



Little Sparrows Nursery Esher

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY267741
Inspection date	29 November 2006
Inspector	Amanda Jane Tyson
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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Little Sparrows Nursery Esher was registered in 2003 and is one of two privately owned nurseries. It operates from within the grounds of Esher cricket club. The nursery use the newly built pavilion. Children have access to a large hall and an enclosed outdoor area. There is an entrance area which also serves as a parents room, toilets including one designated for disabled users, and a kitchen. The nursery is open from 09:15 to 12:00 Monday to Friday, term time only. Parents have the option of booking their child into the lunch club, which runs from 12:00 to 13:00. Children attending the lunch club bring a packed lunch.

There are currently 32 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for nursery education. The group serve the local community. The nursery currently supports four children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of staff plus a manager. Three staff, the manager and the owner hold an appropriate early years qualification. A number of other staff are waiting to commence NVQ 2 training. Four staff have current first aid certificates.

The setting receives support from an early learning advisor from the Early Years Childcare Service.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about good health through activities based on topics, for example the important rule of not eating berries was fully explored during the topic on Autumn. Every day children are provided with a variety of healthy snack choices, such as pieces of fruit and wholemeal toast. Drinking water is available for children to help themselves throughout the session so that they do not dehydrate, and at snack time they have additional choices of apple juice or milk. A particularly good feature of practice is the café style approach to snacks; children choose when they are ready, and with good adult support, they spread their own toast.

Children have free access to the outdoor play area from snack time onwards. Younger children keep active as they pedal bikes and use the toddler climbing frame. However, although there is a mini trampoline and sometimes balancing beams are put out, the gross motor challenges for four year-olds are minimal. Bikes and climbing apparatus are more suited to the toddler age group. Nevertheless, Foundation Stage curriculum planning includes opportunities for music and movement and many of the children take part in the football sessions during the season. Children's coordination skills are therefore being developed and the programme is helping to foster children's interest in physical activity.

Whilst the risk of germs spreading is minimised when children use liquid soap and warm water to thoroughly wash their hands after using the toilet, they use a shared bowl of water which becomes cold before visiting the café style snack table. In their eagerness children do not wash their hands properly, which presents a risk of germs being spread from hand to mouth. Nevertheless, the written procedure to ensure hygienic nappy changing practice is well implemented by staff and the premises are kept very clean. Furthermore, they are protected from the risk of contracting childhood illnesses by the policy for excluding children for specific periods of time until the incubation period for specific conditions has passed.

Children's health needs are well documented and supported, for example due to certain allergies, eggs are not used for cooking activities. Children are well taken care of if they become unwell or have an accident because a sufficient number of staff hold a first aid qualification. Accidents and injuries are recorded and parents sign to acknowledge the entry. Parental wishes, in relation to the seeking of emergency treatment and the administering of medication are clarified in the form of written consents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The premises provide a safe, secure and well maintained play and learning environment for children. Children benefit from the direct access to the cricket green, where they can run around when directly supervised. A smaller outdoor area has been secured with picket fencing to enable free-flow day to day outdoor play. The possibility of children being able to leave the premises unsupervised is very well minimised by child safety gates and the decision to use one entrance, which is located within another room.

Staff have created an exhilarating play and learning environment for children; low level partitioning screens provide quiet areas for children to concentrate and double as display areas for children's art work. The creative workshop, the extensive role play and the storage of all resources so that children can help themselves safely are a key feature. Children use tools such as hole punchers and scissors safely because staff teach them the rules and explain the dangers. Toys and equipment are maintained in excellent condition and robust procedures are in place to monitor their condition.

The setting have devised an extremely robust risk assessment procedure, which is closely monitored by staff and management. For example, daily checks including making sure that parents have not left plastic carrier bags on children's coat pegs. Furthermore, staff have anticipated that the immediate outdoor area may be used by smokers during the cricket season when the pavilion is used during the evenings and weekends by the club. The need for a daily 'cigarette butt' check has been clearly identified. Accident records are closely monitored so that possible recurring causes can be clearly identified. Doors have been fitted with buffers to prevent finger trapping and all electrical sockets are covered. The fire drill is practised with the children once per month so that they know what to do in the event of an emergency, and both the owner and the manager are booked to attend 'fire marshal' training so that they know how to operate the fire appliances should the need arise. Extremely thorough procedures are in place to ensure that children are safe whilst on outings and on the premises during whole group festivities, for instance parents are fully aware that they must accompany children and take full responsibility for them so that staff are free to supervise the event.

