



Toybox Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	142865
Inspection date	17 July 2006
Inspector	Mary Daniel
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Registered person	Toybox Yeovil 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

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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Toy Box Day Nursery has been registered since 1991, and operates from a converted three bedroomed house situated near to the town centre of Yeovil. Children have use of two main play rooms, toilets and changing facilities downstairs, and an upstairs room for sleeping. There is also an office and separate staff room and facilities situated upstairs. An enclosed part paved, part grassed garden is

situated at the rear of the premises. This privately owned nursery is open from 08:00 - 18:00, Monday to Friday, all year round, except for two weeks over the Christmas period. The nursery provides hot and cold meals as required.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 18 children aged under five years at any one time. There are currently 40 children on register, of whom 12 are in receipt of Government funding for nursery education. The group supports children who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery owner is the overall manager and employs a staff of five, of whom three are qualified to NVQ level 3. The group receives the support of the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a range of healthy foods. They chew on chunks of juicy melon for a snack, and tuck into sausage, mash and vegetables, tomato and courgette pie or spaghetti bolognese for lunch. This helps them to develop an awareness of nourishing foods. Drinks are offered regularly and are available throughout the session. Babies bottles and meals are stored in the fridge and clearly labelled, and individual dietary requirements are managed appropriately. Suitable procedures are followed to promote children's health. For example, children wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet, and they use liquid soap and paper towels. Activity tables are wiped after use. Babies have individual bedding for their cots. This helps prevent cross contamination. The nursery use environmentally friendly nappies, which are collected on a daily basis. Suitable nappy changing facilities are provided. However, not all staff wear disposable gloves when changing nappies, and changing mats are not always wiped after use. Consequently, children are not consistently protected from the spread of infection.

Relevant documentation is used to help monitor children's health. Accidents are clearly detailed and acknowledged by parents. Written parental permission for any emergency medical treatment is obtained and administration of any medication is appropriately recorded and shared with parents. This contributes to continuity in children's care. Children enjoy playing outside in the garden area. They have regular opportunities to play in the fresh air and occasionally go on local walks. The nursery provides a weekly gym session with a visiting teacher. This helps children in learning to control their body movements in different ways and build up their large muscle skills. Children are happy to climb, jump and stretch and most move around confidently. As a consequence, children are provided with regular exercise, which supports them in a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety is not sufficiently supported in all areas. There is some safety prevention in place, which helps to reduce accidents. For example, risk assessments are completed on any electrical equipment, socket covers are in place, visitors attendance is recorded and sleeping babies are monitored through use of an alarm and regular physical checks. However, at times, staff deployment is not adequate, particularly at the start of the day, and this impacts on the care and supervision of children. Young children can open the large patio doors, and push and pull the door back and forth in fun, to prevent others entering. This puts them at risk of trapping fingers. Children play happily in the outside sand pit, but in their games sand naturally spills out onto the patio area. This is not sufficiently cleared away until later in the day and creates a hazard, which contributes to children slipping on this paved area. Children are told they must not go into the kitchen and some older ones show awareness of this rule. However, this does not reliably prevent their access and the kitchen door is kept open during the day. The outside area is not always sufficiently checked before use to ensure it is clear of small pieces of toys. As a consequence, aspects of children's safety are compromised.

Overall, most area of the premises are well maintained and play rooms are suitably decorated. For example, with Winnie the Pooh themed characters, and there are bright displays of children's pictures and models. Toilets are easily accessible, which supports older children in developing independence with their personal care. Suitable furniture and equipment is available. Children sit on child sized chairs at low tables to eat and for play activities. Younger babies and toddlers have a separate sleep room, with full sized cots, where they can stretch out for a comfortable sleep, but within the play rooms there are no soft areas, where children can relax and rest when they wish. There is a range of age appropriate toys and resources available, showing as bright and inviting, and in reasonable condition. Babies play with a variety of activity toys and toddlers enjoy sorting through the large, colourful construction bricks. Resources for older children are well organised in clearly labelled toy boxes, however, these are not always easily accessible to children due to tables stored in front of the storage units. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and most have completed relevant training. This is reviewed through the in house training provided by the manager. Suitable procedures, including written information, are in place to manage any concerns arising, which contributes to supporting children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

At times, younger children are not sufficiently supported. Staff are caring and friendly and give a quiet, calm approach. This is reassuring for children who respond well to them. Babies and toddlers are provided with suitable toys, such as interactive musical sets or activity toys, which they enjoy and these encourage their interest in play and finding out how things work. Their individual routines for sleeping and feeding are followed, which helps them feel secure and overall, they settle easily to sleep. At times though, sufficient consideration is not given to the play provision offered for the younger children, and specific activities to support their development are not planned. Some staff have completed the Birth to three matters framework

training, and are starting to implement some aspects of this, for example, through singing and music. However, this is not yet fully established, and babies and young toddlers are often left to play with the same type of toys, with little other stimulation provided. Babies enjoy lying in the shade of the garden on hot days, and listen to the noises around them. They watch the older children play, but at times they are left with little interaction or toys to keep them occupied. Younger toddlers have a lovely time splashing and making bubbles in water play, and this helps to develop their co-ordination, sensory and social skills and enjoyment of play. However, young children naturally get very wet in this activity, and some are then left in their wet tee shirts for quite some time. Although, they show little discomfort due to the hot weather, their needs are not sufficiently met through lack of basic care.

