



Corner House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 300724 |
| Inspection date | 30 October 2006 |
| Inspector | Sarah Gilpin |
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| Registered person | Corner House Nursery 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?

Corner House Nursery School opened in 1993. The nursery operates from a large detached house and outbuildings in Wadsley, Sheffield. The children use the whole of the ground floor accommodation and two annex 'classrooms' and there are three fully enclosed outdoor play areas available. The nursery serves the local community and the wider Sheffield area.

There are currently 103 children on roll. This includes 38 children in receipt of nursery education funding. There is provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and for those children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is open Monday to Friday all year round, with the exception of public holidays and one week at Christmas. Opening times are from 08.00 until 18.00 and children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery employs 23 staff, including a manager and ancillary staff; 18 staff have early years qualifications and others support the staff team in the care of the children. The setting receives support from a community teacher from the local authority and is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association. The setting has achieved a gold award in the Sheffield Kitemark, a local quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy meals that are freshly prepared each day by the nursery cook. These are planned to provide a variety of nutritionally balanced foods, such as brown bread and fresh vegetables. There are two different menus that take account of the changing seasons, for example, in the winter children enjoy stews and casseroles. Following a request from a parent all children now have organic milk or water for their snack time drink. A variety of snack foods are provided for the children each day including fresh fruit and biscuits. Babies and young children are actively encouraged to feed themselves; small forks and spoons are provided to assist their independence in this area and they are carefully monitored by the staff who sit at the tables with them. However, the older children have limited opportunities to self manage their snack times.

Outdoor play is available to the children each day and they can access all three areas. For example, there is an excellent adventure play area, a 'yard' and a grassed area. In addition, children are learning about growing and garden wildlife as they explore the nature garden, which is full of plants that encourage a wide variety of bugs and insects. Children's climbing and balancing skills are developing very well because they confidently use the fixed apparatus with the careful support of the staff. There is a good range of equipment to help develop the children's large motor skills, for example, they pedal bikes with ease and confidence. In addition, children use beanbags and hoops to practise and refine their throwing skills, which helps to develop their hand-eye coordination. When playing inside they further develop their fine motor skills when they build fabulous models with small plastic bricks. Babies and young children are developing their physical skills. Staff use their knowledge of child development to plan activities that are age appropriate and the children enjoy crawling around the floor and climbing with support. The children's rest and sleep needs are met by the staff because they know the children well and recognise when they are tired.

The children are cared for in a clean environment where they learn about good hygiene practices. The majority of the staff implement the nursery's health and hygiene procedures well to ensure that risks from cross contamination are minimised. However, procedures are not always followed when staff serve food to the babies and younger children. Easily accessible resources, such as low level sinks and soap ensure that children can successfully manage their personal hygiene, developing their independence in this area. There are effective systems in place for administering medication to the children and this is clearly recorded. Children's welfare is promoted because the staff have attended first aid training and there are fully stocked first aid boxes around the nursery. However, the system for recording accidents is basic and provides limited opportunity for monitoring all of the accidents involving children in the nursery.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very safe, secure and welcoming environment. The staff are extremely vigilant as they support the children in their play. For example, children are closely supervised as they explore inside the setting and when playing outside. The children's arrival and departure at the nursery is carefully monitored by the staff who effectively use the security systems, such as the cameras in the main entrance, which alert the nursery staff to who is entering or leaving the premises. A clear record is kept of visitors to the setting and detailed risk assessments ensure that potential hazards are minimised and children's safety is maintained. Clear fire safety precautions, such as fire detection and fire-fighting equipment are in place and the regular fire evacuation practises help raise the children's awareness of how to deal with emergency situations.

The children can safely access the toys and resources, which are carefully stored at their level. The equipment that the children use meets the required safety standards and staff ensure that items remain safe for them to use because they carry out routine checks. The outdoor areas are checked each day before the children go out to play and this limits opportunities for children to come into contact with broken toys or debris. The staff help children to develop their awareness of their own safety because they continually supervise them, offering gentle reminders. For example, by encouraging the children to take care not to bump into their friends when they ride around in cars.

