

Apple Tree Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	318110
Inspection date	07 November 2006
Inspector	Lynn Rodgers
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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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.

At the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Apple Tree Day Nursery is privately owned and opened in 1994. The nursery operates from the old school house in Sprotborough, a village near Doncaster. It operates from the ground and first floors of the building. Children who receive funded nursery education are accommodated in a separate building on the main site, this is made up of the entrance hall leading to one playroom. This building is also used for the after school club. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery mainly serves the local area.

There are currently 105 children on roll, none of whom receive funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens all year round, Monday to Friday 07.45 to 18.00 excluding Bank Holidays and Christmas. The out of school club operates Monday to Friday during school term times.

Fifteen staff work with the children. More than fifty percent of the staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification level two or three. Others are working towards a recognised early year's qualification. The setting receives support from the local partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children explore and develop physical control in stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences. Staff have some knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' to support a strong and healthy child. Their understanding of each child's stage of development means the youngest children are confident to try out new skills, ask for help when needed and set their own limits within the safe environment. Older, more able children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise through both fine and gross motor skills. The children are able to use a variety of small and large apparatus with confidence, control and co-ordination.

Children thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Positive adult support and guidance helps children gain an understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become independent in their personal care. However, older more able children are not given sufficient opportunities to be self sufficient and independent and there is no parental permission for children to access the animals.

Babies and young children are encouraged to wipe hands when appropriate and have caring adults to assist in this practice. Adults take into account the individual and cultural needs of all children. Older children are able to talk about what they like or dislike and what foods are good for them. Good adult support ensures children's individual needs are well met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure, welcoming environment, by adults who fully understand their role in keeping children safe. Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are vigilant and use risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. The setting has suitable safety and security precautions such as, key pads on all doors and a visitors' signing in and out book. Practitioners help keep children safe within the setting and on outings because they understand and comply with health and safety requirements and by maintaining adult-child ratios. Adults working with children have an appropriate understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits and how to involve children effectively in organising their environment. This allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm and they are given constant reassurance and guidance by staff.

Children use a variety of quality toys and play materials appropriate to their age and stage of development. They can reach toys and resources easily, because they are organised in low-level storage and furniture is of child height. Younger children enjoy many shared experiences because there is sufficient furniture to enable them to sit together comfortably, such as, at snack and lunch times. However, space for the out of school children is somewhat limited to allow them to move around freely and comfortably. The heaters are not guarded to prevent children from accessing them and the cleanliness of the funded nursery kitchen area is not appropriate.

Adults safeguard children's well-being through secure knowledge of child protection procedures. Most staff have attended child protection training and the child protection liaison officer ensures all staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities and ensures training is available. There is always someone on hand to administer first aid if necessary, as all members of staff hold current first aid certificates.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have some understanding of the Foundation Stage and stepping stones. They effectively use their time and resources to support children's learning and use the correct vocabulary to extend children's language. They question the children appropriately to find out what the children know and what they can do. Children become confident communicators as they share ideas in their play, for instance, using circle time to listen to stories and improve their communication skills in singing and musical activities. Staff plan interesting activities which effectively link to the six areas of learning and interact and support children in a way that positively affects their learning. Staff observe and assess aspects of children's development and learning regularly and frequently. They draw on these detailed assessments in planning what children need to learn next.

Children are beginning to understand about shape and colour. They use appropriate language and choose simple sentences and words to illustrate their work and communicate with each other, as they complete their pictures and during discussions. Mathematical activities are used to encourage children's number skills. However, there are missed opportunities to further develop children's understanding of calculation and the concept of maths. Staff refer to the stepping stones guidance to plan and provide a well balanced range of activities and experiences. This ensures natural progression and improves the quality of care and education provided. Planned activities take into account children's ages and stages of development and staff organise resources effectively to promote independence and social skills. Children respond well to the adults' calm, quiet approach and their clear explanations and support.

A good balance of adult-led, child-initiated activities maintains children's interest throughout the session. For example, three and four-year-olds look at shape and colour, to be able to name and recognise the shapes and colours they are given. All children use marks readily to represent their ideas and older children are beginning to form familiar letters. For example during discussions, some children could say what their names begin with and some familiar words.

