

Smith's Wood Children's Centre/Wood 'N' Tots Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	250120
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Inspector	Samantha Jayne Taylor
Setting Address	Wheatfield Close, Smith's Wood, Solihull, B36 0QP
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Registered person	NCH
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?

Wood 'n' Tots Nursery registered in 2004. It operates from Smiths Wood Family Partnership Centre, situated in Smiths Wood, Solihull. The Centre was set up as a joint venture between the NCH, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the local authority. The nursery operates from a separate building within the grounds. The nursery has its own kitchen and there are children's toilets adjoining the main play room. There is a garden available for outdoor play. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas. Crèches are sometimes set up to care for children whilst their parents attend groups taking place in the Children's Centre.

The setting is registered to provide care for 50 children. There are currently 34 children on roll. This includes 20 children who are in receipt of funding for early education. The setting supports three children who have learning difficulties.

The full day care provision opens five days a week all year round except for bank holidays and is closed for a week at Christmas. Sessions are from 07:30 hours to 18:00 hours.

Ten members of staff work with the children, six of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The staff hold sound knowledge of procedures which support children's health needs. They are knowledgeable of the procedure to follow in the event of an accident occurring and children are comforted by caring staff who give the injured child their first priority. The staff also keep other children safe through effectively communicating with their colleagues. Children's individual needs are met as information regarding any allergies they have and or specific care requirements are exchanged between the home and the nursery at the onset of care. All staff throughout the centre are advised of this information in order to keep children safe. The staff give individual care and attention to younger children, for example, they sing and talk to the children when changing their nappies.

Children learn about hygiene as the staff act as good role models and encourage the children to follow their good practice, for example, children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating their snack. Older children are beginning to understand the importance of hand washing as they discuss with staff the effect of germs on their bodies.

Children have many opportunities to encourage the development of their independence skills which enable them to develop a sense of responsibility. The staff inspire the children's interest through discussion and by providing equipment to encourage children's self-help skills. For example, the cloak room area is accessible to children where they easily access their coats and or belongings for outdoor play. They are involved in tasks and complete simple errands such as assisting the staff in pouring sand into the activity trays.

Children experience a wide range of healthy nutritious meals which are prepared on site by the resident cook. Children are familiar with and recognise a wide range of vegetables such as sweet corn and green beans. Their social skills are enhanced as the staff sit with the children in small groups to eat their lunch together. The atmosphere is relaxed and children engage in conversation with each other and the staff as they discuss a variety of topics. Older children describe their meal as looking "scrumptious" and they are able to self select their meal from the serving dishes provided. This helps children to build their independence skills and to develop their small finer physical skills as they use serving utensils, such as scoops to serve potato and rice. Staff provide good support and encouragement to children as they do this.

Children are given daily opportunities for outdoor play. They access the adjoining grounds of the Children's Centre where the woodland area provides many different learning opportunities. For example, games such as searching for the bear on their imaginary bear hunt. In preparation for this activity children enjoy putting on their Wellington boots to experience the different types of ground as they walk in the woodland area. This also helps them to maintain good health as they exercise using large and small physical skills, for example, they enjoy climbing over bridges. In the autumn season they have immense pleasure as they play games with the leaves as they run and jump to try and catch leaves which fall from the trees and cover the area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The environment is both bright and welcoming to families and children. Throughout the setting children's work is creativity displayed at different levels which helps to create a child-orientated environment. Photographs displayed show children at play and are used to exchange information with parents such as activities enjoyed at the nursery including the themed 'pirate open day'. The staff are very welcoming and approachable to parents and to the children. They enjoy informal discussion with the staff on their arrival to the setting. As a result, children are very keen to attend the setting and families feel supported.

Children independently access a wide range of safe toys and resources, which are of high quality and meet the relevant safety standards. Most are accessible at low level and items are rotated to maintain interest. Resources from the Children's Centre are also shared which helps to enhance their experiences as children have a greater choice to self select from.

Generally risk assessments are undertaken throughout the setting. However, the system in place for outdoors is less rigorous as not all risks are identified, for example, the security of the children from persons entering the setting through the grounds. This means that children's safety is potentially compromised. The children are actively learning how to keep themselves safe and participate in regular fire evacuations. Staff and students are being inducted in the fire procedure and the correct use of fire doors and exits.

Children's protection from abuse and neglect is promoted through the staff's sound knowledge of signs and symptoms of child abuse and of reporting procedures. Several of the staff have completed training in the common assessment framework. This means the setting has the most up-to-date information regarding child protection, which helps to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities and experiences, which helps them to make progress in all areas of their development. The staff are developing their assessments and observations of young children as they implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The arrangement and accessibility of resources and equipment encourages children to explore and become confident in their surroundings. They love to look at the many different mobiles within the room which encourages their development, for example, their sensory skills as young children watch them twist and turn.

Children develop good language and social skills as the staff spend time playing with and singing with the children throughout the day. The questions often asked by the staff extend children's language skills, for example when playing together in a corn flour activity they ask the children "what does it feel like?" The staff demonstrate how the mixture runs through their own fingers and young children respond excitedly saying "mix it, mix it" As a result young children have fun as they learn through their play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are interested, confident and motivated learners. The co-ordinator for this area has a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and she works closely with the early years teachers to provide support and guidance to the

staff who work in this area. The staff are developing their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and its implementation. Activities have clear learning outcomes and the children's assessments are used to inform future planning. However, the written systems in place for planning and assessment are not sufficiently detailed to enable all of the staff to extend the children's achievements.

Children are confident communicators who have positive relationships with their peers. Good relationships are formed with the staff through valuable interaction such as playing games, asking questions and the staff responses to the children. As a result children feel valued and thrive in their development. Their confidence is built through different methods, for example, as they sing nursery rhymes during small group sessions. During play children are encouraged to link sounds to letters and children recognise their own name as they self-register on arrival and also at snack time. They freely access writing resources to draw, write and they make lists during role-play for their shopping. This encourages children to notice print and to understand writing for different purposes. Children benefit from individual support as they share books with the staff in the quiet comfortable story area. For example, they learn to handle books correctly as they turn the pages singly.

Children are well supported as they learn to design and make things. They become adept as they mould paper and glue to make their hot air balloons. They use materials such as scissors, glue and tape to join materials. At the planned open day they make treasure maps with staff and parental support. They are able to observe and find out about features of the natural world as they explore the many aspects of the outdoor area.

Indoor role-play activities are varied and interesting. Themes such as the travel agents and the train station help to fuel children's imagination as well as consolidating their learning across the six different areas, for example, the train timetable introduces numerals in a different format. Children participate enthusiastically in music sessions. Effective teaching with the use of puppets helps children to distinguish between loud and soft sounds and they also enjoy frequent visits from a musician.

Outdoors, children are set challenges to develop their physical skills. They balance along planks and manoeuvre tricycles around obstacles. They use small plastic crates to design and make a 'den' where they develop further physical skills as they crawl underneath. Indoors, children learn to hold pencils, paint brushes and scissors with increasing control.

Children are introduced to mathematical learning through a variety of planned and spontaneous activities. They consolidate their learning through singing number rhymes and during routine times. Children are able to work independently as they throw die to match and count numbers successfully. They explore weight and capacity as they compare different weights and children relate quantity to previous learning as they consolidate their understanding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop their understanding of diversity and knowledge of others as they celebrate different festivals. For example, role play equipment, musical instruments, and craft activities provide different opportunities for children to explore other cultures and traditions. They make cards and taste different fruits and sweets as part of the celebrations.

The setting effectively supports children with learning difficulties, for example, children who receive support for speech and language. Children benefit from the staff working closely with outside agencies. The staff effectively model and reinforce language as they spend time sitting with the children, for example, as they share books. Children are encouraged to listen to others and the staff value what they say. As a consequence their development and positive self-esteem are encouraged.

Children enjoy the calm and comfortable atmosphere which is created within the nursery. Children behave very well, encouraged by the staff who have strategies to promote positive behaviour. A consistent approach to behaviour management is followed throughout the setting. Children's feelings are acknowledged by the staff and also discussed which helps the children to express how they feel. As a result children begin to understand the consequences of their actions on others. Younger children respond well to gentle reminders from staff as they learn to share nursery resources. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit through the warm relationships established between staff and parents. Parents are actively invited into the setting and importance is placed upon the daily feedback of the children's day at the setting. Communication liaison books are available for younger children and the staff spend time giving parents daily verbal feedback. Within the entrance area parents can view their children playing as there is a vision panel which helps to reassure parents and also keeps them informed of the activities children enjoy.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Parents spend time talking to staff informally about their children's starting points. They are well informed about services at the nursery with newsletters and posters informing of forthcoming events. Information about their children's progress clearly links to the progress the children are making through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. A display regarding the Foundation Stage informs parents of the activities offered to support their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are able to actively explore and investigate as a result of the well-organised use of the space available. Throughout the day older children benefit from freely accessing outdoor play as the doors between the main indoor play area and the outdoor area are opened. This also helps to enrich and consolidate children's learning experiences as activities are adapted from indoors to outdoors. Their sense of belonging is fostered through the presence of a consistent and mostly qualified staff team who are positive role-models to the children. Deployment of staffing is effective to ensure children's safety and the correct staff to children ratios are maintained at all times.

Children's welfare is generally promoted as most documentation is accurate and is available to share with parents. Confidentiality is assured and records are stored appropriately.

Leadership and management is good. There are systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching to ensure children make progress towards the early learning goals. Regular team meetings are held where managers keep the staff fully informed. This helps to promote good practice and continuity of care for the children. There is a real commitment to the promotion of quality care and education for young children with the staff's training identified through staff supervision and the appraisal system which is in place. They have access to the

early years staff training programme, which supports their continuing professional development. Support is also offered from the early years teachers to ensure consistency. The staff are willing to review and reflect upon their practice. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection five recommendations were made. The first was in relation to improving upon the special needs statement. Whilst improvement has been made in this area the written policy lacks sufficient detail. A further recommendation is made at this inspection regarding improving further upon documentation.

A recommendation was made with regards to ensuring that fire drills are carried out periodically. The nursery has addressed this and regular fire drills are undertaken. The setting is continuing the staffs understanding of fire risk assessment.

The provider was also asked to ensure that all visitors to the setting are recorded. This is now addressed and there is a book available to sign in and out, which helps to safeguard children and visitors to the setting.

A further recommendation was also made with regard to updating all policies and procedures to include reference to Ofsted as the regulator where appropriate and make available to parents. The provider through discussion demonstrates how she has achieved this.

The final recommendation made was with regard to the complaints procedure. This is now displayed for parents and visitors information. This helps to reassure parents and provides a framework for information to be exchanged.

At the last education inspection two key issues were raised. The first being to provide opportunities for children to recognise numerals. The first key issue has been addressed with significant improvement made. There are many opportunities for children to recognise numerals throughout the nursery and both planned and spontaneous activities. As a result children make good progress in this area.

The second key issue asked the provider to improve planning to show how activities are differentiated for children with different abilities. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has a very good understanding of this area and oversees the implementation of activities to include differentiation. Some improvement in this area has been made but as the written planning does not reflect this information a further recommendation is made at this inspection.

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):

- improve documentation, which is required for the efficient and safe management of the provision with particular reference to the special needs policy
- improve risk assessments to ensure that all areas are included.

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):

- improve staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage in order to develop systems for planning and assessment.

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