on 08/11/2004 in relation to National Standard 1, Suitable person. The provision cooperated fully with Ofsted and agreed to meet actions set to ensure National Standards were met. 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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 medication records are signed by parents to acknowledge the entry and accident records for the Kids Club promote confidentiality
- ensure fire exits and smoke alarms are kept clear at all times
- develop policies so that the uncollected child policy includes procedures in the event of a child being lost; the child protection policy includes procedures in the event of an allegations being made against a member of staff and include Ofsted contact details in the complaints policy. Also obtain written consent from parents for seeking emergency medical advice and for taking children on outings.

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):

- increase the opportunities for children to use mark making in every day activities

- further develop staff's use of time, when children are in a large group, in order to minimise the amount of time they spend waiting.

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 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk