



Little Troopers Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340742
Inspection date	10 January 2007
Inspector	Jill Milton
Setting Address	13 Stanley Road, OXFORD, OX4 1QY
Telephone number	01865 727281
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Registered person	Little Troopers Day Nursery 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets 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?

Little Troopers Day Nursery registered with a new private provider in 2006. The nursery operates over two floors in a semi-detached house in the centre of Oxford and the intake of children is from the local area. There is an enclosed rear garden for outdoor play.

The nursery opens on weekdays all year around from 08.30 to 17.30. Up to 22 children may attend at any one time and there are currently 36 children on roll between the ages of 18 months and five years. Of these 15 children receive nursery education funding. The nursery supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The nursery also supports a small number of children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of staff and over half have suitable childcare qualifications. Two members of staff are currently attending training. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the healthy foods on offer during the day. They enjoy generous helpings of fresh fruit and lunches include healthy choices like chicken stir fry with vegetables. Children access plenty of fluids since they can help themselves to drinking water in their rooms. Along with the availability of snacks too, the children are learning to respond to their own needs for food and drink.

Staff work appropriately with parents to ensure they share information about children's health. If a child is unwell the staff use their first aid skills to monitor the child's temperature and inform the parents of their concerns. Staff liaise with parents when children require medication in the day, but the written records do not always contain sufficient detail such as a date or a signature to acknowledge administration of medication. Children demonstrate their growing awareness of the importance of keeping themselves healthy. Children often select a favourite story book about hand washing and they can readily explain the need to wash hands 'to get the germs off'. Staff are consistent about reminding children to maintain hygiene routines before eating or after visiting the bathroom. Staff ensure they keep areas where children play and eat clean and they have routines in place to regularly check, for example, the temperature of the refrigerator. This means they are working to protect the health of the children.

Children have a balance during the day between active and restful play. They have cosy corners in their rooms where they can select a book and relax on a soft rug. Children can sleep peacefully after lunch in a quiet room that the staff make comfortable with music and low lighting. Outdoor play is a feature of the nursery day and children enjoy energetic times in the garden. They access a suitable choice of activities to stimulate their developing physical skills. Staff supervise outdoor play sufficiently but do not focus very well on assessing the progress of the children's physical skills and plan opportunities to extend them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a homely environment in a converted family residence. Staff make the rooms inviting with colourful displays on the walls and eye-catching objects hanging from the ceilings. Children play in comfort since the staff monitor the temperature of the rooms and adjust the natural ventilation accordingly. Children help to keep the nursery tidy and older ones are active helpers at sweeping up. Although staff tend to select table-top activities, the children can access some low-level resources for themselves. The equipment in the nursery covers all areas of development adequately.

Children stay safe whilst they play since staff supervise them closely. The adults use a suitable range of safety equipment and procedures to protect the children. They visually monitor, for example, the rooms before the children arrive or they complete a written check list for the outdoor play area prior to children's use. Staff encourage visitors to sign their presence at the nursery and introduce new security measures to monitor access. Children learn about safety issues when staff talk to them about using equipment like a see-saw carefully in the garden. When children use the stairs as a group they are familiar with the routine for lining up and holding onto the handrail.

Staff have a sound understanding of the area of child protection and they are aware of signs and symptoms that would cause them concern for a child. They have all the latest guidance to hand and they share their child protection policy with parents. The designated person for child protection has recent training and ensures all staff can access the training notes themselves for reference. The written child protection policy covers most areas but does not currently include how the nursery will act if an allegation arose regarding a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages settle quickly to play when they arrive at nursery. Their day includes a good variety of play opportunities and everyone benefits from time spent outdoors in the fresh air. The staff throughout the nursery interact with the children well and they demonstrate sensitivity to them if they are unwell or new to the setting. Different age groups of children have the chance to mix during lunch times and during play at the end of the day.

Children under three years of age spend most of the time with their peer group in their own set of rooms. The small group of children have plenty of space to play and an suitable selection of resources to attract their interest. Staff involve themselves in imaginative play with the toddlers and help them to develop conversations. Children are confident to talk to visitors and eager to talk about photographs of their family which staff display attractively in laminated booklets. Children play quite happily alongside each other, for example at the sand tray or when circling their trains around a track. Staff leading the care in the room are starting to use Birth to three matters framework in their planning and assessment of the children's development. Photographs on display in the room demonstrate a growing understanding by the adults of how play links to the different aspects of the framework. Children benefit from staff using this knowledge to plan a variety of weekly activities to suit their stages of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have a reasonable knowledge of the Foundation Stage and they provide children with a suitable variety of activities during the day. A recent change to the written plans provides more appropriate focus on the stepping stones for children's learning though this new method is not yet fully tried and tested. The children attending the nursery who are receiving nursery education funding are making acceptable progress in their learning.

Children are achieving particularly well in one area of learning and that is in their personal, social and emotional development. They play together in a friendly way and organise their own free play time with imaginative games when they make up their own stories. Children help each other with tasks and show confidence and independence. The children behave well and are learning how to respect others. Children take part in many conversations during the day and like to share information about their own families with the group. They sit well at group times and are developing some early speaking and listening skills. Children experiment with mark-making as they use paper and pens for drawing. They are quick to recognise their own names and sound out some of the letters.

The children play with a suitable selection of resources to support their understanding of number and shape. They are familiar with number songs and play with items, such as a shop cash register, to develop an awareness of number in everyday life. The staff include outings into the community so that the children learn about the world around them and practical activities like paper recycling is part of the normal nursery day. Topic work provides a varied and enjoyable introduction to different countries and the opportunity to learn about others in the wider context. With regard to information technology the children are not yet accessing the nursery computer though this equipment is in the process of installation.

Children play with equipment that helps to develop their dexterity and co-ordination. They concentrate, for example, on threading or fitting pegs into a board and they hold pencils with control. Their creative development is progressing as they use resources like dressing-up clothes and role play. Games with toys like train sets or dolls are popular for acting out imaginations. There are regular opportunities over time for children to use media to explore and express ideas, though play with materials like paint or dough are not necessarily on offer every day. Music is usually playing in the background as children play and they are becoming familiar with a range of nursery rhymes and action songs.

Staff provide suitable balance in the day between free play and more structured group times. They interact with children quite well as small groups come together spontaneously to share an activity. Staff talk frequently to the children and are supportive to their emotional development. They know the children well but at present are not recording their progress very frequently or using the information to plan the next steps in learning. Whilst children are achieving the early stepping stones towards the early learning goals the teaching is not yet fully effective in stretching and moving children on to the next stage.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are secure with the familiarity of the daily routine and the small groups in which they play. Staff comfort the children quickly and they help them to separate from their parents and carers. The children are developing their confidence as they make choices about what to play and they benefit from a wide range of resources which show positive images of different cultures. Staff introduce the children to alternative styles of music and talk to them about posters of children from countries around the world. These experiences have a positive effect on the children's understanding of others. Staff work with parents when English is an additional language for the child. Co-operation between home and nursery, for example sharing words

for familiar objects or colours, helps children to feel included. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

The nursery has appropriate systems in place to support children with learning difficulties/ or disabilities. Staff are attending the first stages of training to provide them with the necessary background knowledge to support children and their families. Staff welcome advice from other professionals in how best to help children when they have a special need.

Children behave well at the nursery and often show kindness to each other without any prompting from the adults. A child, for example, helps a newcomer find their name and place it on the self-registration board to show who is present. Children show some good manners too with even the youngest ones asking politely for another piece of fruit. Staff act as suitable role models in the way they talk to the children and they introduce ideas of fairness with simple measures like using a sand timer to take turns with a popular activity. Older children contribute to house rules, suggesting 'lots of cuddles and smiling' and 'tidy up when you finish playing'.

The staff and the families attending the nursery liaise in a positive way so that all are supporting the needs of the children. Parents speak readily of their satisfaction with the care the children receive and they voice encouraging comments about some of the new initiatives, such as the emphasis on healthy eating in the nursery. Staff share daily verbal feedback with parents and short written notes are available for each child. The partnership with parents and carers of the children receiving nursery education funding is satisfactory. There is some information available about the nursery day in general and parents receive encouragement to share in the current topic. However there is not a lot of good quality information accessible to parents about the educational curriculum and their children's progress in learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff have established a sound base on which to develop this small, friendly nursery. There is a welcoming atmosphere and children settle well. The policies and procedures are in the main working appropriately to promote the outcomes for children. Staff understand the need to maintain confidentiality and security in the way they organise and store documentation. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

There are secure systems in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. Staff are meeting on a regular basis to discuss their work and helpful notes of the meetings are available for future reference. The new team of staff are starting to access training courses to build up the skills of the whole team and staff appraisals are in the planning stage. There is a written plan for the refurbishment of the building and encouraging work is already complete in the room for the younger children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. Although the staff acknowledge there are some weaker areas they do demonstrate a positive attitude to taking on advice from outside professionals and have a desire to improve their working practice. The enthusiasm of the adults with more senior roles in the nursery provides a positive working atmosphere to get things right and develop.

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.

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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 written records of administered medication are completed thoroughly and consistently
- extend the written policy on child protection to include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff

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 that the planning of the nursery education provides effective support to children's learning
- assess children's progress more frequently and use the information to plan children's next steps in learning
- provide good quality information for parents about the educational curriculum

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