



Sunflower Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127658
Inspection date	21 November 2006
Inspector	Mandy Mooney
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Registered person	Jacqui Pickering
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sunflower Nursery opened in 1998, at the present site, but has been established for 13 years. It is a privately owned and managed provision.

It operates from two rooms in Milton Mount Hall which is part of the United Reformed Church, in Gravesend. The children and staff have access to the two halls, entrance room, toilets, kitchen and an outside area. The Nursery serves the local area and children from the Medway towns.

The provision is registered to care for 44 children from two years to under eight years at any one time. There are currently 67 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 22 funded three-year-olds and six funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is not their first language.

It is open on Monday and Thursday from 09:00 to 15:15 and Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 09:00 until 16:00, term time only. The provision also offers care to children aged two years to eight years during some of the summer holidays from 09.00 to 16:00.

There are 13 members of staff who work with the children, this includes two trainees. Of these, nine have early years qualifications to level two or three.

The setting receives support from an advisory teacher for the Local Authority and the Preschool Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is appropriately promoted because staff implement sufficient hygiene routines, for example, using anti-bacterial spray when cleaning tables and surfaces and checking the toilets are clean throughout the day. Children are encouraged to have effective hygiene routines and this contributes to minimising the spread of infection, for example, they are reminded to cover their mouth when they cough and they know the importance of regular hand washing. This is further supported by appropriate policies and procedures, such as a sick child policy. Although procedure for dealing with accidents is consistently applied, the recording of information does not ensure confidentiality as many entries are recorded on each page.

Children learn the importance of a healthy diet and enjoy helping to prepare snacks. They are offered a drink of milk or water. Sufficient information on children's individual diets is in place and this ensures their dietary needs are adhered to. Parents are encouraged to provide their child with a healthy packed lunch and they receive information in the prospectus on this. Children enjoy daily physical exercise, such as music and movement and getting fresh air in the garden. They learn about the importance of having a healthy lifestyle because staff explain the benefits to them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a bright, if a little worn environment. Staff have made good efforts to create a welcoming and friendly environment, considering the restriction imposed by the building. Children's work is displayed, showing that their efforts are valued and appreciated.

Children are warmly welcomed into the setting as staff cheerfully greet them and their family, and a general chat takes place. Most children separate from their carers positively showing that they are confident and secure in the setting. Those who find separation emotional, quickly settle as staff are responsive and offer cuddles until children are ready to explore. Furniture is organised allowing children ample space to move around safely. Children play with a suitable range of safe and age appropriate toys and resources. Children use three toilets and wash hand basins. Although this is considered sufficient in quantity, because nappy changing takes place

on a mat on the floor, the area becomes congested at times and access to the wash hand basins is sometimes restricted. Children have the opportunity to rest in the book corner.

Suitable systems are in place to promote children's safety in the nursery, for example, the procedures for the drop and collection of children are effective and a daily health and safety checklist is completed to ensure any hazards are minimised before children arrive. Appropriate written procedures, including a record of visitors, a lost or uncollected child policy and risk assessments are in place. Children learn about the importance of keeping themselves safe, for example, they practise the fire evacuation procedure on a regular basis, so this is familiar to them and they take responsibility for putting the toys away when they have finished playing with them.

There is a clear child protection policy in place and this is reflective of current guidelines. This includes the procedures to follow if a concern is raised. Although most staff are familiar with many of the possible signs and symptoms that could indicate abuse or neglect, not all staff are aware of the procedures to follow if an allegation is made. This does not ensure children are safeguarded at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have access to a stimulating environment. Posters and children's work are displayed on the walls throughout the setting and photos are available in a folder to show what children are involved in whilst at the nursery. The main activity hall is laid out into different areas of learning to maximise its use. A smaller activity room is organised to enable older children to take part in small group activities based on the Foundation stage curriculum. Toys are set out on the floor or on tables and also in low level storage units located around the room and children make independent choices of what they would like to play with.

Overall, children are well supported in the setting as staff ensure the outcomes for children are promoted well. Children are provided with a good range of stimulating activities, however, opportunities for children to be freely creative in art and craft activities are too few. Staff have a sound understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and the planning is reflective of differentiation to show how the activities and opportunities are adapted to meet the younger children's needs. A recent implementation of the 'Leuven' approach (a process orientated child monitoring system for young children, based on the research of Professor Ferre Laevers) to help children progress means that young children achieve through activities and opportunities to enhance their development by looking at their wellbeing and involvement. This approach is also used effectively by staff who use the 'Leuven' scale to monitor and assess children's progress. Staff implement a key worker system to support children's emotional wellbeing. Key workers are responsible for settling in new children and developing a caring relationship outside the family home. As a result, children build positive relationships and separation from parents is positive. Key workers are also responsible for liaising with parents to share information about children's wellbeing and developmental progress.

Nursery Education

Overall, children enjoy their time in the setting and staff know the children well and can identify that children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered as children are settled and secure in the setting. They show good levels of confidence and self-esteem and show a sense of belonging as they know where their belongings are kept. Children are encouraged to make choices about their play and they learn about responsibility because they are responsible for putting the toys away. Opportunities for children to practise their independence and self help skills are limited because the soap dispenser in the toilets is out of reach and they must rely on an adult to pass the paper towels to them after washing their hands. Children help to prepare the fruit at the snack bar, however, opportunities to enhance this further in allowing children to give out cups and to pour the drinks are missed. Also, coat pegs are out of reach and although they know they are there, they cannot access them without assistance. Children's good behaviour and kindness is recognised, which promotes their self-esteem. They show appreciation of each other. This was seen at song time, where the children were practising for the Christmas concert. Two four-year-olds were singing along together and one turned to the other to congratulate him on singing. He said 'well done' and the other child responded 'thanks, you were good too'. Children feel safe and have developed a sense of trust as they have formed positive relationships with adults, greeting them as they walk in the room, or approaching adults to ask them what they are doing.

Children have many opportunities to look at books as they participate in story sessions during the day and they approach the book corners freely to choose their own books. This is successful in encouraging children to look at books independently. Children are encouraged to look at books at home with their families because a library scheme is in place, which also encourages children to take responsibility for looking after a book and returning it to the nursery. Children recognise their names from name cards during small group work and when using the snack bar as they are asked if they can identify their names as they sit down. Many can do this. They are beginning to associate meaning to print, for example, observing an object and display name cards. Having a 'word of the week' helps children think about things beginning with the current letter, for example, this week it is the letter 'K'. Staff use carpet time to extend children's understanding of the letter, emphasising the sound of the letter and linking this to other objects beginning with the same letter. Some children use their fingers to follow the shape and through using wipe clean boards to practise writing skills.

Children have access to a wide range of stimulating and challenging mathematical resources. The maths area is created to encourage the children to develop their awareness and enjoyment of different mathematical concepts. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well. They recognise the properties of simple shapes and make patterns using beads and pegs. They use appropriate mathematical language during free play activities. Many children are confident in counting beyond 10 and some can recognise numerals. Children have time throughout the day to consolidate their learning in everyday routines, for example, counting how many children are in the group. Children enjoy taking part in small group games where they take turns and follow instructions to match shapes and colours, however, the activity was finished early because the adult supervising the activity was not concentrating on the game and was not responding to children's questions about the different shapes.

Children use their imagination and express their ideas in a variety of ways. They act out well-known scenarios and stories during role-play and small world play. Children sing along to well known songs. They show good concentration and follow the actions to the songs well. This was shown during a large group practise session for the Christmas concert. Children have opportunities to develop creativity as opportunities are planned for messy activities where they explore colour, texture and use a variety of media. However, opportunities for free painting are too few and some staff are not as skilled as others in supporting children's enjoyment of activities.

Children benefit from regular opportunities of music and movement as this forms part of the planned routine. Large motor skills of jumping, hopping, stretching and breathing exercises are introduced. Children said they felt hot when they were exercising and once they stopped they started to feel cool again. This supports children's physical development. They benefit from using the outside area on a daily basis, where they get themselves ready and put on their boots and coats to ensure they keep warm. Children enjoy the activity and participate well. Children are developing their fine motor skills appropriately, for example, when using scissors, pencils and threading activities.

