

The Learning Tree

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 309724
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Inspector Wendy Fitton

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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 was first registered 1998. It is the only facility operated by a local limited company. The setting is situated in a quiet village close to motorway links and the town of Ramsbottom, Lancashire.

A maximum of 20 children between the ages of two and eight years may attend at any one time. The facility offers out of school care and preschool care on a sessional basis. It is open each Monday and Friday from 9.00am to 1.00pm and each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.00 to 3.00pm for children aged two to four years during term time. The out of school facility is open from 7.45am to 9.00am and 3.15pm to 6.00pm during term time and for some full days during main school holidays. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 90 children, on the register, of which 23 are in receipt of government funding for preschool education. Some children over the age of eight years also attend. The facility currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The facility employs eleven members of staff. All of which hold appropriate early years qualifications. Support is gained from the local authority and the area special needs support worker.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well cared for in a highly stimulating and child-centred environment. The welcoming environment is fully inclusive and reflects the children's backgrounds, communities and family lifestyles. Exceptional organisation of the educational programmes which reflect rich, varied and imaginative experiences, meet the needs of the children exceedingly well. There are excellent partnerships established with both parents and carers and effective links to other providers and professionals, to meet children's welfare and development needs. The system for evaluating the quality of the provision is very effective. Challenging plans are in place for the future, to strive to maintain continuous improvement and to retain the high quality of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continue to promote the effectiveness of the provision, the future planning to secure improvements to bring about further outcomes for children and retain the high quality of the organisation.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are protected and safeguarded through the exemplary policies and procedures that are in place which ensure those working with children are safe to do so. The pre-school's safeguarding policies are effectively implemented, and staff know their role and duty in keeping children safe from harm. There are robust recruitment and selection policies and all staff have clearances that maintain children's safety and well-being. Staff are experienced and qualified and have been employed with the organisation for a number of years. Children are safe and secure in the premises and the deployment of resources is highly effective. There are comprehensive risk assessments and detailed health and safety practices. The quality and provision of safe and suitable furniture, equipment and toys are excellent. There is active involvement from all staff to discuss and share their ideas, and to continue working towards the visions and values of the provision. Management continually reflects on what is provided and strive to maintain the high quality of the provision through staff training, changes around the environment and continual self-reflection. The pre-school recognises their strengths and areas to develop; and has responded positively to previous recommendations relating to staff training in safeguarding.

Partnerships with parents and other professionals are exemplary. Important information is gathered from everyone involved with children in order to meet their individual needs. During the term before children go to school teaching staff visit the children and observe them in the environment; and transitional documents are shared. There are strong links with the area special educational needs coordinators and liaison with speech therapists, health visitors and all agencies who may be supporting a family. There are effective links with early years teams and the pre-school has achieved the Step into Quality award. Therefore, children are fully supported and their overall needs are met. The pre-school works well in partnership with parents and they are fully engaged in all aspects of the organisation. For example, open mornings are planned to discuss children's learning and development. Parents and staff liaise on a daily basis and discuss routines and activities. Parents access all the policies and procedures, they are warmly greeted and given an information brochure to help them feel secure and reassured about the service. Information boards display local community information, staff photographs and planning and activity information. Parents comment positively about the pre-school and think the provision is fantastic, that children laugh and have fun and that staff are approachable, warm and friendly; therefore their children feel secure and settled.

Children and families feel a very strong sense of belonging as they are fully included in all aspects of the environment. The pre-school provides for a wide range of families from varied backgrounds, cultures and religious beliefs and responds to individual families' interests, needs and requirements. The environment, resources and activities are adapted and changed along with procedures to meet all medical, dietary and health needs. Children learn about

equality and diversity through the provision of dolls, figures, books and posters.

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

Staff have excellent knowledge of the learning and development requirements. They really value and support children's learning through exceptionally well planned activities and experiences. The planning of the learning environment is linked to the six areas of learning with free access to continuous provision throughout the day; both inside and outside. Staff respond effectively to the information provided by parents and plan for individual learning needs and interests. Each child is assigned a key person to be responsible for their development, routine care practices and liaison with parents. When children start to attend the setting staff gather information from parents about the child's needs and interests. Staff take into account cultures, family lifestyle, language and any special needs. From this information staff provide opportunities and activities to engage and involve the children. Staff observe the children during their play and initiate the planning as they talk to the children during circle time. Children are encouraged to bring things from home and ask parents to contribute to the planning process. Staff observe all children throughout the day and use these observations to focus on an area of learning and development. Observations are evaluated and included in children's learning stories and a future learning need is clearly identified.

Children are thoroughly engaged and interested in what they are doing. They talk to staff and each other throughout their play. They ask questions and listen to open questions that challenge their thinking and learning. The whole of the environment is print enriched, with lots of labels on objects, displays and everyday furniture. Children recognise letters and words and develop their language and literacy skills. They recognise their own names on coat pegs, drinking bottles and on their own art work. Children explore and investigate different textures and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They touch and feel natural materials on the interest table, with twigs, pods and pine cones. They find out about different family lifestyles and cultures as they celebrate Chinese New Year, try different foods and make presents to celebrate the festival. Children develop their social and personal skills through extremely positive relationships with adults and children. They play cooperatively, are fully engaged, interested and motivated in what they are doing. Staff fully support and encourage the children and place themselves around the room at the various activities to focus on children's learning and development. Children's creative and imaginative play is enhanced through the provision of stories, dressing up, role-play toys and access to craft, messy and malleable materials. Children creatively use construction toys as they make their own animals and people from the various shapes and sizes. They problem solve and find out how things work through activities with calculators, telephones and computers. They explore the glow boards as they highlight objects to study and observe. Children use sellotape and magnetic numbers and shapes in the office area. They develop their physical skills through the provision of daily outside opportunities. They use wheeled and ride on toys;

they climb and balance on the slide and the obstacle course and dig in the garden area.

Staff are fully committed to providing high quality care, which actively promotes the children's knowledge and understanding of safety and healthy lifestyles. This develops their skills for the future and enables them to make a positive contribution. Children are provided with a healthy balanced diet of various snacks and drinks. Outdoor play features daily and children exercise to music and take part in dancing activities. Children learn about health and hygiene as they talk to the dentist and follow good hygiene procedures during routines for hand washing, using appropriate cutlery and plates. Children understand the importance of keeping safe and are currently learning about transport and road safety. Children participate in regular fire drills and learn to be safe indoors by not running about, using the toys and equipment in a safe manner. Children are safe in the setting and feel safe because the environment is warm and caring. Children can move freely and safely and are confident with their key person. Children's behaviour is managed in a way that supports their understanding of what is right and wrong and in accordance with their individual ages, stages of development and understanding. Staff cater for children's interests all the time and deal directly with any issues in a positive way. Staff stay calm and give good explanations, allowing the children to voice an opinion. Children learn to share, take turns and negotiate their ideas during their play. Children are really praised and encouraged for efforts and achievements and given responsibilities when they take home the pre-school bear, for the evening, to look after.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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