Toddlers do enjoy exploring the toys put out for them and begin to develop their co-ordination skills, for example, as they attempt simple inset puzzles. They dance to some music and laugh as they crawl through a pop up tunnel with a friend. However, at times staff deployment does not support the needs of all the children and the organisation of the play room for younger children does not encourage their involvement in a wide variety of play experiences.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff effectively use open ended questions to help children think for themselves. For example, when talking about their holidays or when reading a story. This helps children's communication skills and encourages their use of imagination. Staff are familiar with the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan a range of appropriate themed activities, which cover the six areas of learning. However, sufficient use is not made of the general play environment to provide a clear balance of play opportunities to encourage and motivate children's independent play and learning. For example, role play is provided as a planned activity and children enjoy buying and selling in their 'shop'. Children ask their friends how much the items for sale are and they have fun using toy cash register. This helps to promote their imagination and also their numeracy, mark making and social skills. However, there is little other provision easily available to support children to independently use their imagination and initiate their own ideas and games. Staff are willing to help children learn and interact well to help them feel settled. Children respond to their sense of humour and mix happily with their peers. They go naturally to help others. For example, they fetch a special cushion for a younger friend and pick up a hat from the floor and replace this on the right coat peg. They find their apron for painting and some can take their socks and shoes off and put them back on again. This helps them to use their initiative in their own self-care. Children do take turns in being the dinner helper and bring in the bowls of food, but they do not generally help to layout the tables for meal times, nor pour their own drinks. When they do attempt to do this, their progress is hindered as the jug provided is large and difficult for a child to manage.

Children use language well to make their own needs met. For example, in asking for a favourite game to be played or in recognising the colour of their own sun lotion bottle. They talk about family events, such as a recent holiday or a visit to the park, and are well encouraged in linking sounds with letters through circle time games and use of colourful laminated letter sheets. This helps them to start recognising the first

letters of their name and those of their friends. Children enjoy staff telling them stories and they join in with some repeated refrains. For example, as the 'Billy Goats gruff' go 'trip, trapping over the bridge'. They look at books with interest, but these are stored at the back of a storage unit, which limits their direct access. Consequently, their interest in books is not well supported to enable them to make their own choices when they wish. Children enjoy colouring and happily draw picture postcards for a travel themed activity. Their assessment records show some can form recognisable shapes and letters, and most show clear pencil control. However, children are not always challenged to independently mark make for a purpose and they are not encouraged to access a range of mark making or creative materials to use for their own ideas in play. Children have many opportunities to count and some are beginning to represent numbers on their fingers. For example, to show how many jellyfish are left in a song they sing. Together they count how many children are present at circle time and some independently count how many milk cartons are on the table. This shows they are familiar in using numbers. They start doing early calculations as they sing 'five little men in a flying saucer', and count how many are left after they have 'flown around the moon'. Assessment records show some children are able to say which number is bigger or smaller than another. As a result, some children show as confident in their number skills. However, they are not sufficiently challenged to independently start solving simple practical problems within their everyday routines and play.

Children often go for walks to the post office or the library. They sometimes catch a bus back to the nursery or walk along the underpass. They meet the firemen and police men who visit the nursery. This helps children in their safety awareness and they start to become familiar with their community. Children discover their natural environment through activities planned around a 'mini beast' theme. They explore natural objects such as shells and fir cones and talk about where they come from. They construct with skill as they carefully balance bricks to make a bridge. They help to fit a train track together and have fun pushing the trains back and forth. They fill and empty their pots of sand and water. This helps them develop an understanding of space, size and measure. Children begin to recognise their own personal needs, such as washing hands after a sticky painting activity and they realise they need sun cream and hats to help protect them from the dangers of hot sun. Children enjoy their craft activities, for example, as they finger paint their 'lollies' or stick cotton wool to make their 'ice cream cones'. They explore colour and texture as they trace out letters in the shaving foam and they mix paints for their pictures. They have fun playing a variety of musical instruments and laugh as they play and sing to 'Twinkle, twinkle, chocolate bar'. This encourages children to explore different sounds and develop an enjoyment of music and song.

