



Goldilocks Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	116795
Inspection date	02 February 2007
Inspector	Glenda Pownall
Setting Address	77 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 5AT
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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 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Goldilocks Nursery is privately owned. It opened in 1991 and operates from six rooms in converted domestic dwellings. It is situated in Tilehurst, Reading. A maximum of 114 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year with the exception of public holidays. Children aged between five and 11 years may attend the holiday club, which operates during the main school holidays. The holiday club was not in operation at the time of this inspection. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 113 children aged from birth to under 8 years on roll. Of these, 42 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 28 staff. The manager and 17 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are three staff working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop some good hygiene routines, such as washing their hands before eating lunch and after visiting the toilet through support and encouragement from staff. Children sing a song to remind them of what to do and practise the actions of washing their hands as they sing. However, some other routines are not as effective at developing children's personal hygiene skills. For example, tissues are not quickly accessible in all rooms as children have to go to the bathrooms to use the toilet paper to wipe their noses. As a result, some children use the sleeve of their jumper or the back of their hand to wipe their nose. Staff do not always follow a hygienic procedure when changing nappies as they do not always clean the change mat in between changing different children's nappies. This does not minimise the risk of cross-infection.

A sufficient number of staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications and staff rotas are organised efficiently to ensure that a trained member of staff is on the premises and able to care for an injured child at all times. Staff have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow with regard to recording accidents and administering medications. These include obtaining prior written consent from parents to administer medication and requesting parents to sign the records indicating they have been informed of their child's treatment. However, staff are not sufficiently vigilant to ensure all necessary information, such as the name of the medication administered is always recorded to promote the health of children.

Babies are offered frequent drinks of water throughout the day and children have access to drinking water at all times. This develops children's understanding of regular drinks as part of a healthy lifestyle. Although the morning snack usually consists of a sweet biscuit children receive fresh fruit or vegetables at breakfast and lunch. Parents are able to contribute towards their children's diet by supplementing the afternoon sandwiches with healthy snacks, such as fruit or yoghurt.

All children have daily opportunities for outside play, weather permitting. The babies are taken out into the garden in buggies and young children enjoy pushing buggies, manoeuvring themselves in cosy coupe cars and playing with balls. Pre-school children access a range of activities to develop physical skills, such as music and movement, soft play and parachute games. They are becoming proficient at kicking balls, they pedal and steer two-seated tricycles with skill and run at speed around the garden avoiding other children indicating good spatial awareness. Some children can operate the swings unaided.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for in a clean and generally well maintained environment where they have sufficient space to move around freely and safely. There is a welcoming environment for parents and children. Staff greet each parent and child individually and children's work is displayed promoting self esteem. Children access an adequate range of resources covering all areas of development. Staff regularly check and clean the resources to ensure there are no broken parts that could harm a child.

Staff have a sound understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know the procedures to follow if concerned a child is at risk from abuse. This protects children whilst in the care of the setting. There is a written child protection policy in place for staff to refer to. However, the policy has not been reviewed to ensure it complies with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures to fully safeguard children.

There is an effective security system in place to ensure children can not leave the premises unsupervised. The setting carries out monthly risk assessments of each area of the premises and hazards are noted and acted upon. A daily risk assessment of the outside area is carried out and recorded to ensure it is safe for children to use. However, staff do not always carry out visual daily risk assessments inside the rooms used by children to ensure, for example, all low level electric sockets are covered. This compromises children's safety.

Fire drills are regularly carried out to ensure all children and staff know the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency evacuation. The procedure includes taking the registers out to ensure all children and staff are accounted for. However, staff do not always keep accurate records of children's attendance. This puts children's safety at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure in the nursery environment as they are cared for by staff who interact warmly with them and know them well. Staff respond positively to young children's chatter reinforcing what they have said and developing children's language skills. Children access a wide range of activities and staff take opportunities to extend children's understanding and listen to what children say. For example, staff ask young children at the play dough table what shape the cutter is, a child responds "butterfly" and points to the display board of a caterpillar. Staff praise the child confirming caterpillars turn into butterflies. In the sand tray staff introduce words such as fill and spread as young children scoop sand into buckets. Other children enjoy feeling the sand run through their fingers.

