



Birkenhead School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY320318
Inspection date	06 June 2006
Inspector	Jean Evelyn Thomas
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Registered person	Birkenhead School
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Birkenhead School Nursery and Out of School Care is run by the school's governing body, a charitable trust. It opened in 2006 and operates from premises on the school site. It is situated in Oxtan, on the Wirral peninsula.

The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. The out of school care is open from 15.15 to 18.00 term time and 08.00 to 10.00 and 16.00 to 18.00 for children who attend the holiday activity courses. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 38 children aged from three months to under three years and 64 children aged from four to under eight years on roll. Older children also attend. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery and out of school care employs 17 members of staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a range of energetic and physical activities in the outdoor play area. They move around the environment confidently and with good control. Children are developing an awareness of space, themselves and others as they manoeuvre wheeled vehicles and climb up and over the climbing frame. During physical activity sessions children learn to move in a variety of ways as they practise ball skills, running and jumping. Children benefit from the outdoor play area through out the year. This helps children to learn to enjoy physical activity and to look after themselves. For example, understanding the need to dress appropriately in the different weathers in order to protect themselves from the sun or cold elements. Children develop competent small physical skills through access to a range of equipment and activities including construction equipment and creative and writing materials.

Children benefit from a healthy and balanced diet. The main meals are prepared in the school kitchen. The nursery staff prepare the nutritional snacks. However, not all the nursery staff who are involved in these duties have had guidance on food safety and hygiene regulations. Systems are in place to meet children's individual dietary needs to ensure that they are not exposed to foods that may trigger allergic reactions. Water is available to children at all times. Staff regularly offer the babies water. The older children can freely access the drinks themselves. Children are learning to respond to their bodily needs, which further promotes their health and development.

The health and hygiene procedures help to protect children from infection and cross contamination. Staff have established routines for cleaning surfaces, toys and equipment. Rotas are displayed to monitor these routines. The clear nappy changing routine is followed well by staff. Children are developing an awareness of simple hygiene procedures, such as hand washing at appropriate times. Through staff explanation older children have learnt that the purpose of hand washing is to remove germs. Outdoor shoes are not worn in the nursery to ensure the floors, which are used for play surfaces, are not contaminated by germs carried into the nursery on footwear. Children's health needs are mainly met. Staff know the children well and are attentive to their individual needs. They quickly identify if they are unwell and take the appropriate action, such as contacting parents. There is a high proportion of qualified first-aiders on duty at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and secure environment which provides a welcoming atmosphere and helps children settle easily. Children's work is displayed prominently, further helping to develop their sense of belonging. Rooms are arranged effectively to provide different areas for play, rest and meals. Children are able to move around safely in the very well organised environment. They have access to a wide range of stimulating resources. Toys and equipment conform to safety standards and are suitable for different ages and abilities, meeting children's needs effectively. Children confidently choose from these during their play. Resources are organised in such a way to encourage safe, independent choice and accessibility.

Children's safety is promoted through staff implementing the safety policies and procedures, for example: the evacuation drills; when taking the children on outings; and the high level of supervision. Babies and young children are well monitored when sleeping. However, the fire safety officer's instruction to keep specific doors shut is not always adhered to on the first floor level. The risk assessment covers all aspects of the nursery life including outings. The close circuit television camera and code pads on the entrance doors increase children's security as persons do not enter the provision without authorised admission.

Children are protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures and give priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. They are confident, motivated and self-assured. Children across the whole provision benefit from well planned activities which are supported by enthusiastic and caring staff. The staff use the Birth to three matters framework to inform their planning and practice. This has a positive effective on the quality of the children's learning. Children's level of achievement is established and recorded and the next steps for individual children's learning and development are identified. From an early age children learn to explore and investigate using their senses as they feel the textures of different materials from a range of resources, including natural products, paints, dough, gloop and fabrics tied to the radiator covers. The musical instruments are enjoyed both indoors and outside as children listen to the different sounds they can make. Early communication skills are well supported through high quality adult-child interactions. Staff respond to the babies using words, gestures and facial expressions. Children learn to enjoy books as they are read to often and can easily access books in all care rooms. There are many opportunities for children to be creative and use their imagination through role play and small world play materials. For example, one of the role play areas is currently a travel agents. The children are using brochures, play phones and computers to support their play ideas. The children are able to play in a unhurried manner which allows them to extend their ideas, make connections and develop new skills.

Staff establish positive relationships with children. Children's emotional needs are met through the nursery's settling in procedures, which involve visits made by staff and time at the nursery before the arrangement commences, to help new children to feel secure. The key worker system ensures staff know their children well and are sensitive to their individual needs. For example, as soon as loud machinery noises could be heard from outside the windows were closed and children's music played on the tape to further muffle the sound. Staff are aware that loud noises distress some children. To satisfy the curiosity of the other children they were taken to the window and shown where the noise was coming from, which led to a discussion about the workmen's different tools. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them to develop a strong sense of self.

The out of school children have opportunities to relax and have fun using a wide range of resources to support activities and play experiences, for example, the role play area, construction and growing seeds. Children enjoy this time at the end of the school day to make choices in what they do. The outdoor play area is used by the older children daily. If children do not wish to pursue energetic play they remain in their care rooms and continue with activities of their choice. The older children contribute towards the planning which helps to sustain their interest in the activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave well as staff give them plenty of praise and support for their efforts and achievements. Staff act as good role models, showing respect and consideration for children and each other. Staff meet individual needs well with regard to managing behaviour, offering a clear and consistent approach which takes into account children's stage of development. Children respond well and as a result show a growing awareness of right and wrong. The out of school children and staff have prepared their own code of conduct poster of acceptable behaviour which is displayed in their main play room.

All children are included in the activities. Staff do not stereotype play activities and show respect for children's choice of play. This helps develop children's confidence and self-esteem. However, there are limited resources and visual images to develop children's understanding about the diversity of society.

Children benefit from the good partnership with parents and staff. Children's development and achievements are shared with their parents on a regular basis. Informal discussions upon arrival and collection of children, the daily diary and written records are used to keep parents up to date with their child's progress and development. Parents have access to and receive plenty of good information about the setting and what it has to offer in terms of childcare, themes and plans. Parents are given information about continuing the children's play and learning experiences at home. Systems are in place to log complaints and for parents to raise concerns and suggestions. All concerns and suggestions are considered and where possible improvements made, such as the intercom system for the out of school care service.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are protected because of the recruitment and interview procedures in place. Staff appointments are followed by a detailed induction. Student placements also complete an induction procedure. Regular staff meetings ensure staff work in a consistent way across the provision and that training needs are met. Staff work as a cohesive team who focus on their roles and responsibilities to meet the individual needs of the children. The deputy systems ensure the effective management of the service at all times. Staff create a happy and supportive atmosphere for children and parents. Most staff are qualified and attend relevant courses to continue their own professional development and further enhance the childcare practice. The evaluation process is intrinsic in all aspects of the nursery, which means the staff are able to recognise where they are successful and where aspects need improvement.

Children enjoy a wide range of play experiences which are offered across well organised spaces, maximising their play and learning opportunities. The required documentation is in place which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being. However, the recording of confidential information in the general room diaries does not help staff to monitor children's needs. Records are securely stored to protect children.

Overall the provision meets the needs of all children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?
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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 staff who prepare and handle food comply with food safety and hygiene regulations to protect children from food contamination
- ensure the fire safety officers requirements are met regarding the playroom doors on the first floor level
- further develop resources and visual images to raise children's awareness about the diversity of society
- ensure systems used to record children's information complies with the code of confidentiality, is organised to meet children's individual needs and is available to parents.

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