



Potters Bar United Reformed Church Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130596
Inspection date	08 November 2006
Inspector	Karen Molloy
Setting Address	Tilbury Hall, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, EN6 1BZ
Telephone number	01707 644354
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Registered person	Potters Bar United Reformed Church Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Potters Bar United Reformed Church Nursery opened in 1966. It operates within the main church building. They have use of a double room, kitchen and church hall. It is located in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. They are open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:00 with an optional lunch club running Monday to Thursday until 13:00. The nursery operates during term times and serves the surrounding areas. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs a total of seven staff. The manager is a qualified teacher and the majority of the staff team have early years qualifications and experience. The setting receives support and some funding from the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, with young children given the necessary support. Children stay healthy as there are effective procedures to protect them from cross-infection. They use paper towels to dry their hands, help themselves to easily accessible tissues and nappies are changed and disposed of appropriately. As children are taken to the bathroom they manage well and are encouraged to 'make bubbles' with the soap, to ensure their hands are clean. Children do not attend the nursery if they are unwell or infectious and this information is clearly shared with parents. The majority of staff hold a current first aid qualification and can therefore respond to children appropriately if they have an injury or accident. A sun safety policy helps to ensure children are protected outdoors and appropriate medication records are in place.

Children are nourished. They benefit from a varied selection of healthy snacks including raw vegetables and fresh fruit. They are beginning to understand about healthy eating as they tell each other 'don't eat too much chocolate!'. Children sit in groups and good manners are actively encouraged with children observed saying please and thank you. However, children's independence is not always encouraged at this time as staff organise, prepare and share out the snack and drinks for them. Children's well being is encouraged as staff have completed food hygiene training and are aware of good practice in food handling, storage and preparation. Individual dietary needs are taken into consideration as staff work in partnership with parents and ensure any specific needs are recorded and adhered to. Children also have the opportunity to stay for lunch club and the nursery provides parents with some ideas for a healthy packed lunch.

Children enjoy some physical activity. They go out daily in groups and have some time to play freely with the resources available. A weekly indoor session enables them to participate in music and movement or play parachute games. However, there are limited opportunities for more challenging activities or to develop physical skills such as balancing or climbing. Children develop fine manipulative skills as they complete puzzles and use a selection of tools and materials such as rolling pins, pens, pencils and stencils.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment where risks are identified and minimised. This means that children can move around safely, freely and with some independence. Children's safety is effectively monitored as a member of staff is always at the entrance during arrival and collection times and all visitors are signed in and out of the premises.

Parents are reminded about security and a 'collection book' is in place to record any changes regarding the collection of children. Attention is paid to fire safety with the necessary measures in place, including half termly fire drills. Regular risk assessments are carried out to monitor safety issues and daily checks ensure any potential hazards are identified promptly. Children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe; they are reminded not to run indoors and when asked 'What happens when you play with the tables?' they reply 'you get your fingers caught'.

Children are kept safe outdoors. They use the outdoor play area in small groups and this enables staff to supervise them well. This area is checked prior to children using it and any safety issues are followed up to ensure it is always safe for children's use.

Children can make independent choices from a selection of safe and suitable equipment. They can choose from the selection organised for them and equipment and play opportunities are low and accessible. Toys are laid out attractively and are inviting to the children; both table top activities and floor play resources. Toys and equipment are kept clean and well maintained.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures in place when necessary. Staff have attended child protection training and as a result, have developed their knowledge and understanding in this area. They are aware of the need to share any concerns with the manager who will initiate any action.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They are enthusiastic and eager to start playing. Therefore, children quickly engage in their chosen activity and remain busy and absorbed throughout the session. Children's independence is encouraged as they move around freely and make independent choices. Low storage and accessible resources enables them to do so. Children generally concentrate well and persist in their activity such as completing puzzles or using stencils. Children in the home corner spend long periods of time absorbed in imaginative role play, happily ironing and talking on the telephone. There is a good balance between free play and more structured or adult led sessions, such as group time. The staff team have attended training in relation to 'Birth to three matters' and are becoming more familiar with this framework for young children.

