



Carousel Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	508960
Inspection date	02 March 2007
Inspector	Sue Taylor
Setting Address	1 Westmoreland Close, St. Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN38 9LF
Telephone number	01424 854725
E-mail	ambercarousel@hotmail.com
Registered person	Amber Richardson
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?

Carousel Nursery was registered in 1999. It operates from three rooms on the ground floor of a detached building in the Hollington area of St Leonards-on-Sea. The crèche, which opened in September 2004, runs from a purpose built annex over two floors. There is access to two enclosed outside play areas for all children.

A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round. Children may attend on a sessional or full-time basis. There are currently 55 children on role aged from birth to five years. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of staff. Of these, all but one hold an appropriate early years qualification and that member of staff is working towards a qualification. Five staff members are furthering their training, two of whom are currently working towards a relevant degree.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The environment in which children are cared for is very clean and well maintained. The staff follow good daily routines that help keep children healthy. For example, they use disposable gloves and aprons during nappy changes. In addition, outdoor shoes are not worn in the crèche. Children learn about the importance of hand washing from an early age. The use of liquid soap and paper towels helps prevent cross contamination. Documentation shared with parents, regarding the care of sick children, helps prevent the spread of infections. The records for medication and accidents are clear and make sure parents are aware about matters involving their child.

Healthy eating is promoted within the nursery, with information shared with parents about the content of packed lunches. Children enjoy the mid-session fruit snack and drink. They bring packed lunches and the tables are laid with table clothes. The nursery children use plates and can access cups or cutlery should they need to. Details about home routines are followed for baby feeds and records are kept. This ensures parents are aware of what their child has eaten and when. Drinking water is easily accessible throughout the day for the nursery children. The younger toddlers in the crèche have their own beakers readily available. These practices help babies and children control their own thirst needs.

Children benefit from good opportunities to play in the fresh air. The youngest children have a safe and secure outdoor area where they can play, for example using ride on toys or they use resources on mats during the good weather. The older children develop skills such as climbing, swinging and sliding as they play in the nursery outdoor play area. They move with confidence and play safely amongst others. Children competently use a wide range of resources such as scissors, pencils and glue sticks along with activities that develop their hand to eye coordination. For example, they peg socks up on a line or learn to throw and catch balls. The warm and caring relationships all children develop with the staff supports their emotional wellbeing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in secure premises, for example, there is a video bell at the crèche gate. The staff are vigilant and supervise children well whilst enabling them to explore the environment. The crèche stairway has a safety gate at the top but not at the bottom, however this is being rectified. There are effective procedures for the safe arrival and departure of children. Children learn to keep themselves safe through explanations from the staff.

The resources and equipment are of good quality. The nursery is updating some equipment in the crèche to provide greater safety, for example with a walk up nappy changing unit. The play materials in the crèche are suitable for the young children and are easily accessible. There is a good mix of plastic toys alongside natural and household items. This creates opportunities for babies and toddlers to explore and discover a wide range of textures and materials in safety.

The nursery children have easy and safe access to a broad range of activities, both planned and some free choice. Resources are provided at low level so children can reach them easily. Staff supervise children well as they play, enabling them to investigate safely.

The nursery is clear about its role to help safeguard children's welfare. The staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, supported by written guidance and procedures. Some staff have recently attended child protection training which helps enhance their practices.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and enjoy their time at the nursery. The settling in processes ensure that children gain a trusting relationship with the staff and have positive links with a key worker. The nursery uses the Birth to three matters framework well to plan activities and observe children's achievements and interests, keeping a record of their development.

The crèche is a purpose built annex to the nursery. It offers a good range of activities for babies and toddlers, both indoors and outside. The planning takes their different stages of development into account. The staff spend a lot of time playing with the babies and toddlers. They explore a wide variety of textures and materials together. For example, making 'smelly' collages with herbs or hunting for plastic minibeasts in the sand. Language and communication skills develop as staff ask questions and respond to children's 'chatter'.

There is a organised transition for the two year olds to the main nursery building. They have planned activities that meet their learning needs. The noted next step for individual children reflects their uniqueness. They freely explore a range of items and media, showing great interest. Children and staff have fun as they play and learn together.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress to the early learning goals. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how children learn. Planning is clear and links to the Foundation Stage with interesting focus activities planned daily. As children play, staff make observations from which the children's next steps in their learning are noted. This information is used in future planning. Although children's interests are noted, children are not involved themselves in the planning process.

Assessment records, maintained by key workers, show children's progress along the stepping stones. These also form part of ensuring that future planning meets children's learning needs. The staff have a good awareness of where children are in their learning and development. This

helps ensure children are appropriately challenged or supported throughout the day. The staff ask very good open questions that challenge children and get them to think. The staff are very positive and introduce activities enthusiastically. This motivates children and encourages them to be involved.

