



Merry Go Round Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218458
Inspection date	07 February 2007
Inspector	Jayne Clarke
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Registered person	TAMWORTH & LICHFIELD COLLEGE
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?

Merry Go Round Nursery is run by Tamworth and Lichfield College Governing Body. It opened in 1992 and is located in Tamworth, Staffordshire. The nursery operates from purpose built single storey premises. A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 08:30 to 16:30 for 37 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 76 children from five months to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas.

The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language and who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery employs 12 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards a higher qualification. The nursery is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy good health and a healthy lifestyle. Practitioners follow current and appropriate health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures to ensure that children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment and have their health and dietary needs met. Well established routines increase children's awareness of good personal hygiene, children know that they have to wash their hands to keep themselves clean and use tissues to wipe their nose. Good arrangements are in place for the care and exclusion of children who are unwell or infectious, information about notifiable diseases is kept and shared with parents and helps to prevent the spread of infection. Good attention is given to pet care and hygiene so that children learn to care for pets in a safe environment. All children enjoy regular physical activity both indoors and out so that they benefit from fresh air and exercise, they rest and sleep according to their individual needs which helps them to feel comfortable and relaxed.

Children are well nourished. They eat meals and snacks which are mostly healthy and nutritious and include a variety of fruit, vegetable and salad snacks. High regard is given to children's good health and nutrition through healthy diet plans, nutritional information, activities and projects which help to promote children's healthy living. Children's good dental hygiene is promoted because they brush their teeth after meals, although this is not always consistently supported during practical activities when children use sweet and sugary food to decorate biscuits. Children have access to fresh drinking water at all times, positive steps are taken to develop older children's independence so that they can make healthy choices for themselves.

Children develop positive attitudes to exercise and are becoming aware of the importance of physical exercise to stay healthy. They take part in active games such as jumping, hopping and running and learn how to 'cool down' and 'rest' which helps them to recognise changes that happen to their heartbeat and rate of breathing. However, adults sometimes miss opportunities to make reference to the benefit of drinking water after strenuous exercise in order to further extend children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle. Children use a wide range of small and large equipment and show increasing control when they climb, slide and move around on wheeled toys outside. They handle a variety of small tools, construction toys and soft materials independently and sometimes with support to develop their skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. Well-implemented policies and procedures ensure that children remain supervised by highly trained and conscientious staff, have their security needs met and play with resources which are of high quality, well maintained and conform to safety standards. Designated roles and

responsibilities ensure that staff remain vigilant about safety within the setting, carry out regular risk assessments of the premises and equipment and follow appropriate health and safety guidelines so that children can move around freely and safely. Positive steps are taken to ensure that children understand and are actively involved in emergency evacuation procedures. All appropriate safety information is shared and agreed with parents to ensure children remain safe within the setting and on outings.

Children are protected because all staff fully understand their role in safeguarding children. They are knowledgeable about the necessary procedures, including allegations about the provider and know what action to take regarding any concerns about a child's well-being. A designated member of staff takes responsibility for children's care and welfare procedures. This ensures that children are protected from harm and neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children who attend the setting are confident and secure. They are happy and eager to participate in a variety of stimulating activities which help them to make good progress in their learning, leisure and personal development. Babies and young children express squeals of delight and excitement as they touch, squeeze and rub their hands and fingers in the shaving foam during a craft activity. Staff encourage children to investigate the 'nice smell' of the foam. Children are interested in the small tools to use such as rollers, brushes and sponges which helps them to make patterns and develop the skills needed for their early writing. Children receive good support from their key worker and other adults which helps them feel loved and secure and confident to try new things. Younger children take great delight in decorating biscuits to take home, they enjoy a good balance of child choice and organised activities which helps them to play and rest according to their needs. All children are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive to their individual needs and routines. Staff are successful at building warm relationships with babies and toddlers, they are knowledgeable about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use it well to observe, assess and plan for the development of younger children.

Children make good progress because the staff develop close and caring relationships which increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Younger children are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning and actively enjoy group circle time. They show interest and enthusiasm when they listen to favourite stories and select resources confidently as prompts for songs and rhymes. Staff support children's learning well and respond with interesting words and ideas to develop and extend what children see and hear. Younger children particularly enjoy the activity 'Who is here today?'. They recognise photographs of themselves and familiar others to put on the register board which helps develop their social interaction and skills. All children enjoy using the attractive outdoor facilities to explore and engage in vigorous play.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's assessments are regular and frequent and cover their progress in all areas of the curriculum, although there are minor weaknesses in the evaluation of assessments in order to clearly identify what each child should do next to

make further progress. Staff ensure that planned activities cover all aspects of learning so that all children make good progress towards the early learning goals. They use planned and spontaneous opportunities to support children's learning. For example, staff respond positively to children's interests during child-initiated play in the role play 'Opticians' and writing corner so that children attempt writing for a variety of purposes, talk about familiar experiences, feel valued and included. Resources are easily accessible to enable the children to initiate their own play, older children confidently select a box of construction blocks, they work harmoniously together to make a road track and houses and use toys imaginatively in their independent play, they talk about 'kings' and 'horses' and make body movements and gestures to develop their own game. This encourages children to begin to represent what they know and understand in their role play, ask questions and use their initiative.

Children develop good self awareness and a sense of community during activities which help them to think about their own feelings and the needs of others. They listen to stories about 'Ed' the bear, 'Len' the elderly puppet and 'Lola' the listening lion and frequently contribute to their imaginary lives during shared home and nursery projects. Children form good relationships with adults and each other, they understand behaviour 'rules' and are happy to take turns and share during their play and routines. They demonstrate their growing confidence as they manage their personal hygiene and dressing needs competently. Children confidently participate in mathematical activities, they recognise numbers and use counting and simple calculation to select the right amount of fruit for the number of people at snack time and estimate 'how much water', 'how many spoonfuls' and 'how many more' are needed in the sand and water play. They are beginning to recognise different shapes in the environment as they look at patterns on their clothing and shoes, although adults sometimes miss opportunities to talk about the properties of shape in response to what children see.

Children celebrate varied festivals such as Diwali, Hannukah and Chinese New Year which helps them to learn about different cultural traditions. They have sufficient access to a varied and attractive natural environment when they play in the garden, they receive good staff support to extend their understanding of nature through varied activities such as planting a sensory garden, vegetables and flowers. However, opportunities for children to have extended access to the outside area is limited to the structured timetable throughout the day, this limits older children's opportunity to fully explore the interesting outdoor environment. Children explore colour, texture and pattern in their creative play, they use a variety of paint, collage, sensory and modelling materials to make and design pictures and create play dough shapes. They use their hands and fingers to experience the feel of paint, foam and glitter and to make fine movements in their patterns. Children enthusiastically sing songs and rhymes and experience the effect of different types of music which help them to feel calm and move their bodies in different ways. They are encouraged to recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active and proudly demonstrate their physical skills to others. They play imaginatively with interesting toys and equipment and use everyday technology and computer equipment which helps them to make sense of their world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about the wider world. They play with toys and equipment and see pictures around them which reflect positive images of people who are from varied cultural backgrounds and abilities. Activities such as The Opticians role play area help children to understand and respect people's differences and similarities. Support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as an additional language is good. Staff attend training, have designated roles and responsibilities and clear systems in place to ensure children's individual needs are met. Staff clearly understand their role in working in partnership with parents and relevant organisations to provide appropriate care and support which promotes an inclusive service for all children and their families.

Children benefit from the clear and consistent boundaries set by staff, consequently they behave well and respond positively to the calm and positive approach demonstrated by adults. This helps children to learn about the safety and care of themselves and others. Children play well together and form strong bonds with their friends and familiar adults. They receive positive praise and encouragement at all times which promotes their confidence and self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Relationships with parents are good. They receive detailed information about the nursery which keeps them up to date with current policies, procedures, health and childcare information and the activities and educational programme provided. There is a clear complaints procedure in place so that parents know who to contact if they have any concerns. Daily discussion with their child's key worker keeps parents fully informed about their child's care and well-being. Assessment records are shared at regular intervals throughout the year and on request. Individual information is discussed to support the needs of all children. This helps children to settle, ensures that their needs are met and parents' wishes are respected.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. They receive useful information about the Foundation Stage and Curriculum guidance and have many opportunities to contribute to their child's learning through shared library and diary books and fund raising activities such as the 'Treasure Hunt'. Parents are invited to complete a questionnaire so that they can actively contribute to ideas and suggestions to improve the service and facilities provided. This positive approach enables parents to contribute to their child's care, well-being and education.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective recruitment and induction procedures, staff monitoring and appraisal systems ensure that children are cared for by staff who have completed the necessary vetting procedure and who have good knowledge and experience of childcare and development. There is a good level of qualified staff who work with the children. There is a good induction procedure to support new staff, students and volunteers. Staff attend many additional training courses to advance their knowledge and skills regarding children's care, safety and learning. This shows a strong commitment to professional development and contributes significantly to the quality of care

provided. Space and resources are well organised to meet children's needs and support their developing independence. Consistent routines and positive support helps children to gain confidence and feel secure. Staff constantly engage in children's play to enhance their learning. All required documentation and policies are in place for the safe and efficient management of the setting. Records are stored securely to ensure confidentiality is maintained. Children's attendance is accurately recorded, their individual needs are met and parents' wishes are respected which contributes to continuity of care.

The leadership and management of the funded provision is good. Regular staff and management meetings are held to discuss good practice and how they can best support children's learning and educational progress. Monitoring of the education programme provided takes place to ensure that all children have access to an effective curriculum that helps them to make good progress towards the Foundation Stage, although assessment methods do not fully evaluate children's next steps in their learning. Children enjoy robust physical activity indoors and outside but have limited access to fully explore the outdoor environment. Parents are well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress and achievements which helps them to understand how their children learn. Effective communication between parents and staff successfully enhances children's development and learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to improve the quality of sleeping facilities. Since then appropriate cots, beds and rest mattresses are now available so that children can rest and sleep comfortably. Children's quiet and rest periods are further enhanced with the use of room dividers, soothing background music and low lighting to create a calm and restful atmosphere.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to provide staff with opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of communication, language and literacy and creative learning areas and to increase children's access to resources. Staff have since attended relevant training courses to develop their knowledge and understanding of all areas of the Foundation stage curriculum. They use what they have learned to provide a good range of reading, writing and creative materials and activities which promote children's development in these areas of learning. Several easy access trolley baskets have been purchased so that children can freely choose from a wide range of equipment and activities. Children confidently select toys and equipment to support their independent play. Additionally, agreement was made to improve procedures with regard to working with other agencies in order to implement the Special Educational Needs Code Of Practice. The designated co-ordinator within the nursery now keeps a contact file containing details of all the relevant support agencies. She maintains regular contact with the area co-ordinator in order to provide appropriate care and support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities so that they can fully access the educational provision.

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.

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 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):

- continue to develop and extend all children's knowledge of healthy choices regarding food and drink during everyday routines and practical activities.

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):

- continue to develop and extend opportunities for children to explore the outdoor environment
- develop and extend evaluation methods in order to further identify each child's next steps in their learning.

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