



First Steps

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY331318
Inspection date	26 September 2006
Inspector	Sally Ann Smith
Setting Address	Moreton Hall School, Weston Rhyn, OSWESTRY, Shropshire, SY11 3EW
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Registered person	Moreton Hall Educational Trust 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Moreton Hall School nursery unit has been registered since 2006. The school is situated within the pre-preparatory department of Moreton Hall School, which is located in open countryside on the outskirts of Oswestry in Shropshire. The nursery unit serves the local community. One child receives funding for early education. There are appropriate procedures in place to support children with special needs or who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is open five days a week, throughout the year, with flexible sessions between 08:00 and 18:00. There are four full-time staff who work with the children, all of whom hold suitable early years or education qualifications. The setting receives support from the Local Education Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health and well-being is generally promoted in the setting. Pictorial signs and labels in the bathroom remind children to wash their hands after using the toilet and routines for children to wash their hands before eating and after activities are in place. Younger children independently clean their hands and face with wipes before their meals. On occasions, explanations are given by staff as to why these routines are necessary but there are limited planned activities to further develop children's awareness. Generally staff adhere to appropriate health and hygiene practices such as wearing disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies. Most staff wear aprons when serving the children's food although this is not always consistently implemented. Although procedures are in place should a child become unwell, written consent has not been obtained from parents for staff to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. In addition, staff are not familiar with notifiable and communicable diseases and the relevant procedures, therefore compromising children's health.

Children are well nourished because they are provided with good quality snacks and meals, all of which are healthy and nutritious. They regularly eat fresh fruit and sample whatever is in season such as raspberries, strawberries and blackberries but also try tropical fruits such as pineapple, mango, kiwi and melon. A choice of water or milk is provided to accompany meals and snacks but children are unable to independently access drinking water throughout the session. Menus are varied to suit all tastes and a vegetarian option is always available. All dietary requirements are discussed with children's parents and alternatives provided where necessary. However, mealtimes are organised around the practical considerations of staff rather than making mealtimes a social occasion for the children. For example, many children who can sit and eat at the table are placed in highchairs.

Children take part in physical activity on a daily basis and are encouraged to play outside whenever possible. They run, jump, skip and play with hoops, bats and balls. Staff make obstacle courses where the children can go under, over and through different equipment. A slide and climbing equipment is available although this provides insufficient challenge for older children. Children participate in regular music and movement sessions which they enjoy. Young children rock and jig around to the beat whilst older children learn to move their bodies in more controlled ways such as bending and stretching and in a variety of different ways.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an environment that is safe and secure. The rooms are bright and welcoming and decorated with art work, some of which has been completed by the children but in the main very adult led. Suitable space is available for children's play and appropriate provision made for quiet and rest periods. Access to the nursery is closely monitored and all visitors are required to report to the school prior to admission. Key pad systems are on all doors leading into the nursery to prevent direct access. Risk assessments involving all staff are thorough and regularly undertaken to ensure children are safe at all times. Any safety issues

are responded to quickly and promptly so that risks to children are minimised. There are well written policies in place covering most aspects of health and safety across the setting and staff put these into practice to effectively support the safety of the children in the nursery. However, emergency evacuation procedures are practised in line with the school's and are therefore not individual to the nursery. This compromises children's safety as they do not take account of the ages and mobility of the children or their patterns of attendance in determining the frequency of fire drills. Whilst there is a register to record children's attendance this does not accurately record their arrival and departure times.

Children use safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate resources which they are able to access independently. Low tables and chairs and other suitable equipment ensures that the older children can sit, eat and play safely. Children are gently reminded by staff to sit on their chairs properly so that they do not tumble over and hurt themselves or shown how to play with resources such as wooden bricks and scissors safely.

Children are safeguarded and protected from harm because staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse. They are fully aware of their responsibilities to record and report any concerns to the relevant child protection agencies. They have a general understanding of the procedures should an allegation be made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children under three years are appropriately cared for although there are key weaknesses in the small number of children receiving nursery education. Children enjoy a warm relationship with staff who take time to ensure that they are settled. Children receive cuddles and continual reassurance to help them separate from their carers and develop confidence. Generally, staff create a calm, informal and relaxed environment where children are given choices regarding their play. Children enjoy playing with the wild animals and have fun as they roar and growl. Staff help children to play together cooperatively and have started to plan activities for the younger children using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff are beginning to use observations of children in their play to inform planning so that they can build on children's interests and plan the next steps for their learning.

Some older children like to listen to stories but this is often interrupted by other younger children who are not yet ready to sit for very long. Most children attempt to join in with singing and rhymes and enjoy participating in the music and movement sessions.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning for children receiving nursery education is inadequate. Children's progress is hindered as there are no activities planned to take account of the six areas of learning. Staff are unclear of the early learning goals and learning intentions for children and therefore they are unable to plan and organise resources to execute activities effectively. This means opportunities are not planned and presented to take account of what children know and need to learn next. As a result, children are unable to consolidate all areas of their learning.

Whilst children have story-time this is often aimed at the younger children and consequently older children find it difficult to maintain their interest and concentration. Children are able to paint and play with pencils and crayons but opportunities to write for a purpose as they play is limited. Children see few signs or labels around them. They do not use simple calculation, weighing, measuring or problem solving in everyday practical activities and routines. Opportunities to count are limited and children do not see numerals, letters or shapes in their environment. In addition children's understanding of time, past and present events and information technology is limited. Their understanding of the natural world is also restricted as staff do not make full use of the garden, for example planting and growing or bug collecting. Some planning ensures that children have a variety of experiences in physical play such as opportunities to run, jump, use a variety of wheeled toys and participate in obstacle courses. However, children are insufficiently challenged to make progress to their full potential. Children use their imagination in play, for example, when painting or dressing up but lack of planning curtails further opportunities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Younger children generally have most of their needs met as staff liaise closely with their parents. They establish their likes, dislikes and preferences and plan activities with these in mind. For example, many children enjoy music and dancing so this features regularly in the routine. Daily diaries act as a communication tool between the nursery and home to share information about children's care, learning and play.

Children are starting to develop some understanding of other cultures and diversity. Various resources such as puzzles, dolls and small world depict different cultures and disability. Children taste different foods such as Italian, Chinese, Mexican and Indian meals. They play with 'play people' of different ethnicity or who wear glasses, use a walking frame or wheelchair. However, children in receipt of nursery education are not provided with activities to help them appreciate and value each others' similarities and differences. There are no posters or pictures on display to reflect non-stereotypical roles, racial, cultural and religious diversity and disability. Planned activities to help children appreciate and values each other's customs, such as celebrating different festivals are very limited. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Most children behave well in the setting and with support share toys with others. This is because staff use appropriate methods such as explanations and diversion to manage their behaviour. As a result children are beginning to play harmoniously with others. The management of children's behaviour is supported by a well written policy which the staff are familiar with. Staff regularly discuss all aspects of children's behaviour to ensure that they are consistent in their approach.

The partnership with parents whose children receive nursery education are inadequate. There are no written long, medium and short term plans to identify the stepping stones that children are required to learn in order to achieve the early learning goals. Therefore, parents are ill-informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum. As yet, there are no systems in place for staff to talk about and record information about children's progress and achievements. Whilst

informal discussions take place with parents to discuss their child's attitude to learning these are not effectively used to support children's learning and ensure that children are sufficiently challenged. Parents are not provided with ideas for activities to do at home to involve them meaningfully in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are settled in their environment and are cared for by staff who have been appropriately vetted. Correct adult to child ratios are adhered to at all times to provide sufficient support for the children. Staff are very approachable and welcoming and aim to provide a relaxed and happy environment in which the children can play. Relaxed and informal relationships are established with parents. However, not all the necessary policies and procedures are in place to promote the welfare, care and learning of the children. Resources and activities are suitably organised and planned for younger children but do not meet the needs of children receiving nursery education and as a result impairs their learning.

Leadership and management is inadequate. The manager is inexperienced in the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' and its implementation. Consequently, there is no planning in place for children receiving nursery education. Learning intentions have not been identified for children and systems to observe and assess their progress have yet to be implemented. Currently, there are no strategies in place to monitor staff, identify strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education and evaluate practice. However, staff do meet each week to discuss daily routines. The person-in-charge is aware that the setting requires support with curriculum planning in order to create a positive learning environment for all children and welcomes advice from the Local Authority. There is a commitment to professional development for all staff. The provision does not meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 6: Safety. The nursery door was left unlocked and found to be propped open on one occasion and this raised concerns over the security of the setting. As a result of these concerns, the Registered Person was asked to conduct an internal investigation and provide Ofsted with a copy of the report. As a result of the enquiries made and information provided Ofsted was satisfied that the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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):

- promote further the good health of children and take appropriate measures when they are ill, for example procedures to seek emergency medical treatment and notifiable and communicable diseases
- improve steps to promote safety within the setting for example, systems to record children's arrival and departure and the procedures to practice emergency evacuation
- promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children by displaying a wide range of positive images to reflect cultural diversity and disability.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that staff are familiar with the Foundation Stage to effectively plan and challenge children's learning across all areas of the curriculum
- ensure that staff are aware of learning intentions for children in order to stimulate and maintain their interest
- make effective use of assessments in consultation with children's parents to plan for their learning.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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