



Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY239818
Inspection date	16 May 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre / Jo Blackman
Setting Address	White Horse Lane, Great Ashby Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 6NH
Telephone number	01438 365692
E-mail	
Registered person	Just Learning Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 satisfactory. 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?

Just Learning Nursery, Stevenage opened in September 2002 and operates from 10 rooms in a purpose-built building in the Great Ashby area of Stevenage. A maximum of 112 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:30 for 52 weeks a year, except Christmas, New Year and bank holidays. All children have access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 97 children aged from birth to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 16

children receive funding for nursery education. Most children come from the local community. The nursery is able to support children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs twenty-nine staff. Sixteen of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. They are beginning to learn about the importance of personal hygiene, for example, they wash their hands before snack and meal times. Their understanding of the relevance of these practices is promoted because staff discuss these issues with them. Children are offered healthy and nutritious snacks and meals, promoting their growth and development. These are prepared daily on the premises using a wide range of fresh ingredients. Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are well documented and parents' wishes are respected. Clear records are kept of children's health needs, enabling staff to provide appropriate care. However, children's health could be affected because staff do not always follow the procedure of asking parents to sign the medication record, which could lead to misunderstandings regarding the correct dosage administered.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in activities such as music and movement sessions and parachute games. Attention has been paid to the layout of the outdoor play area so that this is divided according to age group, and appropriate equipment provided in each area. Children are therefore able to enjoy regular access to this area, where they play on the climbing frames, slides, balance bars, ride-on toys and use a range of equipment such as balls, hoops, quoits and digging tools. Older children's independence is promoted and they are developing an understanding of their own needs, for example, pouring their own drinks, serving their dinner and visiting the bathroom independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work and photographs are creatively displayed and resources are generally well organised and accessible. Their safety is viewed as paramount and staff carry out daily safety checks in all areas, identifying any hazards and taking positive steps to remove or minimise these. Children are very well protected as staff are security conscious, diligently checking and accompanying all visitors. Attention to detail in all areas ensures that children can be protected at all times, for example, there are 'evacuation bags' in each room

and these contain items such as play resources and nappies so that children can be well cared for in an emergency until their parents arrive. Regular checks of all safety systems and equipment further promote the safety of children, staff and visitors. Children have a good understanding of taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are given clear explanations by staff so that they can begin to understand these issues, for example, they understand why it is dangerous to run inside. Older children participate in topic work and discussions covering issues such as safety within the nursery and in the garden.

Children's safety is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly sized chairs, tables and cots. Children are offered toys and activities from a range of good quality resources. Staff ensure that these are stored appropriately and are clean and in good condition. Children's welfare is well promoted as all staff have attended child protection training and have a thorough understanding of these issues and procedures, ensuring that they are able to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled, enjoying their time at the nursery. They are keen to participate in the activities and play opportunities provided and are confident in their relationships with each other and with staff. Their personal development and self-esteem are promoted through appropriate support and encouragement from staff. Children's work and photos are displayed, helping them to feel valued, secure and confident within the setting. Babies and young children settle well and are secure in their relationships with staff because staff take time to get to know the children, making sure that they are aware of all routines and individual needs. Staff pay particular attention to making sure that they have all relevant information from parents.

Children show their developing independence as they carry out self-care skills and choose their activities. Children under three-years-old are offered appropriate activities and play opportunities and generally receive adequate support and interaction from staff, helping to make their play purposeful. An example of this is babies playing with a large activity centre, thoroughly enjoying the interaction with the staff member who encourages them to wave and clap to the music as they push the various buttons. Younger children generally have sufficient resources and activities to choose from. However, there are some inconsistencies in the provision of resources and the deployment of staff throughout the day, which means that children are not always purposefully occupied and there are some missed opportunities to extend their learning.

Careful planning of activities for all age groups ensures that children's learning is well balanced and activities are generally linked to their individual needs and capabilities. This is further supported through the implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which staff are using with growing confidence, supporting their planning methods and their assessment of younger children. Activities for this age group

include crafts, painting, construction, outdoor play, music and movement sessions and the exploration of textures, sounds and feelings. Their learning is further promoted because staff make effective use of open questions and suggestions to encourage children to think further and extend their play. An example of this is a group of children playing with a construction set, where they are encouraged to build a longer train and to talk about the faces on the pieces, discussing the difference between happy and sad.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff working in this area have a thorough knowledge of the 'Curriculum for the foundation stage', planning and adapting activities appropriately. Children's progress in all areas is very well balanced as staff use comprehensive methods for assessing them, using information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered and determine future activities. However, there is minimal assessment of children's starting points when they join this group and this could result in a delay in highlighting potential areas of concern and in monitoring initial progress. Planning of activities is practical and comprehensive and staff are able to check that all areas of learning are covered within the plans.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which include regular opportunities to participate in role play, crafts, construction and physical play. They also participate in theme work, giving them opportunities to look in detail at a range of topics such as 'the weather', where they make a rain gauge, talk about rainfall, take regular measurements and learn how to compare larger and smaller amounts of water. Staff use their experience and knowledge to ensure that children are purposefully occupied and are offered challenge in their play, making good use of open questions to extend children's thinking and learning. This is further enhanced by the well planned room, which is set up so that children are able to access resources and can concentrate on their chosen activity.

Children are secure and demonstrate a sense of trust as they confidently initiate conversations with staff and turn to them for help in sorting out any problems. They are clearly aware of the expected codes of behaviour, for example, they understand the relevance of sharing, negotiating and listening to each other and to adults. An example of this is a group of children negotiating the building of a 'volcano' with the sand, taking turns to pile up the sand and listening to each other's ideas. Children concentrate and listen to stories and are developing a good appreciation of this area. For example, during story time children listen to a story about a caterpillar, discuss how they could act this out, decide who will play each role, find appropriate props and act out the story, with much enjoyment and prompting of each other.

Children are beginning to use numbers in a meaningful context, using mathematics to solve everyday problems and confidently using mathematical language in their daily play. For example, when playing in the sand, children work out how many more scoops they will need to fill the container, comparing the size of containers and identifying which is the biggest and holds the most sand. Their understanding of mathematical concepts is further enhanced as they are consistently offered a wide range of opportunities, for example, they regularly use calculators, tape measures

and scales, and play games where they match numbers, sizes and shapes.

Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. For example, they have daily access to a range of equipment which includes torches, magnets, magnifying glasses, a microscope and two-way radios. They are confident in the use of information and communication technology equipment. They make good use of the computer and are pen-pals with children from other nurseries in the 'Just Learning' chain, sending them letters and emails. Children are developing an awareness of different forms of movement through organised activities, music and movement sessions and the use of equipment such as climbing frames, slides, balance bars and ride-on toys. They recognise and understand the changes that happen to their bodies when they are physically active, for example, noting the change in their pulse rate after a physical activity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's sense of belonging is encouraged because their work is displayed, they have table mats labelled with their names, each child has their own coat peg and there are numerous displays of children's work and photographs. Older children are offered a range of opportunities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include topic work covering different religions and traditions, for example looking at celebrations connected with Christmas, Diwali and Chinese New Year. However, these activities are limited for younger children, which means that their understanding of this area is not consistently promoted.

Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. Their behaviour is good throughout the sessions as they move from one activity to another. They respond well to staff, and the positive approach and generally good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff working with the older children consistently use good strategies to ensure that children's needs are respected and their choice is promoted. However, some inconsistencies in staff working with younger children mean that staff do not always use appropriate strategies which respect children's individual needs and choices, for example, turning off the lights for children to sleep before other children have finished eating. Children who have special needs have their requirements identified and met as there is a clear policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is implemented so that children have opportunities to be included in all activities and daily routines.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers is good. There is a strong commitment to involving parents in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are welcomed and staff ensure that they are aware of all procedures and policies. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through topical displays, regular discussions with staff and parent's evenings. There are informative notice boards containing information about a number of issues including current themes, child development,

health and safety. Parents are also able to access clearly marked files containing practical information about the 'Curriculum for the foundation stage'. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and appropriate care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of all children who attend. Their play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space. Rooms have been set aside to accommodate messy play and physical play and there is also a sensory room, promoting children's development in these areas. Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted through the staff's practical knowledge and daily implementation of the nursery's policies and procedures. Their care is further enhanced by the comprehensive staff induction programme, which ensures that all staff are supported, have the relevant knowledge and are able to work appropriately in all areas of the setting. There are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. Children's records are kept up to date and contain all relevant information, enabling staff to provide appropriate care and promote children's welfare at all times.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the quality of leadership and management is good and children benefit from a well-managed setting. The manager acts as a good role model, demonstrating her positive attitude and enthusiasm for her work. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting and staff are motivated, attending additional training, expressing their ideas and demonstrating their enjoyment of their work. Sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of activities which cover all areas of development. Good planning and evaluation of activities ensures that resources are well prepared and sufficient time is allocated for each task. Children's progress is clearly tracked through ongoing assessments and parents are kept well informed of this. Staff meet regularly to plan future work, using information from assessments to inform this and to ensure that the needs of individual children are met and their development promoted.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the nursery was asked to address a number of issues regarding the consistent implementation of company policies. They have now introduced new risk assessments, emergency evacuation practices, procedures for nappy changing, procedures to maintain and check all first aid boxes, and procedures to promote children's learning about personal hygiene practices. Staff have also attended additional training. These improvements promote the health and safety of children attending. The nursery was asked to ensure that attendance registers are up to date and have now implemented new paperwork to record numbers of children, carrying out monitoring and spot checks to ensure that correct staffing ratios are maintained.

The setting was asked to improve the organisation of care to ensure continuous good

practice. They have ensured that all staff have completed a new induction process and have attended additional training, promoting the quality of care provided for children. Staff have also attended additional training with regard to behaviour management and child protection and this area is monitored by managers to ensure that standards are maintained, children's welfare is promoted and their behaviour is appropriately and consistently managed. The nursery was also asked to ensure that a complaints record is maintained and that Ofsted is informed of any significant events. They have now implemented a comprehensive complaints procedure, ensuring that all parents are aware of this, and have ensured that any significant events will be reported by the nursery or area manager, thus promoting the ongoing safety and welfare of children.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the nursery was asked to improve staff's knowledge of the 'Curriculum for the foundation stage', ensure that assessment records are regularly maintained and to improve the leadership and management of the nursery education to support children's learning. Staff have now attended additional training and have implemented new planning and assessment methods which are linked to the 'Curriculum for the foundation stage'. This area is monitored and reviewed regularly by managers. These actions have improved the provision of activities and help to ensure that children are making progress in all areas of learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received concerns that an injury had occurred to a child and the parents were not notified of this incident. An Ofsted Childcare Inspector conducted an unannounced visit on 15 December 2005 to investigate against National Standard 1 (Suitable Person); National Standard 2 (Organisation); National Standard 3 (Care, Learning and Play); National Standard 4 (Physical Environment); National Standard 6 (Safety); National Standard 7 (Health); National Standard 9 (Equal Opportunities); National Standard 11 (Behaviour) and National Standard 12 (Working in Partnerships With Parents and Carers). During the visit it was apparent that the adult:child ratios were not being met due to lunch breaks. Therefore, two actions were given regarding this breach of National Standard 2. It was concluded that although the provider and staff were not aware of the incident when it happened, they have since carried out an internal investigation and a risk assessment to try and prevent further occurrences happening. The incident was not recorded in the accident book and although the complaints procedure had been followed through, a recommendation was given to ensure good practice when dealing with complaints under National Standard 12. The provider responded appropriately to the actions set and 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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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 that the procedure is followed regarding the administration of medication. This refers to parents signing the record
- develop resources and activities for younger children so that they are readily accessible, and deploy staff to support children's play and learning
- further develop opportunities for children to gain an understanding and knowledge of other cultures and ways of life
- ensure that staff are consistently aware of, and respect, children's individual needs.

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):

- further develop the assessment methods so that these clearly show children's starting points and highlight any issues or ongoing concerns.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk