

Elmfield Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 319169

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Inspector Shirley Peart

Setting Address 1 Westfield Grove, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE3 4YA

Telephone number 0191 284 6060

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Registered person Jesmond Nurseries 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 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?

Elmfield Day Nursery was registered in 1996. It operates from a converted three storey house in a residential area on the outskirts of the city of Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne. Children are cared for in groups according to their age and stage of development. The youngest children are based on the ground floor, the first floor accommodates the middle age range and the oldest age group are based on the second floor. There is an enclosed rear garden available for outdoor play.

The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 until 17.45 for 51 weeks of the year. Children attend from a wide geographical area.

The nursery is registered to provide 75 places and there are currently 102 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. This includes 30 children who receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group is managed by 'Jesmond Nurseries Ltd' and there is a partner nursery situated in Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne. The principal, who oversees both nurseries, is a qualified

teacher. There is a manager in place for the day to day organisation of the nursery and specific coordinators responsible for the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. In total there are 21 full-time and eight part-time members of staff employed to care for the children. All staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification Level 2, 3 or 4, or a degree. The setting receives support from an early years advisor and Playgroup Network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Older children are beginning to gain a good understanding of healthy practices. For example, they know that they will 'burn' if they do not wear sun cream and a sun hat for outdoor play when it is hot. They also know that milk and water are good for them, as they chat about this during snack times. Staff adhere to good hygiene practices throughout the nursery so that children's health is well promoted. For example, they wear aprons when serving food, clean tables and sweep up after snacks and meals and change nappies hygienically in designated areas. On the day of the inspection staff did not remind older children to wash their hands before snack, however, it is normal practice for children to do this. Children independently wash their hands after using the bathrooms, before main meals and also clean their teeth after lunch. This promotes children's understanding of the need to follow healthy practices.

Suitable documentation is in place regarding administration of medication, accident forms and emergency consent. Accidents are monitored very well. For example, accident sheets are collated and any particular recurrences are highlighted, so that staff can act on the information to prevent further mishaps occurring to the children. All staff hold relevant first aid certificates for their roles and parents are made aware of the sick children and exclusion policy. This ensures that children's health needs are very well met.

All children within the nursery gain plenty of opportunities to be outside in the fresh air. For example, babies are taken for regular walks or sit in the garden under the shade of the tree with staff. Older toddlers become excited at the prospect of playing outdoors, as they happily put on their coats, state where they are going and eagerly run outside when the doors open. They run around excitedly on the paved area and successfully climb up and slide down the slide on the grass. Well planned indoor activities also provide children with very good opportunities, which help them to develop control of their bodies and learn new physical skills as specific visitors, such as 'Yoga Bugs' and 'Jo Jingles,' attend the nursery on a regular basis.

Children help themselves to their water bottles, which are clearly labelled with their name and photograph. They clearly enjoy the fresh, wholesome food, which is prepared on the premises and they are given more as they want it. Parents also feel that their children receive good quality meals. This ensures that their nutritional needs are very well met. Children sit together in their rooms for mealtimes and their growing independence is well supported by staff. For example, younger pre-school children make good attempts to use appropriate size knives and forks on their own.

Snack times are an extremely good learning occasion for children receiving nursery education. A key member of staff talks to them and asks them relevant questions. Children enthusiastically join in with conversations, as they talk about how they care for the potatoes and strawberry plants in the nursery garden or talk about the latest mathematical shape that they are learning.

Their independence is appropriately fostered, as two 'helpers' are chosen to give out the plates of food and children return their own utensils when they have finished, although they are not given opportunities to pour their own drinks at snack time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a well organised environment and are cared for in designated rooms according to their age and stage of development. For example, babies and younger toddlers are cared for in three base rooms on the ground floor. Older toddlers from 21 months to 36 months are cared for in two rooms on the first floor and pre-school children move easily between the two rooms on the second floor. The nursery rooms and hallways are adorned with children's artwork and other information, such as the 'Tiny Talk' training carried out by staff, regarding using sign language with babies, which is very well displayed. This gives a warm and welcoming feel to the nursery environment.

There is some very good, sturdy equipment within the nursery. For example, staff use appropriate size seats attached to tables for babies and small wooden enclosed seats for toddlers when necessary. All toys are clean and most are well maintained; the nursery is in the process of renewing some items, such as role play cupboards and baby wall mirrors. Babies handle and explore real and natural materials, such as treasure basket items, and older children play with real items, such as telephones, handbags and metal pans. This gives babies very good opportunities to use their senses and older children excellent opportunities to use and develop their imagination.

During topics, such as 'People Who Help Us', children learn about safety in a fun way. For example, staff caring for the older children talk to them, take them on interesting visits and invite relevant people into the nursery, such as the police and road safety officer. They also get involved in national road safety weeks and they have also been on a recent visit to a fire station, where they listen to relevant talks about fire safety and have good chances to interact with fire safety officers and use the equipment.

Staff are vigilant and observant and quickly spot any potential hazards while children play. Documentation supports children's safety well. For example, risk assessments for rooms and areas are prominently displayed; reminders about closing stair gates and the main door safely are also displayed for parents and staff. This reinforces risks and possible dangers, so that everyone has a responsibility to keep the children safe. Staff also record nappy changes and check on sleeping babies regularly, which is also recorded on individual sleep checking charts. As the nursery is on three levels, children use stairways on a daily basis. Stair gates are in place and locked after use. Older children competently walk down the stairs in single file holding onto the banister and younger children are appropriately helped by staff to develop this important life skill.

Most staff have been on child protection training and this is ongoing throughout different levels. They are made aware of the safeguarding children policy during induction and the government poster on child protection is displayed throughout the nursery, as a reminder for staff of what to do if they have any concerns. This ensures that children's safety and welfare is well protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies are fascinated when they handle and explore musical instruments for a planned session with 'The Sage.' They smile and show determination as they watch, reach up for and feel the brightly coloured soft ribbons or bang the drum with enthusiasm. They are very happy and settled and the main staff member caring for young babies is highly competent. Older babies and toddlers play confidently as they run after the ball, make marks with paint brushes or eagerly move trucks around the room. Staff offer lots of praise and encouragement and recognise children's attempts at speaking, as they repeat the words that children are attempting to say. Therefore, children's language and gross motor skills are developing very well.

Younger pre-school children love to be outside and run around happily. However, when the nursery rota for using the outdoor play area is not adhered to and there are lots of children outside together, older children become overexcited and some boisterous play is apparent with children's play becoming less meaningful. Children love to listen to simple rhyming stories. They happily sit in a small group and listen attentively, making good attempts at joining in with the endings. Children go for walks to collect leaves and twigs, which they use in their nature collage and they are very independent at lunchtime. Overall, young children are very well supported by caring, attentive staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Some excellent activities are planned for the children and exciting visitors come into the nursery which helps to promote children's learning very well, such as 'Yoga Bugs,' and 'The Sage,' where children are actively involved with well planned activity sessions. Staff ask children lots of relevant questions that make them think and respond enthusiastically. Rooms are well set out for the children so that they move freely between creative, imaginative, table top and quiet activities. Staff provide good resources that coincide with themes or topics, such as story books on Paramedics and the librarian and role play equipment representing the dentists, for 'People Who Help Us.' Staff use everyday situations very well to help children learn, such as counting the number of children in the room before outdoor play, but cleverly stopping at a certain number so that children confidently carry on counting independently.

Staff use the planning and assessment systems effectively. Learning objectives are differentiated and linked to the stepping stones. Children's individual assessment files contain lovely photographs and comments of children's achievements, which clearly show the progress that they make while in the nursery.

Staff manage children's behaviour in a positive way they are quick to help children resolve conflicts and to take turns as they get down to their level and talk to them. Therefore, children's behaviour is very good. Some staff are very enthusiastic, share children's delight and excitement and offer lots of positive praise and encouragement. Therefore, children are very happy and settled and eager to play. They are beginning to make strides in their independent self-care, as they make good attempts to put on their own socks and shoes after Yoga, take off their jumpers when they are too hot and successfully put them in their own trays. They enjoy talking about their home and family, play cooperatively, and chat and laugh with each other.

Children listen attentively during activities, follow instructions very well and repeat new words correctly. Some children are very articulate and hold meaningful conversations with each other

and staff. Children are beginning to understand that words carry meaning as they successfully find their name label and make good attempts at copying or freely writing their name during planned activities. However, as writing materials are not freely available on the craft table, or in the role play area, this results in some limited opportunities for them to practise their mark making skills.

Children are gaining a good understanding of mathematical concepts. They learn different shapes and successfully point out and recognise shapes in the environment. For example, children know that the strip light on the ceiling is a rectangle. They also know that there are only four children allowed in the role play area, which shows that they are gaining a good understanding of number concepts. They also have good opportunities to learn about measuring, consistency and sequencing as they cook, thread bobbins and use peg boards.

Children use their imaginations very well during child initiated play and through planned activities. For example, during Yoga they think that they are mermaids and look for pearls, or pretend to walk on the sand when it is hot. They pack their bags, sit on the 'aeroplane' pretend to go on holiday and talk about where they will go. Children are very confident and happy as they ask questions and sing spontaneously during play and at lunchtime.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very well enhanced. They visit a garden centre and bring back materials to plant potatoes and strawberries. They know that they have to care for them by watering and know that slugs and snails will eat them. They are currently watching caterpillars turn into butterflies. Children use magnifying glasses, binoculars, torches, the computer and magnets during free play and planned activities. These activities give children a very good understanding of the natural world and how technology works.

Children use a range of movements successfully as they jog on the spot, lie still on their backs and cycle in the air. Some children walk around confidently on pot stilts outside. Therefore, they have good control of their bodies and can balance very well. They competently use scissors during craft activities and small tools in the play dough, sustaining good hand-eye coordination. Therefore, their physical development is effectively enhanced.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Babies and toddlers individual routines are adhered to very well. For example, when toddlers fall asleep on a walk they are given their lunch when they wake up and not as part of the nursery routine. Their individual needs are also well met by caring staff. For example, when toddlers are apprehensive they seek out their key worker and receive lots of warm, loving cuddles and verbal reassurance so that they feel safe and secure. All staff are made aware of young children's individual routines as 'All About Me' sheets are displayed and regularly updated. Children gain a wide understanding of the world as they learn French and celebrate festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Father's Day.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported. Key staff take responsibility, offer one-to-one care where necessary, devise individual plans and have completed relevant training. Staff maintain close links with parents and relevant professionals, which ensures that children's overall needs are well met and that their progress is effectively monitored.

Toddlers and pre-school children are self-assured, have a strong sense of belonging and are confident within the setting, which is largely due to the staff's high levels of involvement. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well.

Partnership with parents is good. They are kept well informed of their children's day as staff complete a 'Today's Adventures' sheet on each child. Informal meetings are held twice a year so that parents can discuss their children's progress on a one-to-one basis with their child's key worker. Comprehensive information is available for parents and carers; they are made well aware of the nursery's policies and procedures and regular newsletters go out. The nursery is very popular as parents often bring younger siblings and some four-year-olds have attended since they were babies. Parents are very pleased with the provision in general. For example, positive comments included that all the staff have 'great interpersonal skills', their children are learning a lot, and the range of activities, food and outings are good. A few parents also described the nursery as 'fantastic.'

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Clear recruitment and selection procedures are in place for new staff. Interviews are held, clearances are carried out and an induction procedure is followed. High priority and commitment is given to staff development and training and the nursery has won a local award for outstanding contribution, for supporting work based learning. The nursery closes early on four afternoons a year so that staff can carry out in-house training. Staff have regular appraisals, are encouraged and supported to attend further training and are well motivated to do so. For example, the coordinators and some staff are currently undertaking National Vocational Qualifications to Level 4 and one staff member is doing the Early Years Professional course. The staff bring their new found knowledge into their practice, as they aim to change and develop the provision for the benefit of the children, such as story times and recipes.

Staff are currently making good progress to implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework throughout the rooms for the under three-year-olds. A key worker system is in place, which ensures continuity for children and parents. For example, they carry out first introductions, complete documentation, manage children's individual personal care and discuss children's ongoing progress with the parents. Although staff do move around to different rooms after a certain length of time, this tends to be flexible to ensure minimal disruption to children. On occasions staff have moved up to a different room and their key worker children follow, which is good as this eases the transition for them as they see familiar adults. A key staff member caring for young babies is currently carrying out an 'Infant Practitioner' course and she is very competent within her role.

A self evaluation system has previously been used and discussions are held during staff meetings regarding improvements and action plans have been put in place. However, this is not a regular or continuous occurrence so that any strengths, weaknesses and improvements are clearly identified in relation to the nursery education and the outcomes for children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. A long standing principal and nursery manager have been in post since the nursery opened in 1996, therefore they are dedicated and committed to the provision overall. The nursery education coordinator is knowledgeable and competent and a good role model for other staff, therefore the education provision is well established.

Communication is good. Staff attend regular team and room meetings, and staff carry out planning meetings every week to discuss the following weeks plans. All staff responsible for the nursery education provision are involved and aware of how to do this. The nursery manager has a clear input into the nursery education provision, as she overlooks the planning and gives guidance or advice where necessary, and ensures that trips out and visitors in are effectively organised. Children receiving nursery education have generally moved up through the nursery. Therefore, a transition report and handover from the previous key worker is carried out, so that staff are well aware of children's starting points. The manager and staff regularly evaluate the provision. For example, they have recently changed the set up and room layout, which they are currently monitoring.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to: ensure positive images of disability were available; and extend the opportunities for younger children to take part in a broader range of activities to fully promote their development, freedom of choice and independence. For the nursery education to: introduce a more flexible approach to the daily routine; and ensure that children's creativity and concentration levels were not interrupted.

The group has made good progress. Some images and displays of writing in different languages are displayed and resources, such as books with positive images of disability, are easily accessible for the children, which gives them a clear message to be aware of differences. The nursery is currently aiming to fully implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which gives children further opportunities to be independent learners based on their interests. Older children still stop activities for lunch and snack time. However, this is more flexible as children help themselves to their bottles of water throughout the session and they can go back to creative activities afterwards, as these are readily available.

Complaints since the last inspection

A concern was raised with regard to National Standard 14 - Documentation, notification of significant events. A visit was made by a childcare inspector to discuss the concerns. An action was agreed to meet the National Standards. Ofsted are satisfied that 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 complaint record may contain 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 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 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 staff adhere to the group rota for using the outdoor play area and consider developing the curriculum for outdoors for the younger children, so that their play and learning is further enhanced
- continue to use the self evaluation system effectively so that any strengths, weaknesses and improvements made are identified in relation to the nursery education and the outcomes for children

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):

- increase the opportunities for children to use writing materials for a purpose, specifically during creative and role play activities

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