

The Lanes Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Amanda Jane Tyson
Setting address	Community Centre, Breech Lane, Walton on the Hill, KT20 7SN
Telephone number	01737 814207
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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*.

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Description of the setting

The Lanes Kindergarten is privately owned and originally opened in 1990. The setting operates from three halls within the community centre in Walton on the Hill in Surrey and there is a secure outdoor play area. There are no accessibility issues. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 40 children aged from two years. The pre-school is open each weekday, during term time only. Opening hours are Monday and Tuesday from 9am to 3pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9am to 12.15pm.

There are currently 25 children, aged from two to four years on roll. The kindergarten supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Four staff, three of whom are qualified to Level 3 in early years and one who is working towards the NVQ Level 3, work with the children.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting's capacity to maintain continuous improvement is exceptionally well demonstrated by the remarkable progress that has been made since the last inspection, which raised six actions to meet regulation and which have all been met in their entirety. Children's safety is prioritised and the environment is superbly organised and resourced to provide inspiration and challenge to each and every child. Equality and diversity is highly promoted. The level of engagement with parents is developing at a rapid rate. This, along with high levels of liaison with children's other early years providers, outside agencies and the local community, along with the knowledge and skills of the staff team, provide for children to make superb progress, from their starting points, towards the early learning goals.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- build on the current initiatives for encouraging parental involvement in the process of observation, assessment and planning for children's learning programme.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a secure environment by a team of fully vetted, suitably experienced and qualified early years practitioners. The team's knowledge and understanding of the importance of monitoring children's welfare and

development, through observation and record keeping, is highly secure and effective, as is their understanding of what to do if they become concerned about a child's welfare. Management have completed advanced child protection training and are clear about the procedures for responding to an allegation against staff. The premises is secure and well maintained, for example portable electrical appliances and fire extinguishers are tested yearly and the emergency evacuation procedure is practised regularly with the children. The setting is equipped with an abundance of high quality toys which help to raise awareness of diversity and ensures the inclusion of all children's interests.

Highly motivated, proactive and inspiring leadership has led to an amazing turn-around in the outcomes for children since the last inspection. Key to this is the involvement of the new team in the process of self-evaluation through thorough and continuous reflective practice. This leads to the identification of astute priorities for improvement, from the ambitious to the simple. For example, funding has been secured for the redevelopment of the outdoor play area to provide an exciting and natural environment which is to include a bridge, working water pump, mini stream and two sand pits. Of equal importance though is the identification of the need for a computer keyboard with lower case letter keys to support children's developing literacy skills. The recording systems for monitoring children's progress and development towards the early learning goals have been modified several times in the team's strive to establish the most effective system. The provision for enabling a child-initiated, and mostly child-led, programme of activities and the way that staff skilfully pitch when and how, and when not, to intervene in children's play and learning is also a key feature of this highly progressive setting. Equality and diversity is exceptionally well promoted and best demonstrated by the wholly inclusive learning opportunities, the arrangements for supporting children with physical and/or learning disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting's policies and procedures have been comprehensively reviewed and updated. They effectively underpin the operational plan, are well understood and implemented by staff, and shared with parents. The setting ensures a very good level of engagement with parents and carers is very good and well on the way to being excellent. Newsletters go out each term and keep parents well informed of themed activities and special events. Relationships between parents and the team are warm, friendly and open and honest. Parental involvement in children's learning is positively encouraged from the beginning, for example they are required to spend time in the preschool with their child before beginning a gradual leaving process. The first parent consultation evening has recently taken place, parents are encouraged to view children's progress and assessment records on a regular basis and to contribute observations themselves. However, whilst this is showing signs of success it is still a developing initiative; the vision is for parents and practitioners to work in complete partnership as co-educators, rather than practitioners being 'the informers'. The setting has been highly proactive in securing partnerships and relationships with external practitioners and agencies, and the local community. For example, teachers from the local school visit the setting at the end of the summer term to help ease the transition for children due to start school in the autumn. The setting has well established links with the local area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and other local area health

professionals involved with children. Members of the community regularly visit the setting and children enjoy visiting them in their diverse roles.

