



## Lake Street Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY316991
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 April 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Jan Leo
<b>Setting Address</b>	Lake Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX1 4RP
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<b>Registered person</b>	Lake Street Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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](http://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?

Lake Street Playgroup is a committee run group which registered at its present site in 2005 after operating for approximately 35 years from another location. It is registered to accept up to 24 children from 2 to under 8 years and currently has 44 children on roll. Of these, 10 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The group supports a number of children who have English as an additional language.

The provision serves mainly children of families living in the Grandpont and New

Hinksey areas of Oxford. Sessions operate from 09.30 until 12.00, Monday to Friday, term time only. The playgroup area is purpose built and includes a kitchen, toilet facilities and office leading directly off the main activity room. There is a secure garden area for outdoor play.

Six staff work with the children on a full or part time basis, four of whom have, or are currently studying for, a nationally recognised qualification to level two or above. A parent helper rota is used to provide children with additional adult support.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because they follow good practice regarding hygiene, benefit from varied refreshments, and have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. For example, they wash their hands frequently, needing only minimal supervision; help themselves to water whenever they are thirsty; and run about outside for part of each session, weather permitting. A large number of staff and helpers have first aid training to enable them to care for children effectively if they are injured. Staff record all accidents to keep parents and carers up to date with their children's health issues. Staff have a clear nappy changing policy for young children and they change children discretely to preserve their dignity. Snack time is very sociable. Children sit together, along with staff, and talk about their preferences as they eat fresh and dried fruit, breadsticks and other nutritious foods. Children choose their drink from options that cater for their particular needs, and all staff are aware of individual dietary requirements. Staff insist all children have some time outdoors to run around and build their stamina. Children learn to keep warm on cold days by wearing their coats and they recognise their own needs by drinking extra water after periods of exercise.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children receive a high level of supervision to ensure they play safely and use resources sensibly. Staff make very good use of adult helpers to provide children with additional support, and they provide very clear information about the tasks these helpers can undertake. Deployment of helpers is not always fully effective to ensure unchecked adults work alongside the checked and cleared staff. Staff carry out daily risk assessments, both indoors and out, to identify and remove hazards before children arrive. As a result, the environment and resources offer children a well-maintained and welcoming space where they can play and develop safely. Children have ample space to move around and spread out without hampering other games and the staff constantly review the layout to ensure it suits the children who attend. Staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and know what to do if they are concerned about a child's welfare. They keep reference material handy to remind themselves of the referral process should they need it.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

All children and their families are welcomed on arrival to ensure children settle quickly. Children rapidly find something to do from a wide choice of activities prepared before they arrive. The children mix well with others, regardless of age or gender, playing harmoniously together and alongside each other for the majority of the time. They successfully develop their own games involving anyone who wants to join in. Some take pleasure in bathing 'baby' scrubbing hard to get the doll clean, while others flee as an imaginary lion chases them. Children talk about what they do to show they are making their own choices. For example, one young child took a brief ride on almost all the cars and tricycles to try them out saying 'the tractor', 'the truck' as he moved from one to the other. All children build strong bonds with the staff and welcome staff involvement in activities. The staff routinely join in play to develop games and ensure children enjoy their day.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children learn mostly through practical activities and free play originating from their own imagination. Staff join in to extend ideas and reinforce what children know. They respond enthusiastically to what children do and say, praising children's achievements and efforts. As a result, children are confident, eager to learn, and enjoy trying everything on offer. Whilst children enjoy interesting and varied activities covering all areas of learning, some areas lack sufficient challenge for the more able children.

Children build strong relationships with the staff and most separate easily from their carers on arrival. Children enjoy talking freely about their home life and special occasions, sharing information with adults and their peers. They listen carefully to instructions, willingly help clear up before snack, and enthusiastically try things for themselves to develop their independence. For example, even the young children find and don their own coat at playtime, and wash their hands thoroughly with little or no assistance. Children are beginning to understand the concept of numbers and count as a group as part of the routine. Some successfully count small numbers of objects accurately on their own, and most use numbers that are important to them in conversation and in free play. The number line is limited, including only numbers one to five, and staff only use small numbers for most counting activities. This hampers early recognition of larger numbers. Children enjoy story time as a group and listen very well. They enthusiastically join in discussion about the story when staff link it with current affairs, and they show interest in what others say. They take turns in conversation and speak clearly and confidently. Children have easy access to basic mark making equipment and some children use this, without prompting, to name their artwork. Some writing equipment boxes are empty and children are not routinely encouraged to practice their early writing skills in either planned or free play activities. Children learn more about the wider world and their local community through topic work based on current events. The staff link areas of learning to the topics to make activities more relevant and help reinforce what children know. For example, the children enjoy decorating crowns and hearing about the princess and the pea around the time of the Queen's birthday, and they show interest in pictures of the Queen's

family and her childhood. Children have access to a computer and use resources in free play to reflect modern life. Some successfully control the mouse to work through interesting computer programs choosing for themselves what to select or move. Music is a regular part of the weekly routine with opportunities for children to sing circle and action songs as a group, sometimes accompanied by a visiting guitarist. They confidently ask for their favourite songs and some remember the words well. All join in with actions enthusiastically and considerately control the volume of sound when one said he does not like noise. Children freely organise their own games using their imagination. Children move well both indoors and out regardless of what activity they participate in. They develop their strength and coordination by pedalling cars and tricycles without steering into people, climbing without falling, persevering until successful at kicking a ball, and pushing carts together to share the effort. Most children enjoy playing outside and make the most of every opportunity to go outdoors. The deployment of vetted staff limits the use of the outdoor area resulting in its use for only part of each session.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children develop a positive attitude to diversity because they learn to listen to, and respect, other people's opinions. All children receive the time and attention they need to feel part of the group and they benefit from a wide range of opportunities to learn about the wider world. Staff follow a fairly rigid routine to help those with English as a second language understand what to expect, and these children settle in quickly. This set format for the day restricts spontaneity to some extent. Staff work closely with children to assess their individual needs and introduce ways to help them join in easily. For example, the staff label resources with words and pictures to help children learn where equipment lives. The provision offers facilities for people with mobility problems and staff have a sound understanding of how to access extra help for children with special needs. Most children mix very well, form friendships with many different children, and behave considerately towards their peers. Tiredness occasionally overcomes some of the younger children towards the end of the session but staff act promptly to control the situation and avoid disrupting others. Staff support each other effectively to offer consistent messages. They act as good role models and as a result, children generally behave very well. The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff welcome adult helpers, giving clear instructions as to helper's duties, and they utilise their skills by involving them in story time, helping with the daily routine, and supporting children at activity tables. Parents and carers very much enjoy their involvement and welcome the chance to learn more about what their children do. Staff provide clear and comprehensive information about the operational practice in the provision, the stepping stones and Birth to three matters framework. All information is easy to locate and follow, apart from child protection information, which is available on request.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children enjoy a varied programme each day and settle quickly because they receive a high level of support and attention. Staff spread themselves around the main activity room to enable them to see all areas and offer the support each child needs. They join in activities to increase children's enjoyment of the day. The room layout varies regularly to enable staff to find what works best for those attending, and staff constantly review day-to-day practice to raise standards. The leadership and management of the provision are good. The staff, committee and parents work exceptionally well together to provide children with the same good quality care and learning opportunities in times of staff absence as they get normally. New staff undergo a thorough recruitment process and effective induction to enable them to be of value as soon as they start work, and parent helpers are very well utilised. Unchecked adults, however, occasionally work in rooms with restricted view making supervision by vetted staff difficult. This compromises the children's welfare. The committee carries out annual appraisals and regular supervision of staff, encouraging the continuation of training and development in order to keep standards high. Staff and management routinely review the policies and organisation of the group to ensure practice remains effective. All documentation, required by regulation, is clear and in place. Planning is currently under review to improve its value in monitoring children's development.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable. (Care)

Lake Street playgroup had a nursery education inspection at the last setting and four points were raised for consideration. These were to develop mathematical work in everyday situations; provide more opportunities for children to practice mark making; improve records of achievement to help future planning; and to develop the staff's confidence to extend learning opportunities for children.

The group has introduced some counting into the daily routine and numbers are used in a variety of practical activities such as putting candles on birthday cakes, and waiting for a turn at the rocking horse. Children now use low numbers with increasing confidence. Children have access to some mark making equipment at each session but the literacy corner is less interesting than other areas of the room and does not attract the children. Staff do not actively promote mark making and this has been addressed by a new recommendation. Staff currently record children's progress in an ad-hoc fashion, which results in there being no clear record of children's rate of progress. As a result, there are insufficient challenges for the more able children. Again, this has been addressed by a new recommendation. Some staff changes have been introduced resulting in a higher level of confidence among staff. Staff are continuing their personal development by attending relevant training and they share new skills to extend the education programme. All now confidently join in play to develop children's ideas.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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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):

- deploy adults more effectively to ensure that children are never left alone with unchecked adults and to give them more opportunities to choose where to play (also applies to nursery education)

### **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):

- promote children's early writing skills by ensuring they have easy access to a wide and interesting range of mark making equipment and frequent opportunities to practice mark making in both free play and organised activities
- improve children's progress records to provide a clear record of children's rate of development through the stepping stones and enable suitable challenges to be built into the curriculum

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