Children are confident and settle quickly as they become interested in the activities. Children concentrate for good periods of time and make some choices about their play. The staff work hard to praise and encourage children to try things for themselves. This helps develop children's independence skills. They relate well to adults and to each other, showing care and concern for others.

Children communicate well and with confidence. They know they are listened to and that what they say is valued. They have access to pencils and paper to practise writing and mark making. They listen to stories, showing great enjoyment when the member of staff uses props such as puppets. The setting has different types of print around the rooms, for example using labels, travel brochures and sharing factual books with children.

Children are competent in their counting. They count easily and use mathematical language themselves. Their number recognition is good and well supported by fun activities. For example, children match a named number, up to the number 10, to the same number that they look for on the garden play equipment. The older child is confident in their knowledge as they help the less sure child. They learn about shapes in different ways. The shape soup activity enables children of all abilities to take part.

Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate a wide range of items. These include household and natural objects. Children spend time looking at these themselves, or discussing them with staff. A resource that enables children to create a battery circuit that lights bulbs or makes a sound helps them develop an interest in how things work.

Children's imagination is promoted through a number of activities and play resources. They enjoy singing and children sing as they play when they hear a familiar rhyme on the CD, playing in the background. They also experience classical or multicultural music. Children are introduced to art, looking at paintings of famous artists and recreate their own pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The nursery is effective at meeting children's individual needs. Staff obtain detail of babies' home routines and follow these as appropriate, whilst ensuring a child's immediate needs are met. Staff are learning Makaton signing to assist communication across the nursery. Children gain a sense of belonging as they know the daily routines and are cared for by familiar staff and keyworkers. In the crèche the staff share photographs of family members and other crèche children with the toddlers. This helps them make connections in their lives. The nursery children benefit from the visual time table that uses picture symbols to show them what activities are planned for in the session ahead. Children gain some awareness of their world through activities and play resources that positively represent the local community and wider world.

Behaviour management is very good and children behave well. They listen to staff and overall respond positively to requests. During circle time the nursery children are invited to nominate a friend for a reward sticker. Children are keen to say a thank you to another child for being their friend. Staff give thanks to children for being good helpers or for tidying up well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Notice boards in the crèche and nursery provide parents and carers with relevant detail about activities and routines. This includes information about the Birth to three matters framework. Relevant policies and procedures are easily accessed in the nursery. Home link books, for all children in the crèche and nursery, give parents useful detail about their child's day, with additional care information such as feeds for the babies.

Partnership with parents of the nursery education children is good. They receive detail about the Foundation Stage showing how their child may progress. Planning is displayed, giving parents information about their child's day that they can discuss together. However, they are less involved in supporting their child's next steps at home. Parents are able to speak to their child's keyworker or any member of staff should they have any questions or want to view the assessment records. Although they are informed of their child's progress in the six areas of learning, they are not routinely contributing to the assessment records themselves.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the very well organised day and environment. The staff team are very aware of their roles and responsibilities, aiding the smooth running of the day. The required written policies and procedures are shared with staff and parents. These include child protection, complaints and behaviour management. Relevant records and supporting documentation are in place. The good adult to child ratio enables some one to one attention. A thorough recruitment process helps ensure the suitability of staff.

Leadership and management are good. The staff and owner work together in monitoring the provision of nursery education to ensure children are fully encouraged to make good progress. Regular meetings are held to discuss planning and as a result, children's learning and development needs are promoted. There is a strong focus throughout the nursery on the personal development and achievement for all children. The effective integration of care and education enables children to learn as they play. The staff have annual appraisals and regular access to various training courses. This values their ongoing professional development. The nursery is committed to continual improvement and has development plans in place. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Good progress has been made since the last care inspection. The nursery were asked to update the complaints and child protection policies. These are in place and meet the current regulatory guidelines. As requested, staff ensure that the home link books are maintained regularly and parents are kept informed of their child's progress. This may not be on a daily basis but relates to a child's pattern of attendance. Suitable seating is in place for adults to use and in the crèche

there is a feeding chair and a comfy settee for staff and children to use together. A folding door has been placed at the doorway of the toilet room which provides some privacy for children, though there is no partition between the toilets.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery were asked to increase opportunities for children to practise writing. Children have easy access to paper and pencils during the day. They use mark making during role play and other activities. The more able child practises writing their name.

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.

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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):

- ensure children are unable to climb the crèche stairs unsupervised

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 parental involvement to encourage further support at home for their child's individual learning needs, inviting contributions to the assessment process
- consider ways to include children's ideas and interests in the planning process

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