Children enjoy singing songs with actions and show delight as they jump up and hop like little bunnies. Staff provide effective support for babies as they encourage them to roll over and to walk with help. Babies develop trusting relationships with staff as they are held whilst bottle fed and receive lots of cuddles during the day. Children remain occupied and interested in the activities provided throughout the day.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff have a good knowledge of the early learning goals and implement this through well planned and interesting activities. For example, children in the Polar Bears group name words beginning with 's' as they create seaside sand pictures. However, the knowledge of staff working with the Cubs group is not secure and as a result they do not vary activities to provide sufficient challenge for all children in their group.

The planned daily and focus activities cover all areas of learning and in some groups staff are well deployed and informed to support children's learning. However, not all staff in the Cubs are made aware of the learning intentions of activities to support the children as planned. For example, staff do not provide appropriate support at a maths activity planned to develop children's understanding of colour, matching and sorting as they believe the aim of the activity is to develop communication skills. As a result, children who are able to sort and calculate the combined total of two groups are not challenged at the activity and they walk away. Throughout the pre-school rooms the planning does not detail how activities will be varied to provide appropriate challenge for more or less able children. Very few activities are evaluated to highlight what individual children have learnt.

Staff in the Grizzly Bears use excellent questioning and explanation techniques to encourage children to think and further their knowledge and understanding. For example, staff break down the questions they ask to help children remember the word used in the story for two times is twice. As children use a split-pin on their craft activity staff introduce its name and explain in detail how it works. Children show interest in the explanation and follow the instructions and use it successfully.

Staff set a number of targets for every child across the areas of learning each term. It is not always easy to identify how these targets are arrived at as, for most children, no assessment records were completed for the previous term and few written observations were made. Staff do not have easy access to the target sheets or assessment records as they are kept securely in the main nursery building, as a result these are not regularly updated. Whilst most key worker staff know their children well they cannot remember all the planned next steps for each child. Consequently, not all children are provided with sufficient challenge at activities.

Children are confident in the nursery environment. They volunteer to speak in whole group situations and are confident to speak to visitors. They develop independence skills by changing their coats and shoes for outside play. Children's small muscle skills are developing well. They manipulate scissors, pencils, construction resources and puzzle pieces with increasing skill and dexterity. Children access a variety of interesting creative activities. They develop understanding of the different sounds percussion instruments make and how they can be used to represent different creatures and natural events. For example, children suggest and use a drum to represent a shark, a rain stick the sea and a shaker the fish's tail as staff tell the story. In the home corner children take on roles and cooperate with other children to develop storylines. They experience different textures and children in the Cubs excitedly announce "we did gloop and it was sticky."

Some children can count competently to nine and beyond and recognise numerals one to nine through activities connected to the daily routine. Although a number of children's assessment records are blank for calculating children do complete simple calculation tasks through singing number rhymes and songs. The Grizzly bears work out how many children they will need to have as many arms as the octopus has tentacles.

Some topics are well planned for, such as 'The fish that could wish' and children consider with staff if it is actually possible to swim round the world twice in one day. Children have daily opportunities to build and construct using a variety of resources. Some children work together to build a castle negotiating which bricks to use until they reach the desired outcome. Staff show interest in the children's models and praise their achievements. Children develop knowledge of the days of the week and become observant of different weather conditions through daily activities. Children in the Polar and Grizzly bear groups have daily access to a computer. They are proficient at clicking and dragging the mouse to complete simple computer programs.

Children have daily access to mark making resources. Children practice writing letters in the sand and staff working with the Polar and Grizzly bears encourage children to attempt to write their names on their work. Some children can write their name using clearly recognisable letters. The mark making resources in the Cubs are set apart from other table top activities and children do not readily access these resources. However, activities are planned to develop emergent writing skills. Most children enjoy group stories. Some staff read stories with great enthusiasm, they talk about the title of the book with children and ask them questions encouraging them to think. Children thoroughly enjoy 'Harry by the sea' and make intelligent suggestions of what might happen next. All children access books for pleasure. They share books with their peers and 'read' stories to each other.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally cared for with equal concern. The setting liaises with parents and records any particular requirements to ensure the individual needs of the child are met. Children learn about the wider community through activities linked to festivals related to their own culture and those of other people. There are satisfactory procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff devise and regularly review individual education plans with parents to ensure the developmental needs of the children are met. Social moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There is an adequate behaviour management policy in place which staff generally follow to manage children and their behaviour effectively. Staff are usually calm and patient and give clear explanations to children of the consequences of their actions and children respond appropriately. For example, staff explain to a child not to tip back on the chair in case they tip over and bang their head and the child puts the chair back on four legs. However, on occasions staff do not follow the setting's policy. They do not always get down to the child's level to speak to them regarding behaviour issues and children are sometimes excluded from activities for longer than the policy states. This compromises children's self-esteem.