Children have many opportunities to investigate and explore using their senses, for example, the children have been looking at ice in line with the current theme of 'Winter'. They used ice and talked about how it is made and made an igloo using a variety of materials. Children learn about how they feel because small group opportunities are planned to enable them to discuss these and talk about what different expressions mean, for example, using picture cards depicting 'happy' and the children were asked why they thought the person on the card was feeling happy. Children are confident in using technology. They have daily opportunities to use the computer, where they self select age appropriate programs for themselves. They manipulate the mouse confidently and take turns. Children learn about people in the community because the nursery has regular visitors, for example, a lollipop person, fire officer and police officer.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and this is used effectively to provide a wide range of purposeful activities and opportunities for the children. Staff are deployed effectively between the two rooms and because the rota is planned, they know their responsibilities for the week and can plan accordingly. Most staff are confident in managing activities, encouraging the children to ask questions and extending their learning through their involvement. However, on occasions, some staff tend to supervise children as oppose to support and enable children in their learning. This was shown during an activity linked to the current topic of 'staying warm', where children were decorating gloves for the winter. The staff member rushed the children and completed the tasks of applying the glue and glitter for many children. The children were not allowed to take their time with the activity, instead the focus was on ensuring all the children produced a piece of work. This was repeated the following day and led by a different member of staff who approached the activity in a more positive way, where children were able to be freely expressive.

The manager and supervisor take the lead on planning activities and other staff contribute their ideas. Key workers ensure that their observations are recorded and that these are used to influence the planning of activities for the children. Targets are set for the children and

parents have the opportunity to contribute their ideas and views. This ensures they are involved in their child's learning. Children's progress is monitored effectively because key workers complete a grid each month to track how each child is progressing and staff plan 'Island time' for the children where activities are planned for a specific area for the key group. Staff evaluate the planning to ensure it is effective in meeting children's all round developmental needs and this is reviewed and improved as necessary.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Equal opportunities is suitably promoted in the setting as children have equal access to the toys and equipment. Children make independent choices of what they would like to play with. There are many resources to depict positive images of cultures, gender and roles in society, however those to show a positive image of disability are few. Children learn about each other, themselves and people in the community because they take in a variety of opportunities to support this, for example, celebrating and acknowledging different festivals.

Staff offer good support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff are secure in their understanding of the code of practice, which means they are able to meet and plan for children's individual needs. There is a designated Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in place, who has attended relevant training and as a result is able to work with the Area SENCO to provide extra support and guidance if required.

Children are generally well behaved in the setting and consistent and positive strategies are used to deal with unwanted behaviour, for example using 'time out'. They know the daily routine well, for example, they know when an adult's hands are raised above the head, this means come and line up for carpet time. Children are encouraged to use their good manners of 'please' and 'thank you', and are developing respectful attitudes towards others. Children are encouraged to behave well because staff acknowledge this and tell them when they have done something well.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are confident and show good levels of self esteem. Children are confident in sharing their feelings through everyday experiences and also through planned small group work. Children show caring attitudes towards others in the group if they are unhappy, or develop caring attitudes through role play. Children are aware of each other's feelings and ask about their wellbeing, for example, two children were playing with the large dice and one threw it at the other. The child who threw it immediately asked if he was alright and explained that if he had hurt him that he was sorry. Children relate well with others, as positive relationships are forming and children interact in play. Children have also developed positive relationships with adults in the room, greeting and sharing information or thoughts. Staff know the children well as the setting liaises with families to find out information about the child and their individual needs.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Required documentation is in place to ensure staff are well informed of children's individual needs and to ensure contact can be made easily with parents if required. Policies and procedures are in place and these are shared with parents. This includes a complaints procedure, however, this is not reflective of current regulations and there

is no complaints log in place. This is a breach of regulations. The provider acknowledges this and demonstrates a positive attitude to ensuring this is amended with immediate effect. Parents receive useful information about the setting as a prospectus which provides parents with information about the care children receive and the aims, roles and responsibilities of the setting is readily available. This includes information on the Birth to three matters framework, however, when asked, several parents are not aware that the younger children's curriculum is based on the framework. Staff continue to develop effective relationships with parents and parents comment that they are happy with the care provided and feel their child has settled well.

