



Ballard School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY311188
Inspection date	08 February 2007
Inspector	Anne Mitchell
Setting Address	Ballard School, Fernhill Lane, New Milton, Hampshire, BH25 5SU
Telephone number	01425 611 153
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Registered person	Ballard School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ballard School Nursery has been registered since 2006. It operates from two classrooms within an independent school in New Milton and has its own secure outside play area.

The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 36 children from one year to five years of age. There are currently a total of 56 children on roll in the nursery. This includes seven children who are in receipt of nursery funding. Sessions are from 08:30 to 15:30, five days a week, during term time, with extended hours for children needing after school care.

There are 10 staff who work directly with the children. Of these, eight hold child care qualifications. The setting receives support from the Hampshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is a member of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted as they follow very good hand washing routines. They wash their hands before snacks and meals and after using the toilet. They use the low level sinks and toilets to promote their independence in their personal care. Babies' and toddlers' health and welfare is effectively promoted during nappy changing routines, as staff wear disposable gloves and ensure that the changing mat is thoroughly cleaned. The younger children enjoy positive interaction with the staff changing them, as they smile and talk to the child throughout.

Children benefit from access to clean and well maintained toys and equipment. Babies' and toddlers' home sleeping routines are followed to ensure continuity of care. Depending on parental choice, they sleep in a designated sleep room on soft mats, or in their buggy. Children's health and welfare is well supported through the recording of accidents and medication. Children can be treated promptly and effectively in the event of an accident, as most staff hold up to date first aid certificates, and a well stocked first aid kit is maintained.

Children's emotional wellbeing is fostered through the close relationships they have developed with staff. Staff use positive interaction and encouragement to help children cope with new situations. Children's physical needs are effectively met as they are regularly changed, provided with healthy snacks and lunches and have opportunities to sleep as required.

Children have daily opportunities for physical play and fresh air in the nursery garden and through walks around the attractive school grounds. At times, the play area becomes very busy, and the organisation of the space does not fully promote children's opportunities for learning or extend the curriculum.

Children enjoy healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit. They can have a choice of milk, water or a drink brought from home. However, children's health and understanding of good eating habits is compromised as they are not provided with a plate, instead using the table top. A varied weekly menu plan is displayed for parents, giving information about the cooked meals provided at lunch times. Meals are prepared on school premises and brought over to the nursery. For example, children enjoy spaghetti bolognaise with sweet corn, salad and bread, followed by either apple pie and custard or yoghurt. Children eat with enthusiasm, although staff do not directly sit with them at this time to promote their eating habits and social skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure in this environment. The school premises are very secure and there are effective systems in place to record and monitor all visitors, such as closed circuit television, a visitors' book, and staff supervision. Children are signed in on arrival by their parents and there are additional systems in place to record their attendance within the setting. The premises are safe with safety equipment in place, such as high bolts on playroom doors and socket covers.

Children are very well supervised and the high staff ratio ensures children are safe inside and out.

Low level storage means that even the youngest of children can independently select toys in safety, and they do so with confidence. Effective risk assessments are completed to ensure children are safe on walks around the school grounds. Children's knowledge of keeping themselves safe is effectively promoted through reinforcement by staff. For example, a member of staff tells a child to finish chewing before leaving the table, because he might get food stuck in his throat and would choke. Planned projects, such as 'transport', include discussion and stories about road safety and the use of seatbelts to promote children's understanding of staying safe in and out of nursery.

Younger children learn about keeping safe and have opportunities to climb and pedal in the nursery garden. They enjoy pushing the shapes into sorters and making marks in the sand and, through painting, becoming skilful in a range of large and fine movements.

Children are protected effectively from harm and neglect, as key staff have a secure understanding of child protection procedures. Many have attended in-house training with school staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and happy in the setting. They are very settled and appear comfortable and self assured. Children spend the day well occupied in activities of their choosing or those planned by staff. Children of all ages are provided with a broad range of activities and resources throughout the day. Babies and toddlers explore their environment with confidence, choosing sorting toys or shakers from the low level storage, or using their imaginations in the well-resourced home corner. For example, a toddler is happily involved in the role play area, using the pots and pans to cook on the hob, and putting plates and bowls away in the cupboard. Children's confidence, self esteem and emotional wellbeing is effectively promoted as staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and follow it well. Children enjoy a very good level of interaction observed throughout the session. Children are engaged in conversation with staff during adult-supported activities, and at other times staff allow them to play independently. Younger children have good opportunities to explore through their senses, using their hands, fingers and brushes to paint. They enjoy using wet pasta, 'gloop' and shaving foam to explore a range of textures and tactile experiences.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Qualified staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the early stepping stones of the Foundation Stage curriculum and recognise children's abilities. Short, medium and long term planning covers all areas of learning. Staff use successful teaching methods to promote children's understanding, including good use of open ended questioning, for example 'How can you pull the anchor up?' and 'How many candles have you put on your cake?' Staff get down to the children's level to talk to them and support their learning. Plans include activities that are relevant and meaningful to children, for example 'My

family' and 'Shops'. Occasionally, staff do not allow children to be independent in their creative play, or finish activities to their satisfaction, guiding their hands as they paint or call children to a planned activity when they are focussed on their own play. Children's observations are completed and inform planning for the next steps for their development. Activity evaluation sheets help staff plan extension activities or additional support for children's varying abilities. Children attending the setting move into the school's kindergarten often before they are four years of age, so they are at the very beginning of the stepping stones and planned activities clearly reflect this. The effective organisation of staff deployment and resources promotes children's learning. They are able to be independent in selecting toys, and are well supported by staff.

Children come into the setting with enthusiasm. They are warmly welcomed by staff and settle quickly to a chosen activity. Children demonstrate good levels of confidence, clearly happy to approach visitors to tell them their news or show them a picture. Children are kind to one another, older children are quick to help younger children. One child picks up a ball in the garden that has rolled away from another. He takes it back and says 'Here you are'. Children have good levels of independence, selecting resources, visiting the toilet alone and putting on their outdoor clothes with competence. Children are beginning to develop a sense of community within the school environment, talking with confidence about what they do at home, about their siblings and parents, and staff respond with interest.

Children participate with real enthusiasm while acting out the story of the 'Bear Hunt'. They enjoy stories in many different forms, in large groups, as part of a physical activity and in small groups sitting in the comfortable story corner. On the whole children listen to staff and follow instructions. Sometimes, as they become excited and involved, they do not listen as well and the noise level rises. Children are beginning to recognise their names on their coat pegs. They find their name on an apple that they stick on the wall indicating that they are waiting to use the computer. Clear labelling around the room helps children to understand that words carry meaning. Access to pencils and paper around the room enables children to write and make marks in a variety of ways.

Children happily name and match shapes using books and pre-cut cards. A member of staff praises their achievements. At the play dough table, an adult holds up a triangular shape cutter saying to the children 'Look, I've found a square'. Children laugh and say 'No! It's a triangle!' Children are beginning to develop an interest in number, through popular rhymes and songs.

Children are fascinated with a pirate ship that has a variety of attachments, showing an interest in how things work. They become engrossed as they pull up the anchor. Children enjoy using construction equipment to make buildings. Children's access to information and communication technology is enhanced by daily access to a computer and simple educational programmes. A small group of children record their voices onto a tape recorder, talking and singing songs. They laugh as they hear their voices played back to them. Through their current theme of 'My Family' children are beginning to develop a sense of time and place.

Children have regular opportunities to explore colour and texture through planned activities such as dough and painting. However, staff do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to create independently, using their own imaginations. The well-resourced role play area provides

children with good opportunities to use their imagination. For example, two children are absorbed in dressing up, and act out their own imaginative scenarios. Children use percussion instruments with enthusiasm during a music session.

Children move with confidence around the classroom. They enjoy moving in different ways, during the story of a 'Bear Hunt' for example, pretending to move through mud and snow. Outside children have good opportunities to throw balls and use small netball posts to improve their accuracy. Children are developing football skills, kicking the ball to staff. Children use large play equipment to develop their large muscle movements during gym sessions in the school hall. Children's small muscle control is effectively developed through using tools during dough activities and through threading and puzzles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the welcoming environment. The bright airy playrooms are decorated with children's artwork and photos, promoting their sense of belonging and self esteem. Staff follow the school equality and diversity policy. Children are beginning to learn about the wider world as there are some good resources that positively reflect cultural diversity. However, these do not include many positive images of disability. Staff know the children well and know when they need support, and talk to them about their families and listen to their news and views with interest. At the end of the session a three-year-old asks a member of staff for a cuddle. She responds immediately and with affection, successfully promoting the child's emotional needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is very good. They are happy to co-operate with staff, and take pride in helping to tidy up. Staff provide good role models for children thanking them for their help and praising their achievements. Children are polite and well mannered saying 'Please' and 'Thank you' spontaneously.

Partnership with parents is good. They are provided with clear and detailed written information about the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Regular newsletters keep parents informed of current themes and projects, and they are encouraged to participate in their child's learning through bringing in related objects from home. Parents are provided with a written report on their children's progress at nursery, and state that staff are friendly and approachable. One parent comments that their child has grown in confidence since being at Ballard, and looks forward to coming.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care and education. Children benefit from being cared for by suitable persons as there are effective systems in place to check staff. The majority of staff hold child care qualifications and demonstrate a commitment to extend their child care knowledge through regular training.

There are high ratios in place to ensure children are well supported in their play and learning, and staff deployment is very good, providing children with physical and emotional support, as well as good levels of supervision. Space inside is organised effectively to meet the children's needs and allow sufficient space to play and rest. However children do not always have opportunities to create independently, using their own imaginations.

Leadership and management is good. Annual staff appraisals highlight training needs and the strengths of individual staff. There is good liaison between nursery staff and the Foundation Stage teachers within the school to promote children's learning and ensure the transition between nursery and school is successful. Nursery education is monitored through staff meetings, evaluations and regular visits from the early years development officer. The nursery manager attends local cluster meetings to keep informed of training, and child care practice. The staff appear happy and motivated, and work well together, ensuring that children have a stable and secure environment.

Policies and procedures reflect the nursery's practice, and these are shared with parents from the outset. However, procedures at meal times do not effectively support children's eating habits and health at this time. All documentation is clear and up to date and held securely within the nursery to promote children's confidentiality.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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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):

- promote children's health and eating habits through direct interaction with staff at lunchtime and the provision of plates at snack time

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):

- provide further opportunities for children to create independently, using their own imaginations and selecting resources independently

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