Staff record observations on the children's development and link these to the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This indicates that children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals, but does not clearly identify how they make their achievements. This means the planning of some activities is not always fully based on children's existing skills and abilities. Consequently, some play opportunities are not sufficiently challenging for all children to take the next step in all areas of their learning. Overall, the sessions provide quiet and active times and children's learning is supported through their positive interaction

with staff. However, opportunities to extend children's learning through the general everyday routines, such as mealtimes are not sufficiently used. Procedures in place for the monitoring of activities are not rigorous enough to effectively measure the success of the learning experiences offered and to ensure that all children's developmental needs are met.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the friendly relationships staff form with their parents. Time is given to help children settle in and gives reassurance to parents. This helps children feel secure in the setting. Staff maintain daily liaison with parents and obtain relevant written permissions, for example, for administration of any medication. A daily report on the feeding, toileting and sleeping needs of babies is shared with parents. This contributes to their continuity of care. The manager provides training courses for parents and encourages their involvement. Children start to learn about some differences within their world as they celebrate festivals such as Chinese new year and they play with multi-cultural toys and resources, such as jigsaw puzzles, dolls and dressing up clothes. This supports them in recognising some other ways of living, although this is not so well promoted through the general play areas. Sufficient procedures are in place to support any child with any particular individual needs. Staff liaise with parents and professionals involved, and all children have previously used a simple sign language to support a child with communication difficulties. For example, when singing different songs and nursery rhymes. This contributes to all children feeling welcome and a part of the group.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents have opportunities to share in their child's progress through an open evening appointment system. Parents see their children's pictures, paintings and models around the play room. They receive some information on the funded nursery education provided, for example, through the nursery prospectus and an introductory letter, which refers to the six areas of learning. However, overall, there is limited information easily available for parents, on the daily planned and everyday activities offered. Children learn to be kind and share. For example, they willingly help to fetch the dinner bowls. An older child helps a younger friend to move to where she can see the moon still in the sky. Children meet the local shop owners and librarian on local walks, which helps them become familiar with those in the community. They perform a nativity play at Christmas and enjoy joining in with a sponsored toddle around a local park to raise money for charity. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The provider does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. Overall, suitable general daily routines are maintained, which provides some stability for children. For example, they know they wash their hands before they sit

down for their snack or lunch, and they join in with a daily circle time. However, at times minimum staff ratios are maintained and their deployment does not fully support all children's needs and impacts on their care and safety at times. At the start of the day, staff interaction with children is constantly interrupted as they go to open the front door as parents and children arrive. Some activities are not effectively organised to support all ages involved. For example, some circle times are too long for the younger children and they become restless and start wandering off. This impacts on all children's attention and makes it difficult for staff to keep them focussed on the story and songs provided. Overall, staff provide activities to cover all areas of play throughout the week, but this is not reflected well within the general layout and daily organisation of the play environment. At times, this impacts on children's free choice in play. Clear staff recruitment procedures are in place and relevant policies and procedures are formed. Staff are suitably qualified and ongoing training opportunities are encouraged. Overall, required documentation is in order. This is stored securely and regard given to confidentiality in use.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. There is a clear staff appraisal system in place, which helps to identify and support staff's professional development and ongoing training is encouraged. The manager provides some in house training, for example, with child protection issues. Staff meetings are held and minutes taken. This contributes to some areas of improvement being addressed. However, a system for evaluating planned activities has not been effectively implemented and although staff do discuss the success of some activities, overall, there is no secure system in place to monitor and review the provision offered.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, actions were set relating to children's safety and policies for the nursery. A lost child policy has now been implemented and made available to all staff and parents. This supports children's continuity in care and their safety. Staffing and numbers of children attending at the start of the day have been reviewed. As a result, qualified staff are on duty, and numbers of children attending before 08:30 have been reduced. However, minimum ratios are still maintained at this time, which compromises some aspects of children's care and safety.

At the last inspection of the funded nursery education, recommendations were made regarding the use of assessments and planning of activities, and the monitoring of the nursery education. Staff have sought advice on planning and assessment systems, and plans are now used more effectively overall. Staff are more aware of the aim of activities, which supports children's learning. Observations are recorded and assessments link with the stepping stones, but do not clearly show children's achievements. This impacts on the challenge offered in further planned activities. Staff discuss the effectiveness of planned activities and intend to record these evaluations. However, this is not currently happening, which means there is still no clear and secure system in place to monitor the overall funded provision for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of any complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain some complaints other than those made to Ofsted

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 satisfactory.

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:

- develop a suitable risk assessment system to ensure children's safety in all areas of the premises
- make more use of all play areas to ensure they provide children with a suitable balance of stimulating and exciting play opportunities to support and encourage them in making their own choices, and initiating their own ideas and games
- plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children under three years, for example, based on the Birth to three matters framework, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs
- review staff deployment and organisation of some parts of the day to ensure all children's needs are adequately supported at all times of the day

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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make more use of assessments to clearly show evidence of children's achievements, and use this information to plan a range of activities that build on their existing skills and abilities and provide sufficient challenge in all areas of their learning

- make more use of the everyday routines, such as mealtimes, to support and promote all areas of children's development
- develop suitable systems for monitoring the provision to effectively identify and fully address areas for improvement.

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