Staff have regular discussions with parents to share children's progress with regard to their learning and development. Staff make regular observations of children's learning. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. As part of the target setting for children, a planning sheet is sent home on a termly basis and this enables parents to give their comments and ideas and to contribute to their child's learning. As a result, parents have the opportunity to share information about what children already know so staff can identify where children are at in relation to the stepping stones and plan for the next steps. Parents receive newsletters, giving general information about the setting and forthcoming events.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Qualification requirements are well met as more than half the staff team hold an appropriate qualification in early years. Several staff have a first aid qualification. Staff are kept up-to-date with current issues because they have regular opportunities to attend relevant training. For example, recent training has included healthy settings, National Standards, Foundation Stage, and the 'Leuven' approach to teaching and learning. As a result, children receive care in line with current practice. Children are cared for by suitable adults as appropriate procedures are in place to ensure staff suitability. All staff have had the required checks carried out and children are never left alone with un-vetted adults.

The setting complies with registration conditions as the certificate is displayed, in line with regulations. Adult: child ratios are adhered to and the attendance record consolidates this. Staff are deployed within the nursery to ensure all areas are appropriately supervised, however, on occasions, less experienced staff place too much emphasis on supervising the children, instead of supporting and enabling the children to progress.

Required documentation is in place to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, although the complaints procedure requires updating. These are readily accessible and are shared with parents. As a result, adults are aware of the roles and responsibilities in caring for children.

Leadership and management is good. A strong feature of the setting is the staff commitment in implementing the aims and objectives of the setting, to ensure the outcomes for children are promoted. Strong emphasis is also placed on team work and staff work well together. Although whole staff team meetings do not take place on a regular basis, the manager ensures time is made every week for staff to discuss and contribute to the planning and for staff to pass on any information about individual children to ensure individual children's targets are

incorporated into the planning. The manager works closely with the advisory teacher to keep up-to-date with advances in the area. Self evaluation takes place so the setting can identify strengths and areas for improvement. The weakness highlighted in teaching and learning with regards to the staff's role in supporting children in their learning is acknowledged by the manager, who realises that the system for monitoring the approach of individual staff is not completely effective. Management demonstrate a positive attitude to making changes to further enhance the provision.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Several recommendations were raised at the last care inspection in 2004. The policies and procedures have been updated and improved to ensure the safe management of the provision. This includes the information obtained at admission to ensure the children's individual needs are met, information on lunch box contents, the lost child policy, the recording of emergency contact details and for recording the administration of medication. The procedure for ensuring that parents are informed if their child has had an accident is appropriate, however, the system for recording this does not ensure confidentiality because several entries are recorded on each page. Parents have access to the policies and procedures because they are stored in a folder by the main front door. Suitable hygiene procedures are implemented and this contributes to keeping the children healthy.

Staff interact positively with the children. Each child has a key worker who works with the child's parent to ensure their individual needs are met. Staff provide a positive role model for the children and appropriate strategies are implemented to deal with unwanted behaviour. There is a designated special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) who has attended appropriate training in the area. This ensures the needs of all children are identified and that additional support can be accessed if required.

Two points for consideration were raised at the last education inspection in 2004. Children have access to two book areas and they have many opportunities during the day to enjoy books, both independently and within the larger group. Children gain a sense of responsibility through being allocated tasks on the 'help' board. Children have daily opportunities to use the outdoor area, this forms part of the planning and children bring in their Wellington boots to ensure they can access the area in all weathers. This contributes to helping them learn about the benefits of having a healthy lifestyle.

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.

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 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):

- develop staff's awareness of the child protection procedures to ensure children are safeguarded at all times
- ensure the complaints procedure is reflective of current regulations and keep a record of complaints relating to the National Standards and any action taken
- increase opportunities for children to develop their self help skills and to become more independent during the daily routine and increase the opportunities for children to be freely creative in art and craft activities (also applies to nursery education)
- extend the range of resources to reflect a positive image of disability

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):

- review the role of the adult in children's play to ensure a supporting and enabling role is provided during activities (also applies to care)
- ensure strategies are in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the role of the adult in teaching and learning (also applies to care)

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