

See-Saws Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	228984
Inspection date	20 April 2007
Inspector	Shirley Delaney
Setting Address	1 Avenue Road, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands, B23 6UY
Telephone number	0121 350 6521
E-mail	
Registered person	Jayne Ackers
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?

See-Saws Day Nursery is one of five nurseries run by See-Saws Nursery Limited. It opened in 1996 and operates from a converted residential property. It is situated in a residential area near to retail businesses, in the Erdington area of Birmingham. A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 18.00, operating throughout the year excluding bank holidays. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 61 children on roll aged under 5 years. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children for whom English is an additional language and children with learning needs and/or disabilities. Most of the parents whose children attend the nursery live in the local area.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff, 10 of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification; 4 are currently working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Advisory Teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted. They develop an awareness of good personal habits as they follow bathroom routines. Children brush their teeth after eating their dinner and older children wash and dry their hands independently after toileting. Staff talk to children about why they need to wash their hands before eating. This helps children to develop an understanding of the importance of good hygiene. Children say they have to wash the 'bug-a-lugs' off their hands before they eat, because if they don't they will put germs in their body which will make them ill.

Children benefit from being cared for in a clean environment. Staff implement the health and hygiene procedures in place to promote children's health. For example, tables are cleaned before meal and snack times, changing mats are cleaned between nappy changes and bedding is changed in babies' cots following use. Food provided, such as fruit at snack time, supports children developing a positive approach to healthy eating. Fresh drinking water is available to children throughout the day. This promotes their health and allows them to independently choose to have a drink when they need one.

Children have regular opportunities to take part in physical exercise. They routinely make use of an outside play area. Large trees in the garden provide shaded areas where babies can gain fresh air whilst lying, crawling and playing with toys on blankets. Care is taken that children wear sun cream and hats during hot weather. They have good opportunities to develop physical skills whilst running and playing with a wide range of toys. Children use tricycles, scooters and pushchairs, which help develop their skills in pedalling, pulling and pushing. The wide variety of outdoor toys and resources range in size and complexity, which means that it caters for all abilities. Large equipment enables older children to practise skills in climbing, balancing, crawling and sliding. Children enjoy taking part in movement to music. Older children regularly join in exercise sessions under staff instruction, when staff talk to them about the importance of warming up before and cooling down after exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about some aspects of personal safety through discussions with staff about safe practices. For example, staff remind children about the dangers of walking on wet floors and talk to them about why it is important to use scissors safely. Fire drills are completed regularly with all the children. Older children also follow themes of learning during which they complete activities that reinforce their understanding and awareness of how to safely evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

There are effective systems in place to promote children's security. For example, parents and visitors are given access to the building by members of staff once their identity is established. Toys and resources are regularly cleaned and checked by staff. This means that children have access to toys resources and equipment that are maintained in safe condition. Staff complete risk assessments which cover all areas of the provision. However, the risk assessments completed do not comprehensively identify all risks to children. As a consequence some hazards remain accessible to children in some areas of the nursery.

Staff have a clear understanding of their role in relation to child protection. Children's welfare is generally promoted as staff are aware of signs of child abuse. They know who to report their concerns to and the procedures to be followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are at ease in the nursery and well supported by staff. They settle into the routine of the day and become involved in play and learning opportunities. Senior staff working with young children have received 'Birth to three matters' training and disseminated this information to other staff caring for this age group. Consequently, they are increasingly familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They offer children a wide variety of play experiences, promote children's ability to make choices and develop their independence. Children are able to independently access a wide range of resources. This encourages young children to explore the environment and develops their curiosity.