Children's welfare is very well safeguarded because most staff have completed recent child protection training. Staff are familiar with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures and they are secure in their knowledge of the nursery's step by step procedure for monitoring, recording and reporting any concerns. The written policy for child protection explains how children are protected within the setting, for example from un-vetted adults, and highlights the need for parents to inform staff of any existing injuries to children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children cheerfully separate from parents and very quickly become absorbed in a hive of activity. Planning is highly effective and provides two year-olds with a wealth of exciting play experiences that challenge and inspire their development. Much emphasis is put on encouraging the children to experiment using their senses, for example they explore scented playdough, make floral

smelling pictures with pot pourri and have fun with shaving foam. The children enjoy cooking activities and competently use tools such as glue spreaders and paint brushes. Circle time activities, such as stories, music, and discussions are held in small groups so that children's age and/or stage of development are well matched. This encourages their confidence to contribute, the challenges are pitched at an appropriate level, and children remain highly interested in their learning. Staff spend time talking and listening to the children. They use their sound understanding of children's individual stage of development to further stretch and develop their knowledge base. For example, two year-olds know that sheep and lambs are related, and that 'fire' can be caused by candles. Children are inspired by the imaginations of the older children within the themed role play area and become immersed as they act out real and imaginary experiences.

Staff keep comprehensive records detailing children's progress and development towards the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and planning details very clearly what the learning intentions are for each activity. The youngest children in this setting are becoming very confident, competent and independent learners. They have built strong relationships with their key staff member and play delightfully together; squeals of laughter are frequent.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are highly inquisitive and keen to explore, experiment and attempt new skills. Staff are exceedingly secure in their knowledge and understanding of how to deliver learning through an exciting range of activities. Children learn how to weigh ingredients during cooking activities, use coins in shop play, count and attempt to recognise numerals as they play skittles, and take part in mathematical treasure hunts. The latter was particularly well planned because each child was challenged according to their individual stage of development, for example; to find a certain shape, or a number. Children label their creative work by attempting to write their names, copying or by finding their named sticky label. They use the freely available writing resources to make purposeful marks, such as signs for the role play corner and three year-olds are beginning to link letters to sounds. The children listen attentively to stories and are very keen to contribute. They throw themselves into imaginative play with delightful enthusiasm, for instance they acted out their sequential understanding of Santa's Christmas Eve journey to deliver a sledge full of presents, which they had wrapped themselves in 'Santa's grotto'. The creative workshop area provides a magnitude of unusual and interesting recycled resources which the children freely access to create and design models and pictures. Children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world is very well enhanced through the thematic approach to curriculum planning. For example, children grew Pumpkin seeds for Halloween. The Hindu festival of light was brought to life when the role play area was transformed into a 'Divali house', which the children decorated with their Rangoli patterns. They explored melting ice as they learned about weather conditions and enjoyed being visited by a miniature pony, a dog and a rabbit during 'pet week'. The development of musical skills is becoming firmly established through well planned weekly specialist sessions with a visiting teacher and daily opportunities to sing, dance and use instruments, such as the bells in the grotto. Children use the computer with developing skill; they navigate the mouse around the screen displaying high levels of coordination as they 'click' and drag' colours to decorate a selected picture from their self chosen programme.

Children's progress and development records present a clear picture of what children are able to do and what steps need to be taken to support and extend their learning further. Staff observe and record children's development towards the early learning goals using good quality contemporaneous observations. Planning is particularly effective in ensuring that all areas of learning are provided through the current theme. The creative workshop area and the innovative ideas for role play are a key strength of the provision. The stimulating environment with extensive and accessible resources encourages children's independence. However, the daily 'focussed' activity is more restrictive; children have less choice because the activity is adult directed, and older and more able children are not always challenged enough during these activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are generally very well understood and met. For example: staff have been proactive in supporting children and their parents who speak English as an additional language, and the cultural and religious beliefs of others are embraced through exciting activities and themes. However, not all children have 'constant' access to familiar cultural influences. For instance, home play is well equipped with equipment such as typical English cooking utensils and play food, but resources to enable children of other cultures to act out their real experiences are mostly only available to support specific themes, such as when the role play was set up as a Divali house. High emphasis is put on monitoring children's gender related play. Staff notice when boys are avoiding activities that relate to writing and set about finding ways to encourage them, for example through role play. Equally, girls are encouraged to take part in football and building activities.

