

Apple Tree Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY319828
Inspection date	26 June 2006
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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets 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?

Apple Tree Day Nursery opened in 2006. It is privately owned and operates from a detached house at Hilsea, in Portsmouth, Hampshire. The nursery takes children from the local community and surrounding areas. A maximum of 21 children aged from 3 months to 5 years may attend the group at any one time. The nursery is open 08:00 until 18:00 Monday to Friday, 51 weeks of the year. Children have use of an enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 20 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Of these, seven children receive funding for nursery education. The children attend for a variety of sessions. Currently the setting supports children with learning difficulties.

The owner has a recognised early years qualification and works in the nursery on a day to day basis. She employs a qualified manager who is responsible for the day to day running of the nursery. In addition four staff work directly with the children. Of these, one holds a recognised early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children gain an understanding of the importance of looking after their bodies. They recognise why they need to wash their hands before eating and this is promoted through discussion with practitioners and the use of photographs and routines displayed in the bathroom area. They describe how germs spread as they wash their hands after playing with soil outside. Children's understanding of caring for their teeth is enhanced as they are encouraged to clean their teeth following lunch at nursery. They talk about different foods they enjoy eating recognising which are good for their bodies, such as vegetables and their understanding of healthy eating is promoted through the introduction of a range of healthy options at snack time. Children try a range of fruits, such as grapes and raisins and enjoy pumpkin seeds and cubes of cheese.

Children stay healthy because practitioners know and implement effective health and hygiene routines, for example in preparation for lunches and when changing nappies to ensure the risk of cross infection is minimised. Effective systems are in place to store and serve meals and babies' feeds brought in by parents. Children are offered tea, such as quiche or spaghetti on toast, followed by fruit and yoghurt and this is currently being developed into a planned menu. Children's health is well maintained because practitioners know their individual health and dietary requirements as written information is shared and discussed with parents at registration. Secure systems are implemented to deal with accidents and administer medication and detailed and accurate records maintained ensuring this information is effectively shared with parents.

All children benefit from opportunities to play outside in the garden daily and to participate in physical activities both indoors and out. Physical play is well planned for babies and young children to ensure they benefit from a wide range of appropriate activities and experiences. Babies use equipment, such as play gyms, walkers and tunnels learning to kick, crawl and walk unaided. They negotiate steps to the slide unaided and enjoy riding in cars and other wheeled toys. Older children develop their physical skills using a range of smaller equipment, such as bats, balls and beanbags. They develop their co-ordination and understanding of spatial awareness as they ride bicycles and use climbing and balancing apparatus. Vigorous and more challenging opportunities are promoted through the use of larger equipment at the local park. Consequently, all children begin to recognise the importance of regular physical exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit greatly because they move freely and safely around the wonderfully stimulating learning environment. Overall, their safety is ensured throughout, both inside and outside because practitioners place high importance on promoting a safe environment. Detailed and comprehensive formal and informal risk assessments are implemented on a daily basis of all areas and potential hazards removed. Access to the provision is monitored and secure systems implemented to ensure identification is obtained and accurate records are held on all visitors to and from the provision. The safety of sleeping children is regularly monitored and extremely comprehensive procedures are in place to ensure children's safety when on outings. However, although children are usually supervised from persons who have not been vetted, during the inspection the potential risk to children was overlooked when their safety was compromised because they were left with a practitioner who had not completed all relevant checks.

Children gain a very good understanding about how to keep themselves safe. They enjoy visits from the local fire brigade who bring the fire engines with them and encourage children to dress up and practice using the hose. Children discuss how to keep themselves safe when around fire and matches and learn how to contact the fire brigade should they ever need to. They know and practise the procedures for emergency evacuation ensuring they are familiar with the routine should this be necessary in the event of a fire. Children use an excellent range of play equipment and resources suitable to their individual ages and stages of development. Their safety is ensured because practitioners implement highly effective procedures to ensure all furniture, equipment and resources are kept clean and well maintained, and this is recorded, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

Children are protected and safe guarded from harm because practitioners fully understand their role with regards to protecting children in their care. Written details are obtained from parents regarding who can and cannot collect their child from nursery and detailed procedures are in place and understood by all practitioners. They have a very clear understanding of child protection issues, and this is included as part of the rigorous induction procedure, and know how to implement nursery and local child protection procedures. This ensures children are fully protected whilst at nursery.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are extremely happy and settled in the nursery provision. They have a wonderful time and benefit from the secure, homely and loving environment in which they begin their early learning. Babies and young children thrive because practitioners have a secure knowledge of child development and recognise how young children learn most effectively. Excellent interaction between practitioners and children ensures they develop a strong sense of self assurance and belonging to the setting. They cuddle their comforters brought in from home and put their arms out to practitioners climbing onto their laps for a cuddle and a story. Relationships are well enhanced because of the effective implementation of a key worker system, which helps to develop strong bonds between practitioners, children and their parents.

Babies thrive in the wonderfully stimulating learning environment and enjoy opportunities to engage in an exciting range of activities and experiences as they begin their journey of self discovery from a secure and loving environment. They have wonderful opportunities to explore their senses using a range of media and sensory and tactile experiences through the use of a range of treasure baskets. Babies babble with excitement as they explore the spaghetti in the tray and play with sand. They become competent learners showing great excitement when they manage to place the ball in the hole and watch as it slides down the ramp. Children begin to make connections pointing to pictures in books and develop their vocabulary as they become skilful communicators. They enjoy being imaginative and creative exploring musical instruments and using role-play equipment to imitate familiar routines, such as using forks to pretend to eat dinner.

Children benefit enormously because practitioners make excellent use of the Birth to three matters framework to ensure that experiences offered are tailored to individual babies and young children's needs. They use effective systems to observe and monitor children's individual development and use this information to guide their planning. Consequently, children receive a wide range of rich learning experiences enabling them to develop at their own rate. Two year olds benefit from spending much of their time with the older children, although participate in focussed activities with their individual key workers. The highly successful systems implemented

for planning and assessment with younger babies has recently been introduced to practitioners working with the two year olds, and this is developing well.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children have a positive attitude to learning and develop high levels of confidence and independence. They arrive happily and hang their coats and bags on individually named coat pegs, which they recognise by themselves. They develop very good self help skills and recognise the feelings of others, for example as they help younger children to put on painting aprons. Children play an active role in their learning and benefit from the routine of the session, which provides them with a very good balance of opportunities for them to initiate their own activities together with a range of adult led experiences.

Children's speaking and listening skills are developing well as they talk confidently to practitioners and their peers about themselves and their families. Their understanding of letters, sounds and numbers is extended in group discussions about the day and weather, for example because practitioners make very good use of these opportunities encouraging them to identify and recognise numerals and words. Children recognise their names as they self register and write them confidently labelling their own work. They freely access a range of writing tools and equipment in a designated writing area and this is extended into the role-play area as children are able to communicate their imagined ideas using emergent writing in different situations.

Children are extremely confident with the daily routine and develop a good understanding of time. They use a visual timeline to help re-enforce what happens next. Their concept of time is promoted through planned activities, such as planting apple and sunflower seeds and taking care of baby caterpillars watching them transform into butterflies. Children learn to take care of living things, for example as they water the flowers outside, and talk confidently about what their seeds need to help them grow. Their curiosity and investigative skills are well promoted because they have free access to a wonderful range of resources, such as bug finders, magnifying glasses, torches and padlocks and keys. Children search for bugs and mini beasts outside and then discuss and draw what they have found using their imagination to make up stories.

Children benefit enormously from the wonderfully stimulating and attractive learning environment, enabling them to freely access the full range of equipment. This provides opportunities for them to explore their own mathematical ideas, accessing resources such as weighing scales, compare bears and a range of number games. They competently handle a range of tools and materials, such as scissors and glue sticks and delight in opportunities to explore creativity for themselves. Children independently select their own paints and paper, put on their painting aprons and complete tasks for themselves developing high levels of independence. They enjoy using a range of tools, such as brushes, rollers and stamps to explore paint in different ways and respond excitedly to suggestions from practitioners who support them well. For example, children are introduced to new techniques, such as blow painting and enjoy mixing different paints to make a wider variety of colours from which they can choose.

Children express their imagination building sandcastles and then select straws using these to represent flags. They have independent access to a range of media, some of which is rotated daily, including gloop, jelly, clay, pulses and different types of cereals. Children respond well to the effective questioning from practitioners using their senses to explore and describe the different textures and patterns they make. Their imagination is well fostered as they have

access to a good range of role-play equipment, including dressing up clothes, providing opportunities for them to act out their real and imagined ideas with their peers.

Practitioners have a very clear understanding of how children learn and provide an exciting and stimulating learning environment, in which they can play an active role and become engrossed in their learning. They use a range of teaching methods, which are rooted in a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, to ensure younger and less able children are well supported. Curriculum planning ensures all aspects are sufficiently included and practitioners make very good use of planned activities, as well as incidental opportunities to extend children's learning. However, the systems in place to observe and record children's initial starting points and continual progress towards the early learning goals are insecure. Consequently, planning is not influenced by children's assessments or sufficiently matched to their individual abilities. Although key practitioner's working with these children know their individual capabilities, the organisation and deployment of staff does not ensure that these practitioners work directly with the children across the whole of the educational session. This impacts on the learning opportunities provided to children, particularly those older and more able and does not ensure that sufficient challenge is provided enabling them to achieve their individual potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children flourish and develop secure and trusting relationships with practitioners during their time at the nursery. They show high levels of confidence and self assurance because practitioners continually praise and encourage them to be independent. For example, babies and young children are encouraged to hold a spoon and try feeding themselves effectively supported and older children take responsibility for their own belongings and nursery equipment. Children are sensitive towards each other's needs and feelings as they try to give babies' their dummies when they become distressed and recognise how some of their peers need the reassurance from comforters they bring in from home. Older children show a very good understanding of the need to share and take turns negotiating this for themselves when playing outside with bats and balls. Overall, children's behaviour is extremely good as they learn what is acceptable and become aware of their own and other's feelings.

Children are highly valued as individuals and practitioners ensure they promote a fully inclusive environment, in which children's differences and similarities are recognised and celebrated. Effective systems are in place to ensure close liaison between practitioners, parents and other professionals involved in the care of children with specific requirements. This ensures children's individual needs are fully met, and secure procedures are in place to monitor and review this on a regular basis.

Children gain a real understanding about diversity through discussions and stories with practitioners, the use of a range of resources and through planned experiences linked to topics and special events. For example, they talk about their own families and those of their peers recognising the different family units. Children learn about their local environment and the place in which they live through visits and outings to shops, parks and places of interest. Topics about transport provide opportunities for children to visit Southsea and watch the hovercraft and regular visits from the librarian and people such as the firemen help to increase their understanding of people who help them. Children celebrate events such as St. Georges Day, Pancake Day and Easter as well as being introduced to a range of cultural festivals, including Japanese Children's Day and the Hindu festival of Chaitra. Consequently, children increase

their understanding of the world around them and this positive approach fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

All children benefit enormously because practitioners establish very good informal and friendly relationships with their parents. A strong emphasis is placed on developing the links between home and nursery and this takes place in a number of ways. For example, babies and young children benefit because consistent routines, such as feeding and sleeping, are implemented. This is achieved because both informal discussion and written information is obtained during the induction and settling in period. Home link diaries and sheets are used throughout the nursery to ensure parents are well informed about their child's day, as well as daily discussion with practitioners. Consequently, all children settle well and their individual needs are fully met. Parents are well informed about the nursery, for example staffing and routines and information is shared through various means, such as regular newsletters, parent notice boards and details included in a welcome pack. They share important information about their child, both formally and informally, to ensure practitioners are fully aware of their home and family circumstances and discuss nursery procedures as part of the induction, although written policies and procedures have not yet been shared.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are well informed about activities and experiences their child is involved in on a daily basis through discussion, the use of home link sheets and because planning is displayed. However, information does not include details about the Foundation Stage of Learning and the curriculum, which impacts on their understanding of how their child learns and develops through play. Parents are invited to share information about what their child enjoys when they start pre-school, although are not invited to contribute to the initial or ongoing assessment of their child. Meetings have recently been introduced providing opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress. However, opportunities for them to be informed about their next steps for development and actively encouraged to support their child's learning in the home are not yet in place, which impacts on parent's ability to fully contribute to their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children thrive and have a wonderful time at the nursery because all practitioners have a very good understanding of how children learn and how important play is in their development. They work well as a team and communicate effectively through informal discussion and formal meetings to ensure the nursery is well organised and the operational plan implemented in practice. As a result, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children benefit because robust and rigorous systems are in place to recruit, appoint and induct new staff, ensuring they are suitable to work with children on an ongoing basis. Highly effective systems are in place to support and monitor all practitioners continually through the implementation of a secure induction programme, regular supervision meetings and the identification of ongoing training needs. Detailed and accurate records are maintained, which include all regulatory requirements and highly effective systems are in place to monitor these. For example, monthly reviews of accidents enable management to assess whether any action is required and to evaluate the impact on promoting children's health. Written policies and procedures are known and implemented by practitioners, although some are still under development and the arrangements to share these with parents have not yet been fully implemented. In general, the overall deployment of staff is highly effective helping children

to develop secure relationships and self assurance. However, during the inspection procedures to ensure children's safety around an unvetted practitioner were overlooked.

Children make sound progress in their learning because the leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The systems for planning and monitoring the educational programme offered are secure and ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are sufficiently included. However, procedures to monitor children's individual achievements and assess the impact activities and experiences have on their individual learning have not yet been developed. As a result, children's assessments are not used to guide planning and insufficient challenge is provided to some children.

Management recognise the strengths within the provision and are aware of the areas for development. Continual assessment of the nursery remains a high priority as they work in partnership to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the nursery enabling them to promote positive outcomes for children. As a result, they develop and use action plans as working documents to enhance the provision. Management and practitioners very much share the same vision and work extremely well together as a team to ensure that this vision is achieved. Consequently, all children are happy, settled and very much enjoy the time they spend at Apple Tree Day Nursery.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets 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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to develop the written policies and procedures and implement a system to ensure parents are informed of these
- improve the arrangements to ensure children are protected from persons who have not been vetted at all times

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):

- improve the systems to observe, record and monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals, to identify next steps for their individual learning and ensure sufficient challenge is provided
- develop a system for parents to contribute to the initial and ongoing assessment of their child and increase opportunities for parents to be informed about their child's next steps for development and how they can support learning in the home
- review the organisation and deployment of practitioners to ensure this is effective across all aspects of the nursery education session

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