



Little Scholars Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224857
Inspection date	02 February 2007
Inspector	Patricia Webb
Setting Address	Randall Lines Hall of Residence, North Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV1 1RN
Telephone number	01902 322909
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Registered person	University of Wolverhampton
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 satisfactory. 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?

Little Scholars Day Nursery has been registered since 1990. It operates from a self-contained suite situated on the ground floor of the Randall Lines Hall of Residence, which is part of Wolverhampton University Campus. The nursery is close to the city centre and serves mainly the students and staff of the University, although it is open to the community. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The provision consists of a day nursery and a holiday play scheme. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 50 children from two years to under five years at any one time. There are currently 31 children on roll of whom 12 are in receipt of funded nursery education. The play scheme caters for a maximum of 24 children from three years to under eight years with

older children also attending. It is open for six weeks during the main summer holidays. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 until 18:00, covering the university semesters.

There are currently five members of staff all of whom hold relevant early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the early years team of the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about being healthy as they follow familiar routines for hand washing and toileting. Staff provide gentle reminders verbally and through the use of posters about the importance of personal hygiene. They use tissues appropriately for runny noses and understand about disposing of such waste carefully to reduce the risk of the spread of infection. Accidents to children are managed efficiently and with care as staff hold current first aid qualifications. They also offer comfort and reassurance to children at such times to reduce upset. All the required consents for emergency medical treatment and the administration of specific medication are in place to promote children's good health.

Nutritious and varied meals are enjoyed by the children provided by the university's catering department. Individual dietary needs are carefully followed with alternative meals provided as required. Staff keep detailed records with regard to some children's reactions to certain foods. This enables staff, parents and health professionals to track back and identify possible sources of allergy in the best interest of the children. They develop their independence and a sense of responsibility as they take turns to set the table for the midday meal and help themselves to drinks pouring carefully from a jug and also accessing a water dispenser appropriately.

Children's physical health is effectively promoted as they have regular opportunities for rigorous activity throughout the day. They use space well both indoors and outside, negotiating pathways with care as they avoid bumping into each other. Wheeled toys are steered and manoeuvred with skill as some children reverse with care when taking their vehicle to the 'garage for petrol'. Music and movement sessions are enjoyed by the children and the staff as they follow simple instructions and develop an understanding of reacting and moving to different tempos and rhythms. As they become aware of the different parts of their bodies, co-ordination is developing through such activities as engaging in a round of 'Hokey-cokey' when much laughter and giggling ensues as they learn about left and right. Manipulative skills are increased as children use tools, cutlery, paint brushes and scissors with developing dexterity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enter the bright and welcoming environment with ease, familiar with the staff and the routines. The entry to the setting is covered by CCTV and buzzer entry to reduce the risk of access by unauthorised persons. This contributes to children being safe and secure in the nursery. Staff have revised the layout of the setting to offer different areas of activity and spaces which offer children the opportunity to rest and relax. There are also little dens created

using material and drapes where children can take time out to be alone with their thoughts if they wish.

Safety is promoted as staff carry out regular risk assessments to identify and reduce hazards to children and adults. There are some issues within the campus regarding discarded rubbish which often ends up in the children's outdoor play area. Staff are diligent in checking this daily and requesting support from the university maintenance staff to reduce risks to the children. Children become aware of their own safety as they learn about road safety, reinforcing this, for example, when they walk to nearby shops and the university theatre.

There is a wide and varied selection of resources available for the children. Attractive storage enables them to make choices about their activities as they seek out favourite items using the pictures of each resource which are carefully displayed on the boxes, shelves and hooks around the setting. There is an effective balance between commercial equipment and found, natural materials which are used appropriately by the children. For example, they handle fir cones, large pebbles and use lengths of hose pipe in their everyday play and activity. Staff clean and check the equipment regularly however, some items such as the small world playhouses and toy trains are showing signs of wear and tear, hindering children's well-being and enjoyment.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a sound knowledge of child protection. A child protection statement is in place and is shared with parents who also have access to the formal poster identifying the full procedures. A separate document informs them about the additional procedures to be followed should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff. Their understanding of how the process protects their children is limited as the document does not refer to the setting being required to inform Ofsted should such an allegation be made.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and contented in the setting. They benefit from the high level of positive interaction and sensitive support from enthusiastic staff who enjoy their time with the children. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to devise and plan a range of activities and opportunities for children providing a developmentally appropriate range of activities for the children under three years of age. They use the outdoor play area with confidence, as they dig, use wheeled toys and make music, banging the mess tins hanging from the fence. Older children follow topics which staff prepare effectively to offer challenge and interest. There are times when children's play is interrupted by the nursery routine taking priority. For example, children engrossed in playing on the computer are called to join another activity as timetabled. Whilst the holiday play scheme was not seen in operation, discussions indicate that a varied range of activities are offered during the main summer break. Children are encouraged to have input into the planning which result in them being interested, motivated and excited by the experiences and activities. Photographs are displayed demonstrating some of the activities for parents to see.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good level of knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a clear understanding of how children learn. Planning indicates how all six areas of learning are covered over the period of each topic followed. This contributes to children being motivated, interested and making good progress towards the early learning goals. Assessments are completed using the Foundation Stage profile as staff indicate when a child has reached each stepping stone. These assessments are supported by evaluations of focus activities that indicate how individual children have performed. The use of observations is not always consistent and this impacts on how effectively staff can identify some gaps or need for additional challenge and extension.

However, staff know the children well and offer a varied range of activities and opportunities to meet individual children's needs. The setting serves a diverse community with some children from families where English is not the first language. Staff work effectively with parents to enable children to develop their communication in English, using some key words from their home languages. The use of some sign language is effective for simple instructions and this is supported by the use of pictures to indicate different activity areas and aid the children's selection of resources. Strategies such as these enable all children to develop their understanding in order to make progress and develop their independent learning.

Staff are developing effective use of the newly arranged layout of the nursery. Children access designated areas of activity although at times the use of grouping of children hinders more spontaneous play. For example, the children separate into two groups with one group accessing the messy and creative playroom for the morning session. The groups swap around for the afternoon. This hinders how children can fulfil their creative potential as and when they wish.

Children's behaviour is effectively managed by staff who are sensitive to individual children's needs and support them in a calm and cheery manner. They know the boundaries and respond appropriately to direction from staff. Children's self-esteem is fostered positively as they delight when staff offer praise such as when one three-year-old child has set the places at the table in preparation for lunch.

Children are chatty and confident, initiating conversation with adults and each other. They 'write' and make marks using various media such as custard gloop, sand and paint as well as paper and pencil. They know that writing has a purpose as they enter bookings into the diary in the 'hairdressers' and from the wealth of labels and signs seen around the setting. They enjoy stories and join in with familiar phrases as some of the older children listen intently. They access books for enjoyment, handling them with care.

Numbers are visible around the rooms as children count confidently up to nine. Staff support individual children sensitively as they stumble with higher numbers in order to achieve. Children setting the table for lunch are aware of the need for three pieces of cutlery for each place and proudly indicate their success to staff. They use mathematical language as they play, recalling, for example, how many spadefuls of sand it takes to fill the bucket. They understand about numbers, patterning and sequencing as they refer to photographs such as the radiator grille, a telephone and a local bus. This helps children to reinforce their learning and understanding of how numbers are used. They are developing an awareness of time as they refer to clocks and know what a sand timer is used for.

An understanding of caring for living things is promoted with the children as they inform adults about how the African snails are attended to. They explain about having to spray them regularly and that they like to eat cucumber. Children learn about various life stages as they celebrate festivals, birthdays and have participated in a 'wedding', with photographs to support their activities. Children use technology equipment such as computers with skill and familiarity. Some children show great prowess in this field, following simple instructions accurately. They are developing an awareness of how things work as they use programmable toys such as robots.

Children develop their imagination through well-planned role play and small world play. They dress up in saris and outfits denoting specific roles such as builders and princesses without gender bias. Great amusement is had in the 'hairdressers' as they attend to adults locks with care, showing the results in the mirrors. They make models using found materials, explore the texture of various media such as custard gloop, sand and bark both freely and as part of set topic work. Innovative ideas such as ice painting ensure that children are enthralled and learn new skills. They are learning about making music and varying sounds using instruments, making some of their own shakers and developing an ear for different tempos and rhythms.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are effectively met by staff who know the children and their families well. Children learn about the wider world around them as they celebrate various cultural festivals such as Diwali, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Children have hands-on experiences as they discover how to put on a sari and practice using lengths of material themselves. They have opportunities to see different languages and scripts written on signs and displays around the setting including the 'aims' regarding children's expected behaviour. This aids the development of a sense of respect for others and valuing differences.

Whilst there are currently no children attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, staff have a keen awareness of the Code of Practice for the identification and assessment of special educational needs. Key staff take the lead role in this and records indicate that a consistent approach is developed for individual children through working closely with parents and other professionals. This results in children making clear and steady progress given their individual starting points and levels of ability.

Children are well-behaved and demonstrate very good manners in response to the realistic expectations of the staff. Staff conduct themselves professionally providing positive role models for the children who are encouraged sensitively to be aware of the effect their actions have on others. The 'aims' of the nursery are displayed and presented to children as very positive statements with photographs of them demonstrating acceptable behaviour. Children are learning about different feelings and emotions as they relate a past visit to the Arena theatre at the university. They speak about having watched a re-enactment of the Three Billy Goats Gruff recalling that the little Billy Goat Gruff was scared of the troll.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the daily verbal feedback which is given to parents and carers at the end of each session. Art and craft work is taken home with pride and achievements are shared with parents developing children's self-esteem. There is a detailed complaints policy in place which ensures that any concerns are addressed and responded to. However, there is no procedure or format for sharing appropriate levels of information from these records with parents on request. This is a breach of regulation and results in parents not being fully informed of factors that potentially impact on the children's well-being.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education is good. Parents receive detailed information about the Foundation Stage in booklets and through displays where they can see photographs of their children participating in purposeful activity. There are parent evenings arranged and additional information is sent regarding the various topics children are following each month. Newsletters include ideas on how parents can extend children's learning at home through everyday routines. This fosters the ethos of children's development and progress being a partnership between parents and the staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are settled and secure in the nursery. Staff organise space effectively indoors and outside. The key worker system ensures that children are appropriately supported and cared for throughout the day and staffing ratios are met at all times. All staff currently employed in the setting have been appropriately vetted and there are clear staff recruitment procedures in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable persons.

Most of the required documentation is in place and maintained confidentially. However, some written procedures such as sections of the child protection policy and the complaints procedures have not been updated to reflect certain aspects of requirements and recent changes to legislation and practice. This has the potential to impact on children's welfare as staff and parents are not fully aware of the changes to current practice.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. There have been some changes within the senior staff group and the team is working to improve and enhance the delivery of care and education for the children. The staff have successfully identified areas for improvement such as rearranging space and redeveloping the outdoor play area. They are knowledgeable and eager to attend relevant training when such needs are identified through team meetings and annual appraisals. Staff work well as a team to provide a stimulating balanced programme where children can participate in appropriate activities.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the management has made effective progress in addressing most of the recommendations. The medication policy includes specific details about medicines administered to children when in the nursery. Parents are reminded on a regular basis to ensure that information on their children's registration forms is up-to-date in order to ensure that

staff can effectively safeguard children's welfare. This is particularly important with regard to contact details should the setting need to call parents. Issues regarding the complaints procedure have been raised in the body of this report.

At the last inspection of nursery education the team was asked to increase opportunities for children to develop their personal independence at snack and meal times. This has been very successfully improved and children conduct much of their own activity at this time, pouring their own drinks, setting the tables and enjoying the social time. Staff are preparing to further improve the lunch time routines by providing food in serving dishes and encouraging children to serve themselves at the tables. The outdoor area is an interesting space which children access during most types of weather, pulling on their wellies and digging vigorously in the bark area. The university management and the staff are organising a refurbishment to further improve the facilities and outdoor opportunities for the children.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- maintain equipment and resources in a clean and safe condition
- develop the child protection procedures to include reference to informing Ofsted in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff
- develop the complaints record to ensure that appropriate information is shared with parents on request
- review the policies and procedures regularly to reflect changes to legislation.

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):

- develop the balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities ensuring that nursery routines do not overshadow the development of children's concentration and enjoyment in their learning (this also applies to care)
- develop strategies for the effective observation of children in order to identify and address any gaps in individual children's attainment or the need for further extension and challenge.

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