Staff develop warm relationships with parents and keep them well informed about their child's daily routines. Parents of babies and children aged under three receive written information about their child's day including sleep times, nappy changes and feeds. There is also a good verbal exchange of information between staff and parents at either end of the day. Parents receive a written termly report of their child's development. This promotes continuity of care. The contact number for Ofsted is displayed to parents enabling them to comment on the care their children receive. Parents are also able to give their views on the setting via the annual parent questionnaire. This promotes the welfare of the children.

Partnership with parents of the nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive a brief outline of the early learning goals and related activities prior to their child starting in the pre-school rooms. Staff verbally inform parents of their child's progress through annual reports and a written sheet each term detailing the planned targets set by staff for their child. However, the setting is not proactive in giving parents the opportunity to contribute to their child's planned next steps or their progress records. Most parents state they are happy with the care and education their children receive. They particularly like the caring staff and the range of activities provided.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery environment and leave their main carers with ease. The recruitment and vetting procedures ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Staff are effectively deployed to ensure minimum adult to child ratios are met. This promotes the welfare of children.

Management has a generally satisfactory knowledge of their role and responsibilities with regard to the National Standards. However, the systems in place to monitor staff and ensure they understand and implement the setting's policies are inadequate. For example, some staff show little understanding of the importance of keeping the attendance registers up to date. The registers held by room staff and the manager do not always tally with each other or with the numbers of children present. At times the registers show less or more children than are actually present. On one occasion one child who was shown as present had left the care of the nursery three hours earlier. This does not ensure an accurate record is kept of who is looking after the children and puts children's safety at risk. In addition, there is a no smoking policy on the premises yet a visitor to the setting was able to smoke in the outside area of the premises in view of children playing in the garden. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

All required policies are in place and are annually reviewed. However, the review process is not sufficiently thorough to ensure all policies comply with current requirements, such as the child protection policy. The holiday club operates using the same policies and procedures as the day nursery. It operates from a separate self-contained building within the grounds of the nursery and children access a range of appropriate resources.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. They monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education curriculum through termly team meetings,

the staff appraisal system, working in the setting and observing staff practice. However, the monitoring system is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure all staff working in the pre-school rooms have a secure knowledge of the early learning goals or that all children are provided with sufficient challenge and their progress regularly recorded. The management is committed to improving the nursery education and has identified staff training and the assessment system as areas for improvement, together with providing children in the Cubs group with opportunities to access a computer.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provision was asked to devise a lost child procedure and ensure children's arrival and departure times are recorded accurately. Whilst the lost child policy is now in place the registers to record the times children are in the care of the nursery are not accurately maintained. This does not promote the welfare of children.

At the last education inspection the provision was also asked to develop staff's understanding of behaviour management and improve on the nursery curriculum provided to children through implementing effective systems for staff to complete planning and assessment records, attend training and regularly meet as a team.

Staff generally manage children and their behaviour effectively and children usually behave well. The management have created opportunities for key staff to have non-contact time to complete the planning and assessment records of individual children. However, these are not easily accessible to staff to ensure they can update them and refer to them during the day.

The pre-school staff team do not meet together to discuss the curriculum or provide support for each other. An appraisal system has been introduced to monitor staff performance but few staff have attended training on the early learning goals. As a result, not all staff are confident in their knowledge of how to support individual children to make progress along the stepping stones.

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:

- ensure an accurate record of the arrival and departure times of children's attendance is maintained at all times
- devise and implement effective systems to ensure the policies and procedures of the setting are adequately followed to promote the welfare of children.

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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all staff working with funded children have a secure knowledge of the early learning goals and are able to provide sufficient challenge for all children
- devise and implement an effective system to record and extend children's learning and involve parents in their children's records.

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