



Snaps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY231620
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Jacqueline Oldman
Setting Address	118 Westborough Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, SS0 9JG
Telephone number	01702 353789
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Registered person	Snaps Nursery
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 good. 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?

Snaps Nursery is privately owned. It opened in 2003 and operates from four large rooms, in a converted business premises in Westcliff-on-Sea. It is situated close to the Palace Theatre, local schools and the hospital. A maximum of 38 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 67 children from four months to under eight years on roll. Of these 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local community. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 members of staff. Of these, nine staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to follow good personal hygiene routines. Staff encourage younger children to follow basic hand washing practices and many do this independently. Staff are mostly attentive to children's runny noses and ensure they wear gloves to help stop the spread of infection. Older, more able children need no prompting from staff to go off to wash their hands in the sink after getting their hands dirty during messy activities. When asked why they wash their hands before eating, children over two years confidently explain that hands have germs that could give you tummy ache if you don't wash them.

Procedures to administer medication to children are comprehensive and have been recently reviewed to ensure children are well cared for if they become ill. Staff follow this effectively in practice. They keep clear records of any accidents or medication administered and can deal competently with minor emergencies or accidents as they hold current first aid certificates. However, children are not yet fully protected as prior written parental permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment has not been obtained.

Staff have a sound appreciation that fresh air helps children's physical well-being and daily plans include them going outside in most weathers. Children are taken out routinely and staff endeavour to use the garden and local community for various activities. Children's hand-eye co-ordination skills are developing soundly. They use a wide variety of equipment inside to build, construct and manipulate. For example, two year olds concentrate hard as they try to build towers higher than themselves and the good variety of writing mediums help children to develop early mark making skills. As a result, children's large and fine physical skills are developing very well.

Children are nourished with packed lunches supplied by parents. Parents are made aware of the nursery's healthy eating guide and asked not to include sweets or fizzy drinks in their child's lunchbox. Any food brought into nursery is checked, labelled and where necessary stored in the refrigerator, maintained at a suitable temperature, to ensure food is kept fresh. Independence is promoted as older, more able children make choices from their lunchbox supported by staff who encourage them to eat the healthier options first. Children sit in a social group for meals and eat at their own pace. Older children help themselves to drinks freely and children's named beakers are displayed appropriately to prompt younger children to ask for their drink. As a result, babies and children are able to remain hydrated and satisfy their needs following exercise or when they are thirsty.

Babies, who are not weaned, are supplied with formula milk according to their individual needs. The milk kitchen is kept clean and thorough procedures are in place to prevent cross-infection.

A steam sterilizer ensures bottles and equipment is clean and free from germs. Children have named bottles, water beakers or cups to drink from which prevents germs carrying from one child to another. Snacks are supplied by the nursery having good regard for healthy eating. These may include choices of fruit, bread sticks, celery or other vegetables, crackers or bread with cheese or jam. Children's specific dietary needs are discussed with parents and positive steps are taken to support children's growth and development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into the safe and very secure environment. Displays of children's work and welcome posters invite children into the setting. More able children select their name card and self-register, helping them feel a sense of belonging.

Daily risk assessments, both indoors and outdoors, are maintained by a designated member of staff to ensure potential risks to children are minimised. Good procedures are in place to help children learn to keep themselves safe. Children are enabled to learn to recognise potential hazards and take responsibility for maintaining a safe environment, supported admirably by staff. Effective security arrangements ensure children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and unauthorised persons cannot gain access. All visitors are carefully vetted at the office and asked to sign in, before entering the nursery, to keep children safe. There are clearly defined procedures for the emergency evacuation of the building and fire drills take place regularly to help children learn what to do in an emergency and keep themselves safe.

Staff have completed child protection training, are aware of child protection issues and are able to implement the policies and procedures. They understand they must report any concerns to the designated member of staff but a minority of staff are not yet fully aware of what to do in the absence of an appropriate response to any concerns they share. However, overall, staff have a sound commitment to safeguarding children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children are mostly eager to attend the nursery and good settling-in procedures ensure they become secure in their environment and form warm relationships with the staff. Children make choices about their activities and they mostly play harmoniously with each other. A key worker system helps staff to become familiar with children's individual needs. Children benefit from staff's good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and how to implement this to plan stimulating activities to interest and motivate them. Children learn to initiate their own play using resources that are readily accessible to them. Staff observe and record what young children can do, however, the information gathered is not yet used effectively to inform future planning to support or challenge children to achieve as much as they can. Most young children interact well with the staff team who support their play and encourage them to be independent, questioning and explain their thoughts. Young children read for pleasure and enjoy sharing books with others.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a well balanced and stimulating curriculum helping children to progress. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals as they learn through purposeful play. The learning environment is organised so that resources are easily accessible to allow children to make decisions about their play. The indoor accommodation has been reorganised and is used effectively to promote learning in all six areas. The outside area is used to support children's physical development and staff are beginning to plan a wider range of outdoor activities that link to other areas of learning. Staff observe children as they play to chart their achievements and progress through the stepping stones. However, observations are not used effectively to inform future planning to ensure activities are accurately matched to individual needs.

The everyday resources used are linked to broad learning objectives. Children show good skills in concentrating and perseverance, for example, they spend time totally absorbed as they skilfully scoop up sand, rice and pasta to weigh, measure, investigate and explore its properties. They are curious about the activities and are motivated to learn. There are good opportunities for children to learn about technology as they use the educational software on the computer. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they look at insects using a magnifying glass.

Children confidently use language in a variety of ways. They clearly express their feelings, ideas and wishes as they produce menus for Bread Café or share descriptive clues when playing 'Kim's Game'. During each session writing and drawing materials are provided and as a result children can independently write in the diary during role play or begin to copy their names onto their artwork.

A wide range of activities are provided to allow children to count, recognise numbers and then develop a secure understanding of how to use mathematical skills in different ways. Children count each other as they arrive and know two boys and four girls calculate to six children... Good use is made of number songs to encourage children to explore what results when one is taken away or one added. Ample opportunities are provided for children to use mathematical language when describing shapes or weighing and filling a variety of containers.

Children show skill in using their imagination and creativity when participating in both planned and spontaneous activities. They spontaneously dance to familiar songs and readily copy the actions following the lead of others. Children sing their response to their name during registration and use props to bring songs such as the 'Runaway Train' to life. Children use a range of tools such as brushes, rollers and sponges to paint expressively and enjoy finding out what happens as they mix colours. Adult-led craft opportunities are also provided when staff provide the initial idea. For example, to make a snowman Christmas card using pre-cut shapes or collage a picture frame then use glue and materials such as tissue paper and wool to create an individual item. However, children are not able to access a fuller range of art materials so that they can self-select materials and explore their individuality.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff build positive relationships with parents and strive to work alongside them to support children's individual or specific needs. For example, staff provide parents with regular newsletters to help them keep up-to-date with any changes to the care provided. Key workers liaise with parents on an informal basis about important care practices such as toilet training and weaning. The current arrangements for nappy changing do not enable children's privacy to be respected. Parents are provided with daily written information about their child's day at the nursery to enable them to monitor continuity and the progression their child makes. They are encouraged to contribute to the daily book provided for children under two years and share information regarding their child's time away from nursery in order for staff to provide good continuity of care. Parents are provided with appropriate information about how to make a complaint and the registered provider is adequately aware of the action they are required to take to address parental concerns.