The two-year-olds are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other and staff. They play happily, learning to take turns and respond to others as they use puzzles, games and books. Babies respond to adults and enjoy a close relationship with each other and the older children. They enjoy cuddles and physical contact which enables them to feel secure and play contentedly. The quality of younger children's learning experiences is being fostered as staff plan appropriate activities, based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff recognise young children's competence and appreciate their efforts when they show their understanding of new experiences and words. Each child has a 'Birth to three matters' profile where staff record details of goals achieved.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Partnership with parents and carers is good and contributes to the children's progress towards the early learning goals. Effective systems are in place to communicate clear information in regard to curriculum planning and the development and progression of their children. However, they have not been informed of the regulators name, address and telephone number in case of complaints. Parents regularly see and comment on their child's assessments and meet with staff to discuss their progress and achievements. This encourages parents to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways such as, helping in the nursery to establish a sense of belonging and helping their child to settle into the daily routines. The setting provides parents with the opportunity to pass on any special skills they may have. The setting receives good support from the local community and the headteacher of the local primary school.

Children show a sense of belonging and feel at ease in the setting as they are warmly welcomed by friendly, familiar staff. Children feel good about themselves because staff know them well and show they are interested in what they do and say by talking and listening to them. They value children's attempts and achievements with appropriate use of praise and encouragement. For example, staff clap and smile as children achieve their goals. Children with special needs are well supported because staff work cooperatively with parents and other agencies to plan for their individual needs.

Children behave well as they know what is expected of them. Staff provide clear explanations and support children in managing their behaviour by planning activities where they learn to cooperate and take turns. For example, children wait patiently for a turn on the computer and negotiate roles in the home corner. Children learn effectively about their own community and are introduced to the wider world in daily activities, planned topics and visits around the local area. Other festivals are celebrated to give children a broader understanding of other cultures and religions. This approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management of the educational provision is satisfactory. Clear aims and assessments for children's care and education are regularly shared with staff and parents. Staff continue to access relevant training to enhance their professional development and work cooperatively with other professionals such as, the local school reception teacher and local outreach worker, to improve the outcomes for children. Planning of activities is a team effort with lots of input from all the staff members and older children. Older children are familiar with the reception staff of the local school ensuring a smooth transition into the school environment. There is a clear focus on the personal development and achievement of all children through clear goals and guidance. Staff ensure children are motivated to learn by providing suitable experiences and activities. The manager evaluates and monitors the curriculum to identify any areas for improvement to provide quality care and education for all children.

The deployment of staff increases children's feelings of security and well-being because it ensures children are cared for by a key person who builds trusting relationships with the children and their families. There are always sufficient staff who know the children well and who can reassure and care for them. The grouping of children, according to their age and stage of development, enables staff to provide age-appropriate activities and experiences that children enjoy.

An appropriate collection of policies and procedures, which contributes to children's health and safety, are in place and are regularly reviewed. Children benefit from staff who fully understand their roles and responsibilities through suitable induction training and regular appraisal. Policy documents are shared with parents, to keep them well informed about the childcare. 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 provider was asked to plan appropriate activities for the out of school children. This has been addressed positively to allow children to give their ideas and input. This means they have access to age appropriate play situations which are more meaningful because they have planned them themselves with some help from the adults who care for them.

Younger children are now able to freely and independently access suitable resources from low-level storage. This means their independence is being fostered to allow them some level of freedom and promoting self help skills.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standards 2: Organisation and 6: Safety. The complaint related to adult/child ratios not being maintained at all times and therefore putting children's safety at risk. An action letter was sent out to the provider on the 19th October 2006. The provider responded and arranged for further staff to be employed to help with the school collections each day. She completed a risk assessment of this journey and a written policy is in place and shared with all staff members. Ofsted was satisfied with the provider's response, so no further action was taken and the provider remains qualified for registration. The provider recorded the complaint in the complaints record.

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):

- include details of Ofsted's name, address and telephone number in the complaints procedure and share this with parents

- ensure the funded unit's kitchen area is clean and suitable for the preparation of snacks
- provide suitable guards for the storage heaters
- obtain parental permission for children to have supervised access to the animals
- ensure the out of school children have sufficient space to move around freely and independently.

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):

- ensure children have opportunities to promote independence and self help
- provide more opportunities for children to understand calculation and the concept of maths

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