



Tops Day Nurseries

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY281231
Inspection date	17 November 2006
Inspector	Lilyanne Taylor
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Registered person	Tops Day Nurseries
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Tops Day Nurseries opened in 2004 and forms part of a chain of nurseries which operate across the south coast, it is privately owned and is a Neighbourhood initiative nursery. It operates from a purpose built building in the grounds of Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham, Hampshire. The provision accepts children from the employees of Queen Alexandra Hospital and also children from the surrounding areas. There is a fully secure outdoor play area.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday 06:30 until 19:30 all year round and in addition to this a holiday club operates during all school holidays. This operates with the same opening hours and provides care for children up to the age of 12 years. There are currently 152 children on roll of these 9 are in receipt of nursery education funding.

The organisation employs 28 staff to work with the children, of these 23 hold appropriate early years child care qualifications, the remainder are working towards a recognised qualification. In addition to this the organisation employs an on site NVQ assessor. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is not fully promoted across all areas of the nursery, because some hygiene procedures and policies are not consistently put into practice. For example, two to three year old children are not encouraged to wash their hands prior to snack times and the carpet floor covering in most areas of the nursery is not maintained in a clean condition. Equipment, such as babies' high chairs, feeding utensils and dummies, are sterilised after use. However, toys, such as teething rings and hand held rattles, are not. As a result, children under the age of 18 months are not fully protected from the spread of germs and infection. Sleeping children are monitored and all bedding is kept unique to each child and laundered as required. Children are protected from the spread of illness through the clear policies in place regarding the attendance of sick children. Children, who become sick while attending the nursery, are cared for sensitively until their parents arrive. Staff liaise closely with parents to ensure all dietary requirements are met and understood. All required documentation to support children's welfare is maintained as required. Staff follow children's individual sleeping and feeding routines. Children are provided with a selection of meals and snacks which are healthy and nutritious. Cooked meals supplied by the nursery consist of fresh meat, pasta and vegetables, snacks consist of fresh fruit, rice cakes and cheese and crackers. Appropriate procedures are in place and agreed with parents for the re-heating/cooking of meals that they provide from home for their children. Children develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise and benefit from outside play throughout the day. They show a good sense of space and move confidently during activities, showing good co-ordination and balancing skills when using a range of equipment, such as a pedal board and bike.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure environment, which is effectively organised to enable them to move around within their base rooms. Children access available resources independently from trays and boxes, which are stored at child height. All toys and equipment are appropriate for the age range of children. However, although toys are safe, they are not always maintained in a good working order. The premises are kept secure and systems in place ensure only authorised persons gain entry. Effective arrangements for the collection and non-collection of children contribute to ensuring the children's safety. All visitors are requested to sign in to the premises and out. In addition to this, records of children's and staff's attendance are maintained to show who is present. Although staff have the responsibility of carrying out a daily check of their rooms prior to children attending to ensure they are safe and free from hazards, not all rooms are maintained in a safe condition. For example, in the room two to three

year old children are cared for in loose objects, such as staples, that pose a hazard are not noticed or removed. Children are aware of the procedures they should follow in the event of an emergency; fire evacuation procedures are practised on a regular basis. Children are protected from possible abuse or neglect. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures they are required to follow with any concerns they may have. They are fully aware of the different types of abuse and the signs to look for. In addition to this, records of any injuries the children come in with are maintained. Management has systems and procedures in place to ensure appropriate action is taken should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are occupied and engaged in a wide range of activities throughout the time they spend in the nursery. They make friendships with other children and play well alongside one another. Although most staff and trainees (modern apprentices) interact well with children during activities and sit alongside the children joining in with their play, others tend to supervise activities and have little interaction with the children. As a result, some children are not fully supported to gain the most enjoyment or learning from activities they engage in. Staff working with children under three are beginning to use the Birth to three framework to plan activities. Some children in this age range enjoy the experience of playing with shaving foam; they laugh and gurgle as it makes a squishing sound as they sit in it, or rub it into their hands. Others are encouraged by staff to explore the contents of a treasure basket feeling the various textures of items, such as a brush, ice cube container and wooden spoon.

Children have opportunities to freely express themselves during craft and painting activities using a various range of materials and techniques; samples of their work adorn most areas of the nursery. However, the opportunity to engage in some activities is limited for two to three year old children; they are only allowed to mark make using chalks when it is a planned activity. In addition to this, resources staff make available in the home corner are sparse. Some children are not always able to gain the most learning value from electronic resources. For example, items, such as cash registers and toddler's musical toys, are not always maintained in good working order; batteries are not replaced when required.

Most of the time children behave well and are beginning to understand right from wrong through the guidance and support they receive from staff. However, because two to three year old children are not adequately supervised at all times they become bored and the unacceptable behaviour they display is not acknowledged by staff.

Children attending the holiday club have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities which are usually linked to a theme or topic. For example, during October half-term, activities were based on Halloween. In addition to this, they have the opportunity to play various board games, computer games and take part in a range of art and craft activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals in all areas. Staff plan a programme of activities to cover all areas of learning. Focused activities show the learning children are expected to gain based on the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage and the differentiation required for varying abilities so individual children are appropriately challenged and supported to make progress.

Children are encouraged to plan, do and review; they sit with a member of staff and discuss what they are going to play with, then proceed to activity, afterwards they review/recall what they have done. Staff that regularly work with children funded for nursery education interact with them well. However, children are sometimes in the care of other nursery staff or trainees who tend to supervise activities and do not fully interact with children. They lack knowledge of the Foundation Stage, and as a result, children do not gain the most learning and experiences from some free play activities or routines they are engaging in.

Children are becoming independent; they pour their own drinks, put on their own coats for outdoor play and make their own choices of activities they wish to engage in. They share resources and take turns when playing games with others. Children have some opportunities to develop their awareness of other cultures through discussion, cooking activities and posters displayed in room.

Children have opportunities to use mark making equipment in a range of situations. For example, in the home corner they write shopping lists and while pretending to be a doctor they write out the patient a prescription for medication. Children are becoming confident communicators and like to share conversations with others. Although children are beginning to link sounds to letters and to know which letters represent the sounds, they have few opportunities to see written words alongside objects and resources in the environment. As a result, they are not fully supported to develop their pre-reading skills.

Most staff make good use of incidental learning opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding of mathematics. For example, they encourage children to count the number of cups required at snack time and compare whether they need more or less so as each child has one and they count how many children there are lining up for outdoor play. While outdoors they count how many ruler lengths the chalk line they have drawn on the playground is. Children sort objects into groups of one, two or three and they count the number of pegs they have prior to using a hammer to bang them into the holes of the board. Children use scales and spoons to measure the ingredients required to make jam tarts. A time line displayed which shows the routine of the session and a sand timer that is used to give children notice of three minutes to tidy up time supports children to gain an awareness of time.

Children have opportunities to explore creativity using a wide range of media, such as sand, water, play-dough, pasta and paints. They use their imagination well and enjoy taking on roles of other professionals; they play doctors and patients. Children enjoy the involvement of staff in their play. For example, the children make a member of staff wear a bandage on her head and then write her a prescription for some medication to make it better.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery welcomes all children and respects them as individuals. Children are supported to play an active part in the session and encouraged to make their own choice of activities they wish to play with from those made available to them. Children attending the holiday club are able to express what activities or resources they would like made available. Children show good levels of confidence and independence. They are relaxed and familiar with routines. Children learn to share and take turns with other children and enjoy having responsibilities. For example, they help to tidy away the toys. Although staff use praise and encouragement to reinforce good behaviour the policy for managing children's unacceptable behaviour is not consistently applied in all areas of the nursery. For example two to three year old children are not given clear explanations of why their behaviour is un-acceptable or made aware of how to respect resources. They are not supported to gain an understanding of the behaviour expectations of the setting or to realise the effect their behaviour has on them or others around them. There are limited resources freely available for children to play with that depict positive images of culture and disability. As a result, children have few opportunities to develop their knowledge and awareness of others and wider society. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory.

Good settling in procedures are offered to new children; they are able to attend pre-visits with their parents prior to attending. This provides them with the opportunity to become familiar with the surroundings in which they will be cared for. Parents have the opportunity to discuss any specific care arrangements or individual needs their children may have. Parents receive information about the operational procedures of the nursery in the form of a prospectus, newsletters and notice boards sited in the entrance lobby and corridors of the nursery.

Children are cared for in accordance with their parent's wishes; written and verbal agreements made with parents are respected.

Information is exchanged daily regarding the care that has been provided for babies and children under the age of three.

Although parents receive some information of the activities their children are to engage in through regular newsletters, they receive little information on a daily basis of the focussed activity their child has engaged in. Information displayed on the notice-board about the activity, what children did, the area of learning covered and the stepping stone being worked towards achieving is not updated daily. As a result, parents are not fully able to continue their child's learning at home if they wish. Parents are able to discuss their child's progress with staff both informally and formally. Children's records of achievement are shared with parents and they are able to contribute the knowledge they have of their child's development and progress which staff take into account when planning their next steps in learning.

Parents are informed of the procedures they should follow if they have any concerns about the nursery and systems and procedures in place ensure that any complaints received are dealt with

appropriately. In addition to this, a poster displayed informs parents of the procedures they should follow if they have any views of the setting they wish to express to the regulatory body. All parents have access to the setting's latest inspection report so they are able to see the quality of care and education their children are receiving and any areas identified for improvement.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Effective employment procedures ensure children are only cared for by adults who are suitable to work with children under eight. All new staff and trainees have an induction on their commencement at the nursery which includes going through the policies and procedures the nursery work to, health and safety and child protection. The ongoing suitability of staff forms part of their appraisal. The nursery displays their registration certificate so parents are able to see the conditions of registration the nursery are required to comply with.

Leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory.

A recently appointed manager of the nursery is being supported by various personnel from head office and the registered provider. A recently introduced system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of care and education children are provided with has identified some weaknesses in the provision. However, because a system for addressing these issues is not yet fully developed it is impacting on the care and education some children are receiving.

The organisation of space provides most children with the opportunity to experience and engage in a wide range of activities; separate base areas are provided for babies, toddlers and pre-school children. Most areas of the nursery are equipped with a sufficient range of suitable resources so children's development in all areas is effectively promoted. Although adult to child ratios are maintained, there is not always sufficient staff working directly with the children. For example, two to three year old children are not always adequately supervised because staff are carrying out cleaning duties. In addition to this, the deployment of staff and the responsibilities trainees are sometimes given are not always appropriate; senior staff within some base rooms do not always act as good role models to inexperienced staff or trainees. As a result, the care and development needs of some children are not always met fully. Some procedures and practices the nursery works to are not consistently put into practice across all areas of the nursery. As a result this is having an impact on the nursery being able to fully promote positive outcomes for all children and their ability to fully protect children's health and safety. Staff are aware the information they hold about children is confidential; all records of children are kept secure. Overall, the nursery is meeting the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the quality and standard of care children were provided with by the nursery was judged to be inadequate. The nursery was asked to take the following action: ensure children's safety at all times during fire evacuation and when using outside play equipment and to ensure registers of children, staff and visitors present are accurate at all

times. The action the nursery has taken in response to these actions has contributed to improving some aspects of children's safety. All children are now able to exit the premises safely; systems put in place ensure all staff in the nursery are aware when the fire alarm is sounding. All outdoor equipment is checked prior to children's use and maintained in a safe condition. A record of all children and staff in attendance is maintained and regularly updated throughout a session to show the numbers actually present and all visitors are requested to sign in to the premises and out.

At the last nursery education inspection the quality and standard of education children were receiving was judged to be inadequate.

The nursery was asked to take the following action: increase practitioner's knowledge and understanding of how to use the stepping stones to improve the quality of teaching and learning and make the most of all learning opportunities; improve systems to monitor and evaluate teaching, the curriculum and the impact on children's individual progress; improve the systems to monitor and record children's ongoing achievements and develop the systems for planning to ensure this information is used to plan the next steps in their individual learning and to increase opportunities for parents to share what they know about their child, contribute to their assessment and be informed about their next steps for development. Since the last inspection the nursery has sought and been receiving support and advice from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). As a result, the standard and quality of the Nursery Education children receive has improved. Staff that regularly work with children funded for nursery education now have a sound knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage and confidently use this knowledge when presenting and planning activities for children. A system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching has been introduced; staff are made aware of their teaching strengths and any areas that require improvement. Children's records are now updated regularly so it is clear to see the progress they are making. Staff carry out observations of children during planned and free play activities, the information they gain is used to inform the planning of future activities which ensures each child is appropriately challenged and they are supported to make progress in their next steps of learning. Opportunities for parents to share what they know about their child have been increased. They are asked to fill in profiles of the stage of development their children are at which staff use as a baseline assessment along with their own observations to plan for the children's next steps. In addition to this, parents are able to discuss with staff daily any progress they feel their child is making at home. Children's records of progress are available for parents to view at anytime and formal meetings provide opportunities for parents to discuss with staff what the plans are for their child's next steps in learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards.

A concern was raised in relation to the following:

National Standard 2 (Organisation) adult/child ratios were not being met.

National Standard 4 (Physical environment) adequate clean bedding was not available for babies' cots.

National Standard 5 (Equipment) toys and equipment within the setting were not of the required standard.

National Standard 7 (Hygiene) hygiene at the setting was not of the required standard also the setting was not promoting good hygiene practice.

National Standard 8 (Food and drink) adequate food and drink were not made available to minded children.

National Standards 12 (Working with parents and carers) the setting was not complying with the wishes of parents.

Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to this setting; this visited identified that the National Standards were not being fully complied with so the following action was set:

National Standard 7 (Health) Ensure stringent procedures to promote good levels of hygiene are implemented to prevent cross infection in the nappy changing areas and ensure all equipment is cleaned thoroughly after use.

Ofsted received a reply from this provider detailing the action they had taken; a review of this reply identified that the National Standards were now being met and that the registered person remained qualified for registration. In view of this Ofsted took no further action.

The provider has a record of this complaint in their records.

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 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.

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 a clean and healthy environment is maintained to meet the needs of all children

- ensure the daily procedures for checking the room used by two to three year old children is effectively carried out so that hazards are identified and removed and children are protected from harm
- ensure resources provided for children under three years of age are sufficient and maintained in a good working order so they can gain the most enjoyment and learning experiences from them
- ensure the deployment of staff and trainees is appropriate and meets the care and development needs of all children at all times (Also applies to Nursery Education)
- continue to develop systems for addressing identified weaknesses in the quality of care children receive to ensure all children's needs are met and their health, safety and well-being is promoted in all areas of the nursery.

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 all staff are aware of the potential learning children can gain from their self chosen free play and routine activities so they are able to fully support children to gain the most learning and enjoyment from them
- support children to develop their pre-reading skills by providing more opportunities for them to see written words alongside resources and objects in the environment
- ensure information on the notice-board regarding the focussed activity children have participated in is updated daily so parents are able to continue their child's learning at home if they wish.

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