The setting is well prepared to meet the needs of children with physical and/or learning disabilities. There is a named Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) whose knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice for special educational needs has been secured with specialist training. Concerns are very likely to be identified through the rigorous monitoring and assessment processes undertaken by staff caring for the under threes and the children who are in receipt of funding for nursery education.

Children behave exceptionally well. There are very few squabbles because children are constantly immersed in play and learning. They support each other, share and take turns and older children are particularly considerate towards the younger children. For example, two little girls were using the computer together for over half an hour. One instructed the other to navigate the mouse to make funny pictures which made them laugh, and then without any adult direction the three year-old put her arm around her friend and suggested she had a turn. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The entrance room is highly welcoming to parents. A wealth of useful written information and media resources are displayed to ensure their knowledge and understanding of the nursery provision and operational plan. A summary of the nursery policies and procedures are given to parents prior to placement and most of these are displayed in full on the notice boards. However, whilst parents are clear about what to do if they have a complaint or a concern, the written policy does not set out the full procedure or explain the provider's regulatory responsibilities.

Nevertheless, the weekly theme and activity planning, and the 'Birth to three matters' framework is clearly explained in a poster and available to borrow on video or compact disc. There are no procedures in place for parents of younger children to meet with key staff on a formal basis to discuss children's progress and development, although the open door policy works well; communication is good. In certain instances, daily diaries are used to assist communication between the nursery and parents, and they can view children's records at any time.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding is outstanding. Parents are provided with a high level of information to enable them to support children's progress towards the early learning goals. They borrow the video which explains how the Foundation Stage curriculum is delivered through play. They regularly view their children's progress and development records, receive a comprehensive developmental report and then meet formally with key staff to agree next steps for learning for the following term.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective recruitment procedures ensure a compliment of skilled, dedicated and suitably vetted staff team. Staff are well supported to develop their skills, knowledge and experience through an excellent training programme throughout the year. Furthermore, there is an effective induction and appraisal system in operation. Staff skills are highlighted and areas for development are supported and enabled with clear action plans. Regular staff meetings mean that staff are kept well-informed of changes to legislation and guidance, and the time is used to share learning obtained from training. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood, for example, there is a named person responsible for child protection, health and safety and for each area of the learning areas, such as graphics or music.

The highly effective organisation of the play and learning environment enables both younger and older children to play and learn together. For instance, a two year-old and a four year-old were equally challenged to wrap and seal presents together in Santa's grotto workshop. There is an exceedingly comprehensive written operational plan which identifies the use of space for certain activities, and how and when children should be grouped according to age to enable good support.

All records and documentation that are required for the safe and effective management of the setting are in place and put to good operational use. Some written policies, such as 'complaints' lack procedural detail and the system for recording existing injuries is not very well organised. However, overall the organisation of records and documentation is very good indeed. There are many additional features to secure parental knowledge and understanding of how their children are cared for.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff are very well supported to develop their knowledge and skills through individual supervision and training. The effectiveness of teaching is well monitored and regularly evaluated by the current leader, who is in turn well supported by the owner. The commitment towards continual improvement is clearly demonstrated by the extensive self evaluation and supporting action plan for identified weaknesses, for example the programme for outdoor play. Immediate action is taken in response

to the astute advice from visiting early years teaching advisors to good effect. The training evaluation forms are proving to be a valuable resource in the strive for excellence; staff identify six points for implementing new ideas and improvement to that particular area of the curriculum. For example, children now benefit from the introduction of story sacks and puppets to support literacy. As a result, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of care, the setting were asked to make one improvement; to ensure that children have access to drinking water at all times. The setting now have a water cooler whereby children can freely help themselves.

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):

- improve hand washing facilities for children during snack time
- improve the way that accident existing injuries are documented, and further develop the complaints policy so that the whole procedural process is clearly explained to parents
- make sure that resources to support all children's cultural backgrounds are consistently available within role play (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- extend the challenges for older and more able children; pay particular attention to the programme for gross physical development, and focussed activity planning.

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