



Tops Day Nurseries

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY281231
Inspection date	04 May 2006
Inspector	Judith Reed / Gill Moore
Setting Address	Queen Alexandra Hospital, Southwick Hill Road, Cosham, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO6 3LY
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Registered person	Tops Day Nurseries
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Tops Day Nurseries opened in 2004 and forms part of a chain of nurseries which operate across the south coast, it is privately owned and is a Neighbourhood Initiative nursery. It operates from a purpose built building in the grounds of Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham, Hampshire. A maximum of 99 children may attend

the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 06:30 until 19:30 all year around. Children have access to various rooms and several secure outdoor play areas.

There are currently 193 children aged from 4 months to 12 years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery takes children from the employees of Queen Alexandra hospital and also children from the surrounding areas. The nursery offers help and support to children with special education needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 18 staff. There are 12 members of staff with appropriate early years qualifications and 6 who are working towards a qualification. All staff are first aid trained and the nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children follow adequate personal hygiene routines as they know to wash their hands after using the toilet. Older children wash their hands before having snacks and meals as part of the daily routine. Younger children have their hands cleaned with individual wipes. Tables and high chairs are cleaned before and after meal times. Staff follow good procedures when changing nappies, wearing aprons and gloves to protect the children and themselves from cross infection. Staff maintain consistent cleaning routines for changing mats and ensure they are scrubbed every week. Accident and medication records are maintained and all staff are trained in first aid. First aid kits are available around the nursery.

Children's health is maintained because practitioners implement effective health and hygiene policies at snack time. They wear aprons when serving food and wash their hands before handling the food. Older children show good levels of independence as they pour themselves a drink of water and milk and help themselves to a slice of bread and butter. They have the option to spread jam on top of the bread and confidently and safely use knives to do this for themselves. Children help themselves to a selection of fruit offered to them from plates. They use individual dishes. Many children throughout the nursery bring their own food and this is served alongside the nursery food at mealtimes. Parents are made aware of the policy regarding lunch boxes and their storage. A cook is employed to provide a range of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks for children. A menu is displayed although the cook does not always adhere to meals as shown.

All children benefit from regular periods of outside play. They have opportunities to climb and slide on the low level equipment. Children enjoy throwing balls and using the tricycle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are secure within the purpose built premises within the grounds of the hospital. Entry to the building is via a door bell and internal buzzer system. Staff identify the person at the door and allow them through if appropriate. Visitors are not always asked to sign in as required. Attractive displays of children's work are shown on notice boards throughout the nursery. Children use six separate rooms according to their age group and they access secure outside play areas from every room. Older children use toilets and wash hand basins within their rooms and staff accompany younger children into nappy changing areas within their rooms.

Children use a variety of toys and equipment, however, some toys used in the outside play area are not clean or safe for children. Staff fail to recognise risks to children from damaged and broken equipment. Most children have access to suitable play provision for those attending although there is limited equipment for older children to extend their large motor skills and physical development. Children are encouraged to access toys from low level storage throughout the nursery.

Children are at risk due to staff in some areas of the nursery being unable to hear the fire alarm. Older children know fire drill procedures and calmly evacuate the premises with their carers. The fire evacuation point has varied due to building work and all present currently gather in a small area adjacent to the building. Most other safety precautions are in place and children are protected as staff check the premises before and after use. Socket covers are in place, safety gates are available when required, cupboard latches are in place and door handles are at high level.

Children are safeguarded by knowledgeable staff who are aware of child protection procedures. A child protection coordinator is not in place at the current time and staff would report concerns to management.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and younger children are supported well by the staff. Their development is recorded and daily record sheets are shared with parents. Staff offer children free choice of a variety of toys and activities including treasure baskets, play mats and baby gym. Children's individual routines are displayed and staff ensure they are followed. Children from one year old are encouraged to explore their surroundings and join in a number of different activities including musical instruments and interesting treasure baskets. Children help themselves to toys from storage around the room. Staff know children well and encourage their development, recording this in the comprehensive development records. Children progress through the nursery at eighteen months and join a different room. Here they are offered further choices and a range of interesting activities including painting, play dough, singing and sharing stories. A home corner is always available and children help themselves to a number of small world toys including the doll's house and garage. Staff continue to build developmental records using the Birth to three matters framework to plan activities. Children move into the next room at the age of two years. They are enabled to make a free choice of activities and join in a scheduled group time. Children move freely

from one activity to another as they choose within a timed programme. They take part in key worker group activities linked to the Birth to three matters framework. Children experiment with different substances such as foam and custard. They enjoy familiar activities in the home corner and with puzzles and bricks. Staff plan and observe children's development using the Birth to three matters framework as a guide.

A holiday care scheme is opened during school holidays for older children. Children are frequently taken out to many local places of interest and have use of a selection of games, a television and computer in their own separate room.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children do not make enough progress towards the early learning goals because practitioners lack knowledge and understanding of how to use the stepping stones to promote children's learning, which impacts on the opportunities they provide. Although they plan small group activities relating to the areas of learning, not all aspects of the curriculum are covered sufficiently to promote children's development. Practitioners interact well with children and fully involve themselves in their play; however, they are unclear about the learning potential from daily routines, children's self chosen play and incidental opportunities. They fail to question them effectively and many learning opportunities go unnoticed.

The routine of sessions is effective and provides a good balance of child and adult initiated activities. Children plan where they would like to play and enjoy a time of recall where they talk about what they have been doing with practitioners and their peers. They develop their independent skills putting on their own painting aprons and hanging them up when they have finished. Children competently handle a range of tools, for example, as they use knives to spread jam on their bread and mould dough using a range of cutters and rolling pins. They confidently contribute to group discussions and talk through their imagined ideas as they engage in imaginative play, for example in the role-play area, developing their vocabulary as practitioners introduce new words to them. Children begin to recognise letters and familiar words such as their names on their coat pegs and print displayed around the room. However, insufficient attention is paid to developing children's early reading and writing skills, such as their understanding of sounds and letters across the session. Practitioners fail to make use of resources available, such as the self registration tree, and do not encourage children to independently access writing tools and materials and label their own work, as these are available.

Children count and learn about mathematical concepts through planned small group times. However, insufficient attention is paid to developing and extending their understanding of number, size, weight and measure through their independent play and free access to mathematical resources. Children enjoy building models from construction equipment and recycled materials and work together with their peers recognising the need to share resources, although they are not encouraged to develop their problem solving skills. They have limited opportunities to develop their curiosity and investigative skills and use a range of information and communication technology gaining an understanding of how and why things work.

Children are extremely confident with the daily routine and develop their understanding of time. This is promoted through the use of a visual timeline and sand timers, which are effectively used to indicate to children how long they have left to play. They engage in physical activities outside every day, however, insufficient use is made of the outside learning environment to provide sufficient challenge and promote learning across the six areas. Practitioners do not identify learning intentions of activities; consequently, although children develop skills in the use of some equipment, their development in some areas, such as spatial awareness, is not fully promoted.

Children enjoy opportunities to freely explore a range of media, including sand, water, different types of dough, gloop and jelly. They talk about how this feels on their hands, using vocabulary such as 'squidgy and soft' and explore paint using a variety of materials including toothbrushes and combs. Children enthusiastically join in with large group times singing songs and participate in action rhymes. They have daily opportunities to work in small groups during their key work time, although the organisation and planning of these do not ensure activities are pitched at the right level. Consequently, younger children are not always fully involved and lose interest, whilst the older and more able children receive little challenge.

The systems for planning and assessment are not fully developed. Practitioners assess children's starting points and make some observations of children's progress. However, the system for gathering and recording evidence is insecure and not sufficiently rigorous to show how well they are achieving towards the early learning goals across all aspects of the curriculum. Practitioners do not use their knowledge of children's individual interests and abilities, or information gained from assessment, to plan the next steps in their learning. As a result, older and more able children are not sufficiently challenged, which impacts on the progress they make, and they do not achieve their full potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident and show good self-esteem, which impacts on the relationships they build with practitioners and their peers. They begin to develop a sense of belonging to the nursery and responsibility as they help to pack away activities and resources when they have finished playing. Practitioners are very effective in the way they manage behaviour, helping children to think about how their actions affect others. Consequently, children have a very good understanding of what is expected of them. They share and co-operate with one another and their behaviour is very good. Babies and younger children are encouraged and praised throughout their activities. Children behave very well and staff ensure good behaviour is congratulated. Younger children are patient, waiting for their turn with feeding a doll or dressing it. They help each other when necessary by passing toys and fastening paint overalls. All children respond immediately to "Tidy up time" and help staff put toys away in the appropriate place. They begin to gain an understanding of the world around them as they use a range of resources reflecting diversity of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability in their play. Children talk about themselves and their families

and recognise the differences and similarities between themselves and others through discussions and activities linked to topics, such as Ourselves and Our World. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is inadequate. Although parents are informed about pre-school topics and planned key work activities, they are not helped to understand how their child learns through play and are not provided with any details about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning. Planned parent evenings provide regular opportunities for practitioners to share children's records of achievements and discuss their progress. However, insufficient opportunities are in place for parents to be involved in the initial and ongoing assessment of their child, be informed about the next steps in their individual learning and how they can help to support and extend this in the home. This limits children's progress and impacts on parent's ability to fully contribute to their child's early learning. However, partnership with parents of younger children is satisfactory and parents are kept well informed about their children. Daily diary sheets are used to share information regarding nappy changes, food consumed, and sleep taken. Parents state that they can talk to staff at any time and feel they are kept informed about necessary information. A complaints log is available and parents are aware of the procedure for making a complaint.

Children are cared for by practitioners who know their individual needs and home circumstances, for example, dietary and health requirements and special needs. Information regarding children's individual needs is passed from their previous room. There is currently no special needs coordinator in place and staff are not fully aware of the special needs Code of Practice. Management are working closely with the local authority to ensure the needs of individual children are met.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The leadership and management of the nursery is inadequate, which has an adverse affect on children's learning. Although practitioners have an adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, they lack the knowledge in how to use this to provide appropriate challenges and experiences for children across the session. Management are aware of some of the gaps within the provision, however, systems to monitor the curriculum, and the use of resources, including the availability and accessibility of some, are not fully developed. Insufficient attention is paid to monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and the impact on children's individual progress, which means the more able children are not sufficiently challenged and do not meet their potential as young learners. As a result, the setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Management are aware of their responsibilities regarding staff checks and these are managed off site at head office. Suitable recruitment procedures are in place although induction procedures are not always secure for students. There is currently no manager in post and the deputy is being supported by a number of personnel from head office and this reflects the present challenging situation within the nursery.

Staff meetings are irregular at the present time although training is offered.

Organisation is inadequate due to the poor procedures for registering children and staff into the premises. Most children are marked in and out, however, those who arrive at unusual times are frequently missed. Staff register themselves into the building at the entrance and in their own rooms. The list at the front door is often incorrect and this may put staff at risk during an emergency evacuation. Staff work well as a team and support one another well. They cover for each other during breaks and work shift patterns to cover the long opening hours.

Documentation is stored securely in the office.

Improvements since the last inspection

During a recent investigation visit an action was raised concerning cleaning procedures in the nappy changing areas especially regarding mats and bins. The procedures for cleaning refrigerators in the baby rooms were also required to be improved. Cleaning procedures have been improved and nappy changing areas are scrubbed regularly to ensure good hygiene and keep children safe from cross infection. Staff ensure nappy bins and refrigerators are monitored and kept clean.

A further investigation recommended that risk assessments were completed regularly, written and evaluated, as well as daily registers of both staff and children to be maintained with required detail. Sufficiently detailed records of significant incidents were required to be shared with parents. Risk assessment tick sheets are completed daily for both indoors and outside play areas, however, staff do not recognise and note risks and damaged equipment. Managers state that they evaluate risk assessments. Daily register sheets for children and staff are not completed rigorously and they may be at risk in an emergency. This is now an action.

At the last inspection the nursery was recommended to keep the visitors book, accident and existing injuries records with required detail. Visitors record is not always completed as necessary although accident records are recorded with sufficient detail.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received two complaints. The first complaint related to National Standard 1: Suitable Person; National Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play; National Standard 7: Health; National Standard 8: Food and Drink; National Standard 9: Equal Opportunities; National Standard 12: Partnership with Parents and Carers and Annex A: Babies/Children under 2. Concerns were raised regarding the suitability of a member of staff; nappy changing practice; poor hygiene leading to health issues; inadequate process to ensure children are adequately fed; anti-discriminatory practice not always being incorporated in everyday exchanges; and communication with parents. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to the nursery. As a result an action was raised and a recommendation was given. Ofsted made a follow up unannounced visit to ensure that action had been taken and

National Standards were being maintained. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The second complaint related to National Standard 6: Safety. Concerns were raised regarding an incident during which children had been able to gain access to scissors. Concerns were also raised in relation to staff interaction and the structure of play provided. Ofsted investigated by carrying out an unannounced visit. As a result of our investigation three recommendations were set. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider has made a record of the complaints in their complaint record.

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure children's safety at all times during fire evacuation and when using outside play equipment
- ensure registers of children, staff and visitors present are accurate at all times

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- increase practitioner's knowledge and understanding of how to use the stepping stones to improve the quality of teaching and learning and make the most of all learning opportunities
- improve the systems to monitor and record children's ongoing achievements and develop the systems for planning to ensure this information is used to plan the next steps in their individual learning

- improve systems to monitor and evaluate teaching, the curriculum and the impact on children's individual progress
- increase opportunities for parents to share what they know about their child, contribute to their assessment and be informed about their next steps for development

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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