Staff provide a stimulating environment for the children and offer them a wide and varied range of play and learning opportunities. Staff support and interact positively with children in their play and facilitate their learning effectively. Children are eager to join in activities and the staff's enthusiasm and encouragement inspires children to try new experiences. There is good attention paid to developing children's confidence and social skills. For example, older children take on roles and responsibilities within the group such as laying the table and serving food and drinks at various times throughout the day.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The pre-school co-ordinator working alongside the provider has the main responsibility for the task of formulating plans for children's learning. Other staff have regular input through informal discussion and information shared at room meetings. They also have the opportunity to put forward suggestions and ideas on how to deliver play and learning opportunities for the children linked to the themes identified by the pre-school co-ordinator. The regular use of planning and the availability of referral documentation help staff to become increasingly familiar with the Foundation Stage. Completed plans detail learning intentions for children, linked to stepping stones and early learning goals. Activities are evaluated and staff record some information about children's attainments. Assessment records are completed, however, the records are not sufficiently clear to demonstrate that children are making progress in all area of learning or identify next steps in children's learning.

Children have good access to books which they learn to handle with care. They choose to look at books on an individual basis or seek out the attention of an adult to share a book with. Many children recognise their names and those of other children when they look at the register during registration or read information recorded on the children's rota. They are able to recall and retell familiar stories, are confident speakers and active listeners. Many children are able to write recognisable letters, for example, when writing their names to label their work or to record information to label displays and friezes.

Children have opportunities to make observations of the local environment, linked to themes of learning. For example, they observe vehicles on the road outside the nursery when following a transport theme. Children's interest in nature and understanding of the world around them is developed through inclusion in activities such as sowing flower seeds and growing vegetables.

Children have good opportunities to use their senses, through access to play materials such as sand, paint and play dough. They make their own play dough and talk about the consistency of the finished product. Children enthusiastically sing rhymes and songs and join in actions when taking part in movement to music. They develop a good awareness of their bodies as they talk about body parts and what they can do. For example, they talk about what tasks they can complete through use of their hands and develop an awareness of their skeleton and how their bones enable them to move around. Children have good opportunities to develop an interest in music. They are introduced to a wide range of music. They use musical instruments and experience making their own. On occasion they are encouraged to listen carefully to music and identify the range of instruments used. Children develop skills using communication and information technology as they routinely access a range of electronic equipment and computer equipment.

Children develop a good awareness of mathematics. Many children count to 10 and above. Their interest in numbers and shapes is supported by staff who talk to them routinely about numbers. For example, they use routine events such as bathroom times to compare numbers, asking children questions such as 'how many can go to the bathroom at one time if there are four toilets available for their use?'

Children receive lots of encouragement from staff to co-operate and work together as a team. As a consequence children learn to show consideration for one another. Their behaviour is well managed and this results in a largely calm environment which allows children to maintain appropriate levels of concentration. Children's interest is held during group activities for example, they sit quietly at group times and wait patiently at mealtimes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well behaved and respond to requests staff make of them. They are aware of the routine and know what is expected of them. For example, they help to tidy up toys after they have finished playing with them. Young children are well supported by staff and are beginning to learn to share. Older children are identified on a rota to complete tasks as helpers. They receive praise from staff for carrying out these roles responsibly, which gives them a sense of achievement. Involving children in tasks that include helping and serving one another helps them to develop an awareness of the needs of others and show consideration. All children receive praise for their achievements, when they are being helpful, for sharing and displaying kindness to other children. This helps to develop confidence and self-esteem.

There are children currently attending the nursery with identified learning difficulties. Staff work alongside parents and with other professionals involved in children's care to promote and assist children's development. They work on individual plans to ensure that the children's needs are planned for and incorporated into the daily routine. Staff monitor the progress children make towards their individual goals. This supports the needs of children with identified learning needs well.