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

Practitioners gather comprehensive information about children prior to their first visit, for example what their particular interests are, whether their play is dominated by repeated patterns, what upsets and comforts them and what they can and cannot do. Staff use this information to plan for children's first visit with their parent which, along with their observations, are used to identify children's starting points for learning. Separation anxiety, for both children and parents, is significantly minimised by the individually tailored and gradual settling-in procedure. By the time children are left for the first full session on their own they have established a secure and trusting relationship with a key practitioner. Children arrive brimming with enthusiasm, even after lengthy periods of absence. They know where everything is, have their own special 'communication pocket' to keep their personal belongings and have affectionate and trusting relationships with all the team, especially their key practitioners. Behaviour is exemplary; squabbles are few because there is plenty to do.

Practitioners' highly secure knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), along with their confidence in enabling children to lead planning, provides the forum for children to engage in powerful and dynamic play and learning. Key to this is their knowledge and understanding of children's individual interests, which are evident in their representations and symbolic play and the type of play that they choose. For example, artistic creations, pretend play, or cognitive and technological experimentation. Practitioners use their well established observation skills to monitor children's interests and developmental progress and this enables them to 'go with the child'. Children are thus empowered and their levels of competence, confidence and imagination are insurmountable. The extensive and accessible provision of creative media, such as cardboard boxes, ribbons and joining tape enables children to turn their ideas into reality. For example, cardboard boxes are transformed into a sleigh as children's fascination with Santa continues post Christmas and then as play develops it is changed into a space ship. Children decide what they want the role play area to represent and using collaborative critical thinking and problem solving skills it is changed, for example from a home to a castle. This turns into a mini project spanning the week as their ideas develop, for instance from a 'light' to a 'dark' castle. Similarly toys are transformed: a teddy becomes an astronaut, represented by being wrapped in silver foil. He then has a birthday and a cake is created from a small box, which children learn is 'cube' shaped, crunched up tissue paper becomes colourful sweets and carefully counted straws the candles. Children then become engrossed in conversation as they recall their own birthday celebrations, how old they were and will be next birthday and what month their birthday is in. The quality of learning, as a result of accessible resources and expert adult interaction in one single activity, such as this, is superb.

Children present high levels of curiosity and this keeps them absorbed in

experimentation for sustained periods. They discover that ping-pong balls float and pop out when submerged in a long tall cylinder, and that they can make them move by blowing through a straw. Children help themselves to magnets, torches and tape measures. They use light trays to examine bottles of coloured water which show floating particles. Children learn how their body works and what they need to do to stay healthy through the provision of resources, such as a plastic model of the inside of the human stomach, through stories and discussions about healthy foods during snack time. The setting is exceptionally well equipped with technology which children use confidently and competently. There are two working computers, a working camera, which many children have mastered the use of, and are now ready to begin to learn how to use the video option. Electronic time monitors encourage children to recognise, and alert adults, that it is time to give their eyes a rest or time to let someone else have a turn.

Children show concern for people and their differences within play, for example as they manoeuvre 'grandma' gently down the stairs of the doll's house whilst calling out for 'granddad' to help her. Children's own cultures, traditions and interests are highly valued and respected and well demonstrated by the number of activities that are planned to support individual children, whilst introducing others to new experiences. The recent Diwali celebrations, for which the setting sought the advice of a parent, the arrangements for two miniature ponies to visit in their horse boxes and the plans to take children to observe the mechanics at the local MOT garage in action, are excellent examples of this. Activities are wholly inclusive and therefore provide for every child's interest, and age or stage of ability. Children with additional needs are exceptionally well supported by practitioners who are free to provide lots of one to one and small group support. High levels of observation and use of reflective practice means that solutions are easily found to support children with specific requirements, for example picture time tables and photographic labelling supports children with English as an additional language. Possible concerns are promptly identified and acted upon to ensure early intervention support.

Children squeal with laughter as they compete with staff to create the biggest splash in the puddles when they play outside in the rain. They observe the process of evaporation first hand, by playing with piles of snow in a large shallow builders tray filled with Arctic animals. Practitioners are constantly on the look out for ways to introduce children to new experiences and this is epitomised by the effort they made to retrieve an icicle from the roof so that children could feel and examine it for themselves. When visitors, such as the local fire brigade, police dog handler and miniature ponies come to the setting, and when children visit the local shops and farms, learning comes to life. For example, they are reminded about dog safety and introduced to the role of a police dog, they learn the importance of hard hats to protect their heads, and what to do in the event of a fire.

Every child's learning journey is documented and closely monitored to ensure that they make consistent progress. Children are making rapid progress in their learning, but most importantly their journey, in this delightful setting, is highly exciting.

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

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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	2

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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