Children and staff form good relationships and interact with each other in a positive way. Staff listen effectively to children, acknowledge their comments and ask and answer their questions. They have a kind and caring manner and are sensitive to the needs of the children. In turn, children approach staff confidently, for help, to ask questions and to recall events. Children receive appropriate support and reassurance from staff who respond promptly to their needs. They develop self esteem and confidence and are confident in speaking in a large group situation. They receive praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements. Children are familiar with the routine, for example, they know when to tidy up and this helps them feel secure in their environment. The key worker system is effective and children are observed receiving support from their key worker. They help them to complete puzzles, show them how to sequence the dressing puzzle and support children with their personal care too.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and this contributes to children's progress towards the early learning goals. Children take part in a variety of planned activities and staff are aware of their differing ages and stages of development. Children have a positive attitude to learning, they show interest, ask questions and develop confidence and self esteem. However, at times, there are missed opportunities for children to take responsibility and increase their independence, for example, at snack time, staff organise, prepare and carry out this task. As a result, some children become restless and do not benefit from a potential learning opportunity.

Staff are effectively deployed to support children in their learning, with the key worker system working well. Small group times enables children's progress to be monitored and individual needs to be identified. However, large group time is not beneficial to some of the children as the group is too large. Staff manage the children well and use various strategies, but the wide age range and differing stages of development makes it hard to cater for all the children's needs. Consequently, some children concentrate well, whilst others are distracted and become restless.

The majority of children who receive funding are three years old and they achieve well in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals. All staff have input into the planning, which is completed every half term and staff meet to discuss the themes. Each staff member is responsible for planning for their group and this ensures children's various ages and stages of development is catered for. Activity planners include all the necessary information to meet the educational needs of the children. Areas of learning and stepping stones are identified for small group activities and these are evaluated for future use. A progress record covering the stepping stones is used to monitor children's development and observations are carried out regularly. This enables assessment and observations of children's learning to be linked to future planning.

Children communicate well. They are confident to speak in a large group situation and enjoy talking about their own experiences, taking it in turns to talk about their breakfast. They negotiate and co-operate with others. Children are encouraged to recall events of the week to help reinforce their understanding of time and develop their thinking. Children can recognise their name and find this on arrival at the nursery.

Children really enjoy using the role play area where they spend lots of time creating imaginative play situations. They are observed ironing and carrying out domestic chores whilst they interact positively with their peers. Children explore various media and materials, they enjoy free painting, junk modelling and play dough. They learn about rhythm and sound through use of musical instruments and sing songs and rhymes at group times.

Children have opportunities to explore and investigate as they go through a box of interesting items including old battery toys, binoculars and telescopes. In the summer children grow seeds and care for frog spawn. They develop their knowledge of information, communication technology as they play with keyboards and telephones. Children begin to learn about time as an egg timer is used to develop their concentration. They begin to gain a knowledge and understanding of different cultures and beliefs as they celebrate Jewish New Year, Diwali and

Chinese New Year. They discuss the seasons and the different clothes needed for different types of weather. Children learn about their own community and were recently involved in the nursery's celebration of forty years.

Children use compare bears to learn about size and colour. They compare and group the bears into small, medium and large whilst younger children group them into colours. Children use counting in some everyday tasks, such as how many boys or girls in their group and begin to grasp the concepts of more and less. They use cards that link opposites together and begin to use mathematical language such as same, different and smallest.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and parents are greeted warmly on arrival by staff. They separate from their parents with ease and settle well into the session. New children who may need some additional support are responded to promptly and sensitively by their key worker, who offers reassurance and helps them to settle into an activity. Children's individual needs are met and staff are keen to help children develop an understanding of different cultures. They are due to attend training in 'cultures and diversity' to extend their own understanding and transfer this knowledge into the setting. Children are respected and valued as individuals and information is gathered about their needs prior to them starting at the nursery. As a result, staff have an insight into their needs before they begin.

Children show care and concern for others, for example, a new child is shown around the nursery by another child and children help each other complete puzzles. They work together to carry a large drying rack and to put it away. Children are encouraged to think of others and the nursery takes part in 'Operation Christmas Child' where children send gifts to children in other countries. Children are beginning to learn a sense of their own community as many are involved in the church and talk about their experiences, such as Harvest Festival.

Children develop positive relationships with their peers and staff. They approach each other confidently, ask questions and show kindness to others. Children's confidence and self esteem is fostered; they talk confidently in a large group situation and are keen and enthusiastic to be independent and take responsibility. Children with additional or special needs are supported well within the setting. Staff are pro-active; they attend training specific to the needs of those children and have secured funding for one to one support. Staff work in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure children are fully included and their needs are met.

Children behave well. They play together harmoniously and are clear of the boundaries. They help each other, share and take turns. Good manners are encouraged and children show an understanding of this as they tell others 'hands under the table!' Staff manage children's behaviour in a firm but fair manner. They are quick to respond and resolve any minor disagreements. Any unacceptable behaviour is nipped in the bud quickly. Children are given an explanation and the consequences of their actions are explained to them. They may be excluded for a short period of time if necessary. Children develop a sense of right and wrong and tell staff 'he snatched, he isn't sharing'. Positive behaviour is promoted through lots of

encouragement; children receive cuddles, praise and stickers for all sorts of behaviour such as being kind to another child. All staff have attended training in this area.

Staff work well in partnership with parents. Information about the children is gathered prior to them starting. Communication is effective through a number of ways; a notice board, regular newsletter, questionnaires and a nursery booklet. Parents are also invited to join the committee. Information about 'Birth to three matters' is shared with parents and a photographic display of this framework supports the literature. Policies and procedures are available for parents on request although the complaints procedure does not have all the current detail, which may mean parents are not fully informed. Feedback from parents is positive and they comment on the good communication from the nursery, how children develop lots of confidence, a good transition from nursery to school and the opportunity to talk daily with child's key worker.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. They are well informed and kept up to date. A prospectus details information about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in children's learning; they borrow library books from the setting to use at home, they help children to find their name on arrival at the nursery, they receive 'helpful hints' when they start and they are encouraged to help within the group and become involved in children's activities. Newsletters include information on 'learning opportunities' for parents to do at home with their children. An additional page 'Activities at home' is attached and includes the current topic, activities, rhymes, poems and songs and suggested activities for parents to do at home. Children have a bag that provides a link between home and nursery where they bring items in from home to show and use it to take letters home. Information about children's progress is shared informally with parents and they receive a written report at the end of their time at the nursery.

Parents views are actively encouraged and a questionnaire to parents asks for their comments and feedback. This covers various aspects of the nursery provision including 'Do you think your child gets a good balance between play and learning?' which received a very positive response.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a committed and enthusiastic team of staff. They have a high regard for the well-being of children and are attentive and responsive to their individual needs. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and continue to update their childcare knowledge and skills. The team are well qualified and have a range of experience between them. They are deployed appropriately and work well together. New staff have an induction to ensure they are fully informed of the setting's policies and procedures. Shadowing is used to help new staff settle and become familiar with the routine and responsibilities.

Space is well organised with some clearly defined areas and the adult to child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play. Consequently, children are relaxed and comfortable within their environment. Small group times enable staff to focus on individual children. However, large group time is not effective as previously mentioned. Key workers are responsible

for settling in new children and this means they can focus on their individual needs. Children are familiar with the routine, they know what is coming next and understand the expectations. They are confident to initiate their own play and make choices, yet still approach staff for reassurance or support.

Policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety and enjoyment and achievement. However, there are some documents that do not have all the relevant detail or require some amendment to bring them up to date.

Leadership and management of funded children is good. The manager and staff team are clear of their roles and responsibilities and this underpins the smooth running of the group. They have clear direction from the manager, they work well together and share information effectively. Children's care and best practice is monitored as staff review and evaluate their practice. They have attended Foundation Stage training and continue to develop their knowledge in the six areas of learning. As a result, staff have a sound knowledge of the curriculum. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with a knowledge and understanding of child development. New staff undergo an induction before they take on the responsibility of being a key worker to a group of children. Staff are motivated and enthusiastic. The manager maintains this by reassuring everyone is kept well informed and staff meet regularly. They discuss a shared vision to ensure they are all working towards the same goals. Staff are receptive to improving or adapting practice and any comments made are responded to positively.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the nursery have built a wooden step that can be slid in and out at the sinks. This encourages children's independence as they are able to wash their hands themselves. Accidents continue to be recorded, although times are not always noted and there are a number of entries on each page. This does not ensure confidentiality.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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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):

- review and amend documents and records to ensure all correct detail is included and confidentiality is taken into consideration

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 children's independence through everyday routine tasks such as snack time and effectively organise group times to meet the needs of all children
- develop challenging play opportunities to promote children's physical skills.

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