Children are safeguarded because high priority is given to ensuring that all staff regularly attend child protection training. This means that staff have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and effectively use this knowledge to monitor the children in their care. There is a clear policy for dealing with child protection concerns, which contains all of the mandatory elements and meets the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. In addition, the robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are cared for by adults who are suitable to do so.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy and content because they are able to build warm and affectionate relationships with the staff who work consistently with them in designated areas. Children are grouped effectively and careful consideration is given to their individual needs and stage of development. For example, they are moved from the toddler room to the 'classroom' when they are judged to be 'ready' and not necessarily when they are old enough. Children are very confident and comfortable with the staff and they seek support as and when needed. The younger children climb happily onto the lap of the staff and initiate cuddles.

The staff successfully use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan for the young children's progress and to foster their growing independence. The babies and toddlers enjoy playing in areas which are designed and resourced to ensure they can access a good range of equipment. For example, they enthusiastically explore baskets of toys and play at being a 'hairdresser'. They choose books from the easily accessible shelving and excitedly look at the pictures. The

toddlers play alongside their friends and enjoy being sociable as they sit together to eat their meals. When they play outside the children follow the lead of the staff and have a running race around the wooden apparatus. The children enjoy creative activities, such as the collage workshop where they make interesting pictures to take home for their parents. As a result, they are beginning to develop their individual creativity and increase their hand-eye coordination.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children are cared for in two separate 'classrooms' that provide similar resources and experiences. The staff in both areas have a good working knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and provide children with creative and interesting activities and experiences for them to enjoy. There is a substantial range of continual provision available for the children to choose from. The staff recognise what areas of learning can be promoted in these areas and interact with the children to question their understanding and challenge their thinking. For example, the staff encourage children to think carefully about what bricks they need to successfully build a house. The nursery has recently introduced a new planning system, which focuses on the individual learning and development of the children in the group. Initial indications are that this is used well to plan focused activities and recognise when spontaneous learning occurs in the provision. However, there is currently no system for monitoring the planning to ensure all aspects are effectively covered over time. The assessment of the progress children make in relation to the stepping stones is clear and staff are beginning to use their observations of the children to inform the next steps in their learning.

The children are inquisitive and well motivated. They are eager to be involved in the activities provided and they are making good progress in all areas of learning. The children are confident because they build warm and harmonious relationships with the adults and strong friendships with their peers. The staff ensure that children can accomplish many tasks independently because they provide different resources and areas of play. For example, there are role play areas, construction and creative workshops in both classrooms. However, the organisation of the snack means that children have limited opportunities to independently manage their own snack time when they recognise they are hungry or thirsty.

The environment is well organised to provide children with a wide, varied and interesting range of practical activities that stimulate them. Children show good awareness of their own needs and can manage their own personal hygiene easily and independently because the facilities are easily accessible. They enjoy the company of their peers as they seek others out to play with chosen activities and resources, such as the role play 'home corner'. The children speak very confidently and use a wide vocabulary to engage adults in conversation about what they are doing. Books are enjoyed by the children who seek out staff to read well known stories. Group story time is thoroughly enjoyed by the children who listen intently and make predictions about the events in the book. The children are encouraged to practise their writing skills as they annotate their pictures or when they pretend to take the register. Some of the older and more able children have excellent pencil control and can accurately form the letters of simple words, their names and the names of their friends.