Staff work with outside agencies about how best to support children who may have learning difficulties. They provide adequate activities and play opportunities and liaise with parents regarding any special services required to promote children's welfare and development. There is a good supply of toys and books, reflecting diversity, available to the children. Children celebrate festivals such as Christmas and join in activities based on other festivals such as Diwali, while learning new vocabulary and recognising that families have different or similar cultures and traditions. This helps them to develop acceptance and tolerance of the similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Staff manage children's behaviour in a positive and consistent manner. Children learn to work harmoniously with others. Any minor conflicts are quickly dealt with and children are enabled to take responsibility for their own actions. For example, when a child was joined by others during a measuring activity, and only one dish was made available, a member of staff skilfully intervened asking carefully posed questions to enable them to recognise and resolve the problem. Children are effectively being taught how to share and negotiate and as a result, very few children show disruptive or challenging behaviour and many children play very co-operatively alongside each other. There are valuable opportunities for children to be independent and make meaningful choices whilst they play and many are able to appreciate how they can help others. For example, following play children gather as a group and are encouraged to look around the room and identify what needs tidying and why before negotiating roles and responsibilities. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with good quality information about the setting. Written information is displayed outlining the learning structures and the themes covered throughout the year, together with a shared reflection of the aims. This enables parents to familiarise themselves with the National Curriculum and the six areas of learning children cover, helping them to learn how they can best support the learning and development of their child. Each child's developmental record is easily accessible to parents, enabling them to monitor how their child is progressing. As a result of the effective partnership parents are warmly encouraged to be involved with their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The owner is committed to the improvement of nursery education for all children. She understands the importance of regular staff meetings and training opportunities in raising the quality of education. Meetings are used effectively to encourage consistent practice and reflect, monitor and evaluate staff's knowledge and understanding of the implementation of the Foundation Stage. The staff team is very receptive to new ideas and keen to develop their knowledge and understanding of effective practice and child development through training opportunities such as 'Play with a Purpose' and NVQ level 4. They have implemented a new planning structure and revised the process of recording observations to improve outcomes for children. Staff assess their own effectiveness through yearly appraisals and any identified training needs are included in the staff development plan.

Children benefit from a caring and committed staff team who understand the importance of team work. All staff have been vetted and checked and the required qualification levels are met. The registered provider is aware of the need for robust recruitment procedures and has enlisted the support of a professional agency. An induction programme helps to ensure staff are made conversant with all aspects of the position they are applying for. Thoughtful use of time, space, both indoors and outdoors, and staff deployment is generally successful in contributing to children's well-being and development and flexible to parents' needs. Due to anticipated demand since the last inspection the conditions of registration have been varied to allow more children under two years to attend the nursery. As a result the play space has been re-organised. However, admissions mean children under two are not yet being admitted into the designated room and children aged two to three years benefit by resting or sleeping undisturbed there.

The majority of documentation and record keeping required to support children is in place. One or two policies need very minor amendments to ensure they reflect the latest information and changes to the National Standards. Policies and procedures are kept in a large operational plan which provides a good illustration of the setting's practice. Parents have access to the policies and procedures so they can see how the setting is organised. The nursery benefits from a well-organised office space and nursery manager who is supernumary.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to: update their policies and statements in line with the National Standards and guidance, ensure that there is a named staff member where appropriate and develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the policies; develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and update the child protection policy to include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer; review the operational plan to show how space, staff and resources will be organised to improve the quality of care provided for children and plan a wider range of

activities and play opportunities for children that encourages them to make choices about their play and foster independence.

Policies and statements have been reviewed and updated and reflect the requirements of the National Standards and associated guidance. Staff have familiarised themselves with the policies and procedures and the National Standards and have their own copies for reference. Staff are aware of their role in reporting any concerns and know who the designated staff member is with responsibility for child protection. The operational plan and staff deployment has been reviewed and positive changes implemented to improve the quality of care for children. Children have access to a varied range of activities and play opportunities that are organised to encourage them to make choices and foster their independence. This promotes children's safety, care and welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standard 1: Suitable Person. Concerns were raised because whilst staff:child ratios were being met the requirement for a minimum of 50% qualified staff was not always being maintained. A childcare inspector made an unannounced visit and one action was made relating to National Standard 1: ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking that staff are suitably qualified and experienced to work with children under two years. As a result children have been grouped and given group names and staff deployment has been changed to ensure qualified members of staff work directly with children under two years at all times. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider 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):

- develop activity plans to ensure they include differentiation to provide sufficient support or challenge to maximise outcomes for all children under three years

- review the nappy changing procedures to ensure children's privacy is maintained
- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment

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):

- develop planning by using observations to more effectively plan for children's next steps in learning and ensure activities are accurately matched to individual needs.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk