



Sunbeams Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101586
Inspection date	07 July 2006
Inspector	Angela Cole
Setting Address	Hawkers Hill, Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire, GL17 0BS
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Registered person	Sharon Hale
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sunbeams Day Nursery is a privately owned setting. It was established in 1997 and is sited in a former Victorian primary school near the centre of the town of Mitcheldean in Gloucestershire. Children are accommodated in four rooms with babies, toddlers and pre-school children having separate facilities. All children share access to an enclosed, outside play area.

The nursery operates on weekdays all the year round, excluding bank holidays, from

07.30 until 17.30. A maximum of 68 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 95 children aged from three months to under eight years on roll including a number of before and after-school children. Of these, 35 children receive funding for early education. The children come from the town, the surrounding villages and from farther afield. The staff have experience of supporting children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is managed by the owner who is a qualified primary and early years teacher. There are 16 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, 12 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery offers placements to students from the local colleges.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a balanced diet as they eat regular, freshly-prepared meals and snacks that include fruit and vegetables. Younger children freely access their drinking cups between meals and older ones are offered additional drinks, for example, when the weather is hot. Their dietary needs are met well through regular exchange of information between parents, childcare and catering staff. Parents know how much the children who bring packed meals have eaten but are not given firm guidance on the contents so some children eat less healthy foods for lunch.

The children's health is generally well promoted by staff who implement appropriate procedures to reduce the risk of cross infection, including the wearing of gloves when changing nappies. Children learn the importance of hygiene as they usually wash their hands before eating although some younger ones do not wash after going to the toilet. Children receive suitable continuity of care through the sharing of information with parents about medication administered at the nursery. Families are informed verbally about children's accidents; however, parents are not always asked to sign the accident record to confirm they have received the information to continue any care the child may need at home.

Children enjoy effective opportunities to play outdoors, getting regular exercise and fresh air, although babies are taken out less frequently. The older children develop control and skill in climbing and balancing in energetic play, for example, on soft-play equipment and a challenging climbing frame. They respond to invitations to move imaginatively in games or action songs and gain an awareness of space in the base rooms and in smaller areas such as a den. From an early age, children become skilful in using basic tools such as spoons, forks, pencils and scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the safe, secure environment that the nursery offers. They are

protected from unknown visitors as the doors are locked and only opened to known persons by the vigilant staff. Children play safely in the outdoor play area which is secured by high fences and locked gates. The nursery environment and resources are kept safe for children. This is because the setting undertakes regular risk assessment and all staff work together to implement appropriate actions to address any identified potential hazards, such as hot drinks. Sleeping babies and children are closely monitored by their key workers to ensure their well-being. Children go on outings along well-known routes to areas of the town including the park with which the staff are familiar and appropriate emergency equipment is always taken. Older ones are accompanied as they walk to and from school on a safe path away from the road.

Babies and children use suitable ranges of resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. They have opportunities to select activities from a range of toys and equipment that meets safety standards although some of the resources for the older children are well worn. The children gain first-hand knowledge about keeping themselves safe. For example, they learn through an appropriate experience of danger in controlled circumstances as they manoeuvre wheeled toys confidently and safely.

The staff safeguard and promote children's welfare and have all the required procedures in place. There are always several first aiders on the premises and most staff hold have completed a detailed course on protecting children. Staff are familiar with the child protection policy and procedures so they have a comprehensive understanding of how to protect children. Any issues would be dealt with sensitively and effectively, ensuring the welfare of the children and families concerned.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The youngest children are supported by the stable group of caring, attentive staff. Their care needs are well integrated into the daily routine with considerate regard for the babies' own nappy changing and sleeping patterns. Staff are beginning to provide different resources such as treasure baskets that contain a small number of objects made from natural materials for children to explore. The toddlers enjoy being with the small team of kind, responsive adults. They have considerable free choice of resources throughout the day and play confidently as individuals or in small groups. The staff caring for the under threes are adopting an assessment system using the Birth to three matters framework to monitor the children's development. There is no clear planning of experiences, however, to ensure an appropriate balance of activities for those attending full or part-time. The oldest children enjoy coming to the nursery when they are not in school. They enthusiastically join in different activities such as a disco, although are not actively involved in planning a wide programme to extend their interests. In appropriate weather, they have freedom of the outdoor and indoor spaces and access all the nursery resources for themselves, especially after school. They use their own ideas and initiative to extend their use of the versatile pre-school equipment.

Nursery Education

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning, for example, in communication, language and literacy. They gain fluent speaking skills to talk socially, to ask questions and to tell their own stories about things they make, such as a dough 'flower pancake'. Children experiment with difficult tenses of words and regularly suggest rhyming words such as 'me' and 'tea'. They spontaneously sound out the letters of their names and write these when they are ready with recognisable letters. Children volunteer to 'read' stories to the others and listen intently to books to show good recall of the story when questioned by staff. They fetch their own materials to write 'stock lists' and to sign family cards. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points in mathematical development. They confidently use numbers in their play and pose problems for themselves, for example, as they find out how many children are in a queue. They confidently count to 10, including pictures of piglets in a book, and know that one more window is required to make four for a model. They create complex models with shapes such as hexagons and accurately tell others to place items in the 'middle'.

Children gain new ideas and skills to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. They focus intently as they explore the properties of natural materials such as dry sand and water. They often notice differences and changes of the cooking ingredients used, for example, in cake making. Staff take the time to give in-depth explanations, for example, when a child is fascinated by paper and water going down a covered drain in the playground. Children concentrate and show good interest in everyday technology, such as videos, and to operate programmable toys. They build complex models when encouraged and play alongside older children. There are no differences in learning between different groups of children such as girls and boys in creative development. Staff effectively support children to create their own designs with challenging materials including soft-play shapes. They encourage them to combine resources to extend their ideas, for example, to add bricks to the cars and to bring dough tools to represent breakfast items such as 'toast' and 'eggs'. Children experiment with colour as they use a wide range of painting techniques, including bubbles and marbles. They spontaneously respond as they use all their senses to taste and smell different foods such as a 'rough' kiwi and to handle the soft fur of mice. Children work well together, for example, to describe their favourite musical instrument and to create a complex story about a farm.

The staff are secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are perceptive to children's discoveries as they play. Adults calmly encourage children to concentrate and explore materials in depth so they gain knowledge, hone their skills and have pride in their achievements. The planning includes learning for children with different abilities although it does not cover extensive outdoor play or creating through spontaneous access to a wide range of media and materials. In practice, children take part in an appropriate balance of adult and child-led activities to effectively encourage them to learn at their own pace. The staff effectively observe the needs and progress of the small groups of children and regularly record the children's achievements. This enables them to help children to take the next steps towards the early learning goals through appropriate questions, individual tasks and group challenges. As a result, the children are enthusiastic and interested with a

confident approach to learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are welcomed into the nursery to settle quickly and develop effective relationships with each other and the friendly staff. The use of a shared area at each end of the day helps children of all ages to develop a sense of community within their own group and the whole nursery. The children have some opportunities to learn about the local community as they see older ones going to and from the adjacent school. Staff introduce different customs such as Chinese New Year, multicultural resources and some books showing people with disabilities so children begin to gain an understanding of people in the wider world.

Children with additional needs are suitably included through liaison between staff, parents and appropriate external agencies. They are able to participate in activities with their peer group as staff ensure they receive the required support, for example, to cope with their feelings and frustrations. Children generally behave well and develop an awareness of the need to respect agreed rules. For example, older children willingly take turns on the slide and inform the staff when a younger child takes a wheeled toy onto steps. Children respond positively when staff notice incidents and use distraction and praise to support them to adapt their behaviour. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children settle well as staff work closely with families to gain information such as preferences and familiar home routines, particularly for babies. Parents are warmly welcomed and there are good opportunities for informal exchange of information, which ensures that children are cared for in accordance with their wishes. Families benefit from the comprehensive welcome pack and are well informed about the provision through prominent notices. They receive good information about young children's development through detailed explanation of the daily sheets. Parents of pre-school children are familiar with the Foundation Stage shown in the group's plans and key workers share and celebrate with them as children achieve a step towards the early goals. They are meaningfully involved in the children's learning through sharing resources such as farming leaflets and bringing in mice for the children to handle during pet week.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Robust employment systems ensure that staff are suitable and vetted. Children receive satisfactory adult attention due to the carefully organised staff ratios and well-established keyworker system. The younger children have free access to toys and equipment so they make decisions although pre-school children do not move freely between their two rooms to organise their own play. The older children's equipment is not attractively displayed on the available surfaces to enhance their

choice, for example, of technological and creative resources.

All legally required documentation is completed and confidential records are usually stored on the premises. The children's daily routines are well-established although there is not clear planning of experiences for babies, toddlers or out-of-school provision. Staff generally implement the nursery's policies and procedures consistently, for example, to foster their understanding of hygiene. The up-to-date, clear policies and procedures are specific to the setting. However, accident records are not always signed by the parents and staff do not complete written risk assessments before outings. The group has a log to record any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements.

Leadership and management are good. Children receive consistent care enhanced by the very low turnover of the well-qualified and experienced staff team. They benefit from the staff's strong commitment to improvement, for example, of systems to monitor the assessment of their progress. Staff are well supported in their professional development so they use the acquired knowledge to improve their practice. For example, younger children access a wider range of activities following staff's training on the Birth to three matters framework. There is good integration of care and nursery education, and children are well motivated so they concentrate and become enthusiastic learners.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the setting improved the outdoor provision and gave further consideration to the equipment used at sleep times. The setting has begun to develop the outside play area with the addition of a pergola although activities are not covered in the planning. In practice, staff provide appropriate equipment that offers children sufficient challenge, interest and stimulation. Older children fetch additional items such as dolls and small-world toys to use for their own ideas to extend their play. The nursery now provides suitable and sufficient equipment to meet the sleeping requirements of babies and young children. Extra sleeping mats are available from the pre-school. This ensures the children's safety as only appropriate furniture is provided for them to rest or sleep.

In the previous education inspection, no significant weaknesses were noted and the nursery was asked to further consider the system of assessing the children's progress. Staff have continued to review, develop and extend the pre-school children's assessment system. They now keep dated examples of children's work and keyworkers comment on the children's responses to activities based on the highlighted levels of stepping stones. The system is now more readily accessible to staff to further support and provide on-going evidence of children's progress and achievements.

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 complaints made by the 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

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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 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 good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing
- make sure the record of an accident is signed by the parent
- record the risks to children in relation to outings and the actions taken to minimise these.

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 the planning for children including opportunities for them to learn outdoors and for their creativity through spontaneous access to a wide range of media and materials. (also applies to care)

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