Children confidently and spontaneously use number names and mathematical language in their play. They enjoy counting the circles on a caterpillar's body, showing good awareness of order even when they make mistakes, which they correct immediately. They accurately describe bricks and use words, such as corner and side when building houses. The children have a good understanding of time and know the order of the seasons. There are computers available for the children, which are used to develop their skills in information technology. Children enjoy the home based play in the role play area and successfully use their own experiences to act out events from their own lives. The children have many opportunities to explore paint, glue and other media and their individual creativity is celebrated because the staff produce attractive displays of their paintings and models. The children's physical development is encouraged because the outdoor area is included in the planning and used most days. A variety of planned activities using the extensive resources ensures the children have chance to balance, climb and pedal bikes. They confidently use tools, such as pencils and paintbrushes to create recognisable pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave very well because they are extremely busy and carefully monitored by the staff throughout the day. The children help staff each session to tidy away the toys and as a result they are beginning to understand that equipment and resources need to be looked after. A consistent approach is successfully used by staff when they deal with the limited unwanted behaviour. Positive reinforcement is used effectively to promote good behaviour; praise and encouragement are a regular feature and this results in the children's self-esteem and confidence being effectively promoted. As a result, the children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The children are cared for by a staff team who work hard to get to know them and their families. There is a wide range of age-appropriate resources available to the children and staff provide many activities and experiences that help to develop the children's understanding of the local community and the world around them. For example, they learn about different holiday destinations around the world. Some children enjoy a weekly French lesson, which parents can pay for, and they are beginning to remember simple words and can greet the teacher in French. Children with disabilities and learning difficulties are successfully included in all aspects of the provision. Individual staff support means that all children can join in and enjoy all of the activities provided.

There is a good partnership with parents. A wealth of information is provided to ensure that the parents know about the provision for their children. For example, the educational plans are displayed in each room, childcare information is displayed in the entrance hall and the provision's policies and procedures are easily accessible. The parents' information pack provides them with their own copy of the major policies and gives them an opportunity to provide information about their child's routines and individual needs. The annual questionnaire, which is issued to all parents, is used effectively to provide a formal opportunity for parents and children to comment and compliment the provision. Information gathered in this way is used to develop the setting for all children. Parents and children are made very welcome by the staff and

easy-going informal discussions ensure that all information relating to the children's changing needs is successfully exchanged each day.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are cared for in a successfully organised and well managed setting. They have access to a wide range of activities, resources and experiences each day because staff carefully plan for their enjoyment and learning. The large staff team are effectively deployed to ensure there are high adult to child ratios and this ensures that children are very well supported as they play. There are clear and robust systems for the recruitment and vetting of staff and these are successfully implemented by the management team. These include, references, health declarations and Criminal Records Bureau checks, all of which ensure that children are cared for only by staff who are suitable to do so. In addition, the effective induction procedure means that staff are equipped to care for the children and have a good understanding of the provision's policies and procedures.

The nursery has all of the required documentation, such as registers of attendance and medication records and these are accurately completed. There are substantial policies and procedures in place, which are implemented well by the staff to ensure that children's well-being is promoted. Staff development opportunities are planned because the appraisal system is used effectively. They enjoy regular access to training and as a result they have a good understanding of child development and are up to date with current practice.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The staff are supported effectively by a management team who ensure that they have a clear understanding of the National Standards, the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. The management team work alongside the staff to monitor the care and learning opportunities the children have and this results in positive outcomes for the children. The managers know what the setting does well, such as the quality of the staff and their interactions with the children and they recognise that the planning and assessment of children's learning is an area for development.

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 provision was required to develop the complaints and child protection policies. This has been successfully addressed and both policies now contain all of the required information. The inspection of nursery education recommended that the staff provide opportunities for children to use practical experiences and activities to develop their awareness of simple addition and subtraction. There are many opportunities in the provision and the children engage in many practical activities. Finally the nursery was asked to improve the links between the observation and assessment of the children's learning and the planning for the next stages in their development. The new planning and observation system in operation is designed to help staff plan for children's individual learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 one concern has been raised to Ofsted regarding National Standard 7 (Health). This concern was discussed with the provider who provided a full report. Ofsted is satisfied that the provision is complying with the national standards. 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

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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):

- make sure that good hygiene practices are followed in all areas of the nursery
- develop the accident recording to show more details of the children involved and consider how accidents are monitored.

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):

- continue to develop the planning and assessment to ensure that children enjoy access to a full range of activities linked to the stepping stones in the Foundation Stage curriculum
- develop the opportunities children have to independently manage their own snack time.

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