

Snapdragons Nursery & Out of School Club
Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY253622
Inspection date	19 April 2007
Inspector	Sue Vernon
Setting Address	Henley Lodge, Weston Road, Bath, Avon, BA1 2XT
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Registered person	Snapdragons Nurseries Ltd
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?

Snapdragons Day Nursery and After School and Holiday Club is located in a large detached house near Victoria Park and the Royal United Hospital in Bath. It is one of seven settings in a group of privately owned nurseries. This setting opened in 2003. The nursery is open all year round, including bank holidays, with the exception of the Christmas period. The nursery operates from 07.30 until 18.30 each day.

At present there are approximately 305 children on roll. Of these, 87 children receive funding for early years education. The setting provides support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

Children have access to all areas of the house which includes the lower ground, ground and first floor rooms. There is a large enclosed walled garden with grassed areas, vegetable plots and enclosed play areas for outdoor play. The nursery have two pet rabbits.

The owner employs two qualified managers who oversee the day-to-day running of the nursery. The nursery employs 52 staff, eight of whom are part-time. There are 34 staff holding

appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards developing their NVQ level 2 qualification to a level 3 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. All staff followed good routines that support effective hygiene practices, for example wearing aprons and gloves whilst changing nappies. Children follow good hygiene routines such as regular hand washing and older children learn about why they wash their hands, knowing it is to remove germs and have clean hands before eating. Good information about infectious illness and the nursery's sickness policy is made available to parents which helps prevent possible cross-infection. Good medication and accident records are kept and shared with parents which supports consistency of care for the children.

Information about children's individual dietary needs is gathered from parents and supported consistently which ensures parents and children feel secure. For example, clear information on special dietary needs is used for menu planning and alternatives are offered such as gluten free sandwiches or a vegetarian daily meal. Children enjoy fresh fruit daily either at snack breaks or as part of their dessert. Regular drinks of water are made available to all ages during the day through the use of individual labelled bottles or cups and staff ensure all ages are encouraged to drink during outdoor garden play which promotes children's welfare. Bottles for babies are name tagged and checked by another staff member to ensure each baby receives their required feed.

All ages enjoy an interesting range of physical play and have daily access to the large garden area where they explore use of wheeled toys or climb on fixed equipment. Sheltered areas offer opportunities for good weather picnics and children enjoy games exploring around trees and shrubs. Children receiving funding for early years education enjoy good planned opportunities for extending their physical skills. They develop balancing skills on fixed garden equipment and practice throwing and catching in ball games. They move with confidence during musical exercise and parachute games and negotiate space well as they join in action songs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Risk assessments are used to monitor a safe environment and staff are consistent about checking the areas used daily. Appropriate safety equipment is in place which ensures that children move around the rooms safely during play activities. The secure environment helps children develop their independence as the pre-school and older children go to wash their hands by themselves after messy play. Access to the nursery is monitored carefully using two security systems and records of visitors are up to date. Children using the extensive outdoor areas are monitored to ensure they play safely but the use of occasional equipment is not always consistently supported. Good fire safety systems are in place with evacuations being practiced regularly and appropriate equipment maintained and checked.

All staff in all of the different rooms are clear as to their role in keeping children safe. They help children learn about taking responsibility for their own safety, such as reminding them to why they do not run or should wait in line before going outside. The suitable storage of toys and play resources enables children to see and select toys safely for themselves. Children enjoy

working together to gather up toys in boxes and replace them in storage. Children are attracted to the bright range of toys and resources offered which meet safety requirements. There is a good range of play resources for the different ages including construction kits, imaginative play with dressing-up and attractive home corner units with appropriate accessories. Babies and toddlers enjoy musical toys, shape sorters and books with different textures. However, there is a limited range of indoor wheeled toys or furniture to fully support emerging mobility skills.

Staff have good knowledge of the signs of possible child abuse and are secure in their knowledge of the procedure to be followed should any concerns arise. Written information about the required procedure is shared with parents. Staff attend training about this subject which serves to support children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and interested in the range of play activities and resources offered. As children arrive they are able to move smoothly into play as staff have planned well and prepared in advance. Each room has a daily routine offering a balance of free play and planned activities which are linked to an appropriate framework, such as Birth to three matters. This ensures staff provide suitable activities that stimulate children's development in all areas. For example, babies and toddlers enjoy painting using low high chairs or sitting on large pieces of paper on the floor with paint where they can use feet, hands and legs as they enjoy spreading different colours.

The key worker system in each room enables children to make strong relationships with a consistent staff team which helps them feel secure. Staff get to know children well and children look to them for support and reassurance. Staff are sensitive to their needs, for example knowing when a toddler is getting tired and needing a rest or quiet story time. Children enjoy consistent praise from staff and they share fun together, for example as they enjoy songs and action rhymes.

Nursery Education. The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The staff team have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the different areas of learning. They use this to plan an interesting range of learning opportunities for funded children. The staff understand how children learn and use open questions such as 'what do you think might happen next?' and 'how does that work?', in order to prompt children's thinking effectively. This ensures children are engaged in their play and curious about activities such as when they look at different types of seeds, being enthralled that cress seeds are tiny and vegetable seeds that they plant in the garden will produce carrots. Observations of children's responses are recorded and linked into 'All about me' books which monitor children's general progress through the stepping stones, though records are not always used to develop the next stage of learning.

Children develop independence as they make decisions about their play activities and pour their own drinks at meal times. Good relationships are fostered as they greet each other with a welcome song in circle time or they work together when putting toys away. They enjoy helping each other, such as when they pass around collage resources during craft play and they work well together in small groups, such as when they take turns with a programmable toy. Respect for each other is built as they listen to each other's news in circle time.

Children play in a print-rich environment where they contribute to labels for the displays of their work. Many opportunities for children to practise emergent writing are offered both in writing areas as well as within play, such as writing diaries or lists in the home corner. They enjoy attempting their name and some phonetic linking is made to letters although this is not consistent. Children enjoy using language to express themselves, for example describing the texture of baked beans in a deep tray as 'squidgy'. Children enjoy books and follow the story from left to right when looking at books independently.

Children count regularly within activities such as in circle time where they count how many children are present and write the number on a white board. Number displays made by children arising out of play activities such as 'ten green bottles' are offered but links to numerals are not made consistently. Opportunities to use simple addition and subtraction are offered at snack time as children work out how many extra plates and chairs they need from those put out deliberately by staff. Simple mathematical language is used such as bigger, smaller, full and empty as they use scoops and funnels in the sand and water trays. Children know different shapes, for example describing cutting the tops off small sponge cakes and making semi-circles as they make butterfly cakes.

Opportunities for children to learn about the outside world are offered as the children plant and grow vegetables in the garden or nurture nasturtium and cress seeds indoors. They collect blossom, leaves and twigs to create their own collage pictures and enjoy free drawing of flowers. They learn the value of technology as they confidently use the computer, moving the mouse to complete simple games. Games with a programmable toy help them work out sequencing. Children learn about changes as they mix ingredients for cooking or play with ice in the water tray. They learn about other cultures for example, as they decorate their hands with rangoli patterns during activities on the festival of Holi.

An interesting variety of creative activities are offered for children to express themselves creatively although these are not consistently made available for extensive free choice. Children enjoy creating sock and glove puppets using glue and a variety of collage materials. They then enjoy playing with the puppets as they give them names and voices. Various opportunities are offered for children to explore a variety of painting techniques including feet and hand painting, using sponges, rollers and different toys such as car wheels and construction kit pieces. Children enjoy recognising colours and experimenting with colour changes such as when painting blossom. Children enjoy expressing themselves to music, joining in action exercise tapes or using musical instruments with familiar songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff ensure that they are very familiar with each child's particular needs including sleep routines, diets or medication. Individual needs are known and key workers work closely with parents to ensure their needs are respected. Where there are any concerns about a child's development, staff work with parents and closely support any other professional plans in order to ensure the child is fully involved in the nursery activities. All children are included in the full range of play opportunities and both genders are encouraged to enjoy cooking, dressing-up or computer play. Children learn the value of diversity through an interesting range of play resources including books, dolls and musical instruments. They learn about different cultures through topics such as Chinese New Year or the festival of Holi. Children learn about different languages as they try drawing different styles and scripts. Staff share any concerns over children's development and work closely with parents and external professionals such as speech therapists in order to

support the child's needs. Children with English as an additional language are supported, using pictures and simple words from home until language develops.

There is a positive policy for managing behaviour with appropriate techniques used in all age rooms. Children benefit from the consistent praise offered by all staff during their play and daily care. Children develop self-esteem as they receive praise or stickers and are keen to help with small responsibilities such as giving out plates for snack time. Older children in the out-of-school club discuss guidelines for good behaviour which helps them feel part of the decision-making process. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children relate to each other well, respecting each other as they take turns with electronic toys or waiting to speak during circle time. Children's own family and culture are respected as staff and children share social time during snack time and chat about family events and outings. Children learn right from wrong as staff explain why certain behaviour, such as not sharing is not kind.

An effective relationship with parents is built through settling-in visits and clear information sharing. 'All about me forms' which parents complete ensure staff have good information to help children settle. Consistency of care is supported effectively by the good range of ways in which parents receive feedback on their child's day. Babies and toddlers have day books and sheets as well as daily discussions with their child's key worker. Quarterly progress reports are also given out as well as newsletters. Good displays of information on notice boards keep parents up-to-date with room information and any changes, for example to the staff team. Opportunities to review their child's progress are also offered at parent's evenings.

The partnership with parents of funded children is good. Information on the Foundation Stage is shared through notice boards and in welcome booklets. More detailed information about planning and the six areas of learning is given when each parent receives a photocopy of activity planning. A regular newsletter with information about proposed topics informs parents and invites comments and ideas on activities which helps them feel involved. Record books linked to the stepping stones marking children's learning progress are kept and shared during parent's evenings or less formally whenever parents wish.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a secure system in place to appoint new staff and ensure that they are suitable. This includes application forms, police checks, references and a detailed induction system. This ensures consistency within the staff team's application and understanding of the nursery's policies and procedures. A majority of staff hold suitable early years qualifications and the nursery supports and encourages staff to further develop their skills through established training courses as well as workshops. In-house training is also organised to ensure good practice is disseminated through the chain of nurseries.

Areas are well-planned in order to meet the children's play and care needs, for example sleep rooms have cots with each child's bedding ready for when younger children need a sleep. Each age group has carpeted areas for floor play and messy play opportunities available. The garden is well planned with sectioned areas with suitable play equipment for different ages which enables all ages to explore outdoor play.

Permissions and records such as daily registers are in place and up-to-date. Accident and medication records are shared with parents and are retained as required. Policies are well

organised and are made available to parents and staff. This enables parents to understand the routines and procedures of the nursery.

Leadership and Management is good.

Managers encourage the staff team to review their own practice and offer opportunities for discussion both within team meetings and separately. Staff are supported in delivering the curriculum, with having time for planning and record keeping. The staff team liaise together with managers and appraisals are linked to training needs. The owner, manager and head of pre-school work together and continue to review the delivery of the curriculum and change methods, for example a new system for recording children's progress has recently been introduced. This provides more detailed information about activities and how they link to the stepping stones, however some weaknesses in the system for identifying future learning needs have not yet been addressed. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the nursery were asked to meet fire safety recommendations by keeping fire doors closed which they now do which improves safety for all. They were asked to improve the confidentiality of the medical records and further develop their understanding of child protection issues. Medical records are now kept on separate sheets and staff have attended child protection training. New staff also have a clear understanding of the required procedures which supports children's welfare.

The nursery education inspection asked them to improve their planning and provision of opportunities for role play and free and imaginative play. Planning has improved and children enjoy free play within sessions using good resources for role play and imaginative play, for example with dressing-up clothes. Another recommendation asked the nursery to develop opportunities for children's emergent writing. Children now have writing resources out within activities such as writing shopping lists or menus as well as using a writing area equipped with pens and paper for children to access freely. Their emergent writing is also encouraged as they write labels for displays as well as marking their names on their work.

Complaints since the last inspection

A concern was received on 18 May 2005 relating to Standard 6, Safety and Standard 12, Working in partnership with parents and carers. We asked the provider to investigate these concerns, and we received a response. We asked for clarification and following the second response we asked again for clarification. Following the third response we were satisfied that the National Standards were being maintained. The provider remains qualified for registration.

On 07 July 2005 we received concerns relating to National Standard 2, Organisation.

We made an unannounced visit to the nursery to assess their methods for maintaining the National Standards. At the visit we interviewed staff in addition to making observations and reviewing various documentation.

As a result of our investigation we found no evidence that National Standard 2 was not being maintained.

We made a recommendation for the nursery to further improve their day care practice to;

'Develop an action plan and registration system which shows how staff are deployed to ensure children are kept safe'.

We took no further action and the nursery remains qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure potential outdoor hazards, such as the obstacle course are minimised for all ages
- ensure younger children have increased opportunities to use equipment and play resources to further develop balance and walking skills

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):

- strengthen links between planning, assessment and children's records to ensure all children are moving consistently through the stepping stones
- ensure children have access to free creative play and increased opportunities to link sounds to letters and numbers to numerals.

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