

Spring Lane Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY307211
Inspection date	09 February 2007
Inspector	Virginia Cooper
Setting Address	Spring Lane Day Nursery, c/o Chaucer Technology School, Spring Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1SW
Telephone number	01227 479 696
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Registered person	Asquith Court Nurseries Limited
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Spring Lane Day Nursery is one of 108 nurseries run by Asquith Court Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2005 and operates from 8 rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated on school premises on the outskirts of Canterbury, Kent. A maximum of 143 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 177 children under five years on roll. Of these, 62 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 42 members of staff. Of these, 26 hold appropriate early years qualifications, 2 are working towards a qualification and 7 are working towards a higher qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's good health is not adequately supported. The standard of cleaning is not always thorough; sand from children's clothing is left in the creases of the changing mat and on the work surface where they are positioned. Staff remove the bowls of potties and clean them but do not wipe the area under the bowls; a residue of urine remains where germs may harbour and present a risk of cross infection. Staff do not always dispose of dirty tissues immediately, keeping them in their pockets. To help prevent the spread of foot and mouth in one of the rooms' staff made the decision to sanitise the toys at the end of every day; however this was not followed through consistently. Some children attending are clearly unwell and caring for them puts other children at risk of cross-infection. Poorly children are not enjoying their time at nursery and the constant adult support they require has a negative impact upon the care provided for the other children present.

Nappy changing procedures to prevent cross infection are satisfactory. Staff use gloves, disposable aprons and clean the changing mat with anti-bacterial spray after each nappy change.

Children learn about good hygiene practice through the daily routine; they routinely wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. The door to the toilets in some rooms is locked at times during the day preventing children gaining personal independence.

Most staff hold a first aid qualification; they are able to administer first aid to children in the event of an accident or emergency. The staff record any accidents and any first aid that is administered whilst the children are in their care; this ensures parents are well informed about what has happened to their child. All children with allergies have a written care plan to ensure they are not given anything that is unsuitable.

Generally, the same staff care for babies each day providing consistency and security. They enjoy a close bond with their key workers and when they look to staff for support they receive reassurance with a smile or cuddle encouraging a strong sense of self worth. Most of the children get to play outdoors on a regular basis, but this is not extended to the babies who do not go out in the fresh air regularly. The large outdoor play equipment is grimy and uninviting; children are not playing with these resources.

Children eat healthy and nutritious meals that a cook prepares on the premises. They have free access to regular drinks ensuring they do not become dehydrated. Children serve themselves encouraging their independence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety is not adequately protected. The attendance registers for children are not kept accurately; this impacts upon children's safety in the event of a fire and may be an important record in child protection issues. Fire drills are carried out every few months; staff choose different days to ensure as many children as possible experience an evacuation. The evaluation of the last four fire drills has highlighted that on three occasions staff have not signed the main staff attendance register.

The nursery is secure. There is an effective system in place for monitoring visitors and an arrival and collection procedure to keep children safe. There are eight rooms in the nursery and two garden areas. The children are grouped by age, enabling staff to prepare the environment appropriately.

Nursery size furniture enables children to undertake tasks more easily. Staff share resources and sometimes the equipment they need is not to hand. For example toddlers did not have enough aprons available for water play and one was wearing an apron clearly made for a much larger child, it came down to their feet creating a tripping hazard. Staff do not routinely encourage children to tidy and put equipment away, resulting in the floor becoming cluttered and this prevents children from moving around the room safely and easily.

A risk assessment of the premises and outdoor play area is carried out regularly and room leaders carry out visual daily checks to ensure these standards are maintained. These checks are not always thorough and safety equipment to protect children from accidents is sometimes missing, for example, socket covers.

The nursery has a designated member of staff who takes responsibility for child protection. Staff have sufficient knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about any child in their care to keep them safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are kind to the children and give them praise and encouragement. Staff are aware of the document Birth to three matters. They have spent time making the environment in the baby and toddler rooms stimulating and interesting. There are fairy lights, cosy areas where children snuggle up and listen to stories. Both baby rooms have a black and white area where babies love to play. Staff provide some interesting resources like balloons in a duvet cover children can feel and pop. They provide the youngest children with opportunities to undertake a range of tactile activities; for example playing with wet sand, soil, play dough, shredded paper play and water. In every room except one on the first day of the inspection the play dough was dry and needed replacing for children to gain maximum benefit from this activity. Babies enjoy a close relationship with their carers. Staff encourage babies to find their voice; they sing songs and teach them action rhymes. Staff are still becoming accustomed to using observations to plan future activities, they can recognise what children enjoy but are finding it harder to recognise the skills the children are learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Some of the teaching methods are confusing for children, for example, familiarising children with a word in lower case letters and then asking them to write the word in capitals. Staff make regular observations about what the children do and this provides parents with an account of their time at nursery. Much of what they record, however, is descriptive and inadequately identifies the child's stage of learning to help them provide appropriate activities to further their development. The weekly planning follows children's interests; however, the educational content is lost because staff lack experience of extending children's learning. The observations are random and are not recorded under the different areas of learning. It is difficult, therefore, to easily identify how children are progressing towards the early learning goals, or the next steps required to address their individual learning needs. Much of the information staff know about the children is committed to memory; if they

leave the provision this information is lost. Some children are bored and insufficiently challenged; staff are not skilled at recognising when children are not engaged. The atmosphere is chaotic on occasions which does not provide a positive learning environment. Children are not always supported to use resources appropriately, for example, they emptied sand all over the home corner equipment. Staff are familiar with the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and organise the room to reflect the six areas of learning.

Children are able to select resources for themselves and work independently. Some children are having difficulty playing co-operatively together and do not find sharing easy. When staff are working with a group of children they are sometimes slow to react to what is going on with other children in the room and poor behaviour or distress is not always dealt with promptly. Children use equipment inappropriately, for example, they use the rolling pins for sword fighting. Children celebrate a variety of festivals and are beginning to learn about their own and other people's cultures and beliefs.

Children have the opportunity to recognise their names throughout the day. Staff rarely make reference to the sound different letters make which does not help children's early reading skills. They enjoy listening to stories but many of the books are in a poor condition and children cannot reach a lot of the books as they are stored down the middle of the book case. Children have opportunities to write but the crayons and pencils are not always sharp enough to make this easy. Staff give examples of words written in lower case and then teach children to write in capital letters. This is confusing for them and staff are unaware that it is usual teaching practice to introduce children to lower case letters initially. The environment is richly labelled but this adds little to the children's learning as the organisation of the resources is poor, and the label on the outside of boxes often bears little resemblance to what is inside.

Children count regularly, however, one room does not have a number line and the other has a number line that only goes up to five not allowing children regular opportunities to become familiar with how numbers are written. Staff miss many opportunities to help children make simple calculations. According to the observations a few children recognise some shapes but again it is difficult to identify easily what children know and what staff might introduce next.

Children grow plants and enjoy looking for mini beasts in the garden encouraging them to learn about nature. They enjoy playing on the computer and have good mouse control. The computer is temperamental and the software does not always work, there is not a printer to enable children to print the pictures they make. The opportunities to use other technology are limited.

Funded children use the garden most days but staff use this mainly as an opportunity to run around and get fresh air. Activities especially for the outdoor area are rarely planned, although staff sometimes take some of the resources outside. Children cannot always move freely indoors because of the cluttered floor. They have reasonable spatial awareness and move around without bumping into one another. Staff are aware of the children who can use scissors and other hand held tools competently although it is difficult to find this information easily in their assessment records. When a staff member laid the table for dinner the cutlery was all set for left handed children, this lack of forethought will make a physical task much harder for children to manage.

Children love to play with a variety of musical instruments; one room has a small room attached dedicated to musical activities. Children use their imaginations, for example, they move the chairs and made a bus. This role play is rarely extended by staff; they don't join in with the children's games. Children are able to paint freely and are proud of their pictures, they like to show their parents when they collect them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

There is a breach of a National Standard. The nursery policies state that children with special needs enjoy the same full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education; however, staff have inadequate knowledge of how to support children with special needs. Whilst they ensure children are happy, less attention is given to their learning. They are waiting to liaise with other agencies before writing an individual education plan for a child, this is taking a long time and the key worker is not aware of this child's individual targets.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are generally happy to attend the nursery. A member of staff takes responsibility for equal opportunities in the nursery. There are some resources that reflect our multi-cultural society positively.

Staff teach children right from wrong by giving them explanations and intervening when necessary. They are; however, sometimes slow to react to conflict. They do give children praise and encouragement indicating to children the behaviour they want to see repeated.

The partnership with parents and carers is inadequate. Parents are given basic information about the Foundation Stage. However, they rarely see their child's assessment records and therefore, the opportunities for parents to share what they know about their child and to become involved with their child's learning are limited. There is general information about the nursery available for parents to read and some open days are held throughout the year. Key workers talk to parents at the end of every day about what their children have done.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

There are recruiting procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. The pace and routine of the session is unsatisfactory, children's needs are not met effectively at meal and snack times. Poor organisation results in children becoming fidgety and agitated waiting for their dinner. It takes half an hour for all children to be served, by the time some children are offered gravy they have already finished their meal.

The environment is sometimes chaotic, and resources are not well organised. Staff do not regularly tidy and put equipment away that is not in use, this results in toys all over the floor which is dangerous and not teaching children how to take care of things. Staffs' knowledge of the National Standards is inadequate. Books to record mandatory documentation are in place, however, a breach of regulation occurs because staff rely upon parents to mark the attendance register and these records are not always accurate. Staff do not identify relevant and achievable targets for children with learning difficulties promptly, helping them progress and develop at a satisfactory rate. The provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery are inadequate. The systems to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education are not effective; weaknesses in the teaching methods go unnoticed. Some staff are insufficiently confident to deliver a suitable range of activities that aid children's progress towards the early learning goals. Much of the continuous provision is customary practice and little thought is given about what children will learn and gain from the activities they provide. Staff do not have a good understanding of how to use assessment records effectively to provide activities that address their individual learning needs.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection several actions were made that relate to both the care and education of the children. The actions related to National Standards 2,3,5,6,7 and 8.

Some progress has been made in addressing some of the actions, however, some problems identified at the last inspection remain and the provision are still required to take action to address the outstanding issues.

The progress staff have already made include more consistent care for babies; the temperature of rooms is better regulated; more resources have been purchased; all staff have received training and been made aware of child protection procedures; staff are better informed about children's dietary needs and they have received training to help them deliver the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

The areas of concern identified at the last inspection that require further development include issues about hygiene; the planning and delivery of activities; the effective use of assessment records and the service provided for children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Whilst there has been improvement in some areas, this is not sufficient to promote positive outcomes for children.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- maintain a safe environment for children ensuring all required safety equipment is in place
- ensure staff implement the nursery's policy about the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious to prevent cross infection
- ensure the steps taken to prevent the spread of infection are adequate

- ensure registers record accurately the hours of children's attendance

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure staff improve their understanding of how to use assessment records effectively to plan relevant activities
- improve the systems for monitoring and evaluating the educational programme; ensure all children are suitably challenged and making progress towards the early learning goals
- ensure children with learning difficulties enjoy the same full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education and are making progress towards the early learning goals; this action also applies to the care inspection
- ensure parents have adequate knowledge about the Foundation Stage; their children's progress towards the early learning goals and are aware they are able to contribute to their children's records

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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