Children have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities that promote positive images of disability, race and culture, which assists in promoting children's understanding of diversity and the wider world. They acknowledge and join in activities associated with cultural and religious celebrations. Older children take part in activities that look at similarities and differences. For example, they take part in activities looking at eye colour and people with disabilities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents are able to share information about their child and their wishes are respected. They have good access to information regarding policies and procedures, as information is included in the prospectus and on display around the nursery provision. Verbal information is exchanged with all parents daily and written information is shared in the form of daily sheets which supply information to parents about their child's care, diet, toileting and activities they have been involved in. This promotes consistency of care for the children. Parents are kept up to date through regular newsletters and can express their views through completing questionnaires and making suggestions.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education is good. Children benefit from the sharing of information between parents and staff to support their learning. There are good processes in place to keep parents well informed about the learning programme. Information about the Foundation Stage is provided to parents in the home link sheets. This information is provided to parents on a regular basis and gives them information about how play and learning experiences provided in the nursery enable children to work towards the early learning goals. It also provides parents with details about the themes being covered and how they can support the children's learning by involving them in activities at home. This enables parents to continue children's learning within the home environment. Parents are kept informed of the achievements their child makes in the group through discussion with staff at parents meetings which take place twice a year.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Documentation is well-organised, as required information relating to staff, parents and children is recorded. Records are held securely, which supports the confidentiality of information relating to families and staff. Most of the staff employed to work with the children are appropriately qualified and the required adult to child ratios are maintained. Suitability checks are completed on all staff to ensure children are well protected. Care staff are supported by a small pool of peripatetic staff who work across all the settings in the nursery group providing support in relation to quality assurance and training. The additional staff also generally complete tasks such as assisting over the lunchtime period and providing cover over staff break times. Policies and procedures underpinning the care provided in the group are in place and contribute to the care and welfare of the children who attend.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The management team and staff work together to identify new ways of providing children with learning experiences and take on board guidance and suggestions from outside agencies. There are procedures in place to identify staff training needs and training is made available to staff through in-house support and accessing external training courses. The management team work alongside staff, offer support when required and carry out spot checks to monitor the service provided to the children. Staff are identified to take on specific responsibilities enabling them to develop their skills and roles within the nursery. To improve the quality and standard of the nursery education the setting has taken action to address the recommendation raised at the previous inspection. The provider, manager and staff team share a commitment to improving learning for children. There is a system in place to evaluate the provision for funded education through regular management team discussion. This promotes the continual review and enhancement of the programme for early education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the group had three recommendations to improve practice: review the organisation of large group activities for young children; make sure that appropriate strategies used to manage children's behaviour are consistently applied by all staff; review policies and procedures to ensure that the complaints procedure includes the address and telephone number of the regulator and the child protection procedure includes guidelines which are understood by staff, to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

Since the inspection changes have been made to the routine and organisation of group activities for young children. This has improved the play and learning experiences available to them. There has been training and development undertaken with regard to ensuring that all staff have an awareness of appropriate strategies used to manage children's behaviour. These strategies are consistently applied by all staff, which means that children have secure boundaries. The complaints procedure has been updated in line with current guidance and the child protection procedure now includes information about the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. This supports the safety of children attending the setting.

At the last nursery education inspection there were two recommendations made to improve practice: give more effective consideration to how space is used in the pre-school room to display children's work and to give children enough room to take part in activities; develop staff's understanding about how to question children to encourage them to think through problems for themselves. In particular, ensure that staff prompt children to think about what a total means and to experience equal and unequal quantities in practical situations.

Since the last inspection there has been more consideration given to how children have space to take part in activities and they are organised to take place more often in small groups. Children's work is predominately displayed around the room and children identify their own work and take pride in their achievements. Staff display effective teaching skills in questioning children, they ask open questions and develop children's lines of enquiry effectively. Staff ask children questions which encourage them develop their awareness of what a total means. For example, by asking them to count the number of boys and girls in the group and then joining the two groups together to find the total number of children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. Concerns were raised regarding the standards of hygiene at the nursery, the hygiene practice of the staff and inappropriate menus for babies under six months. These concerns relate to National Standard 7 Health and National Standard 8 Food and Drink. Ofsted made an unannounced visit to the setting to investigate the concerns raised. The inspector raised two actions. Ofsted is satisfied that the registered person has taken appropriate steps to address the concern and the provider 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.

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):

- review risk assessments to ensure that hazards are identified and action is taken to minimise risks for children.

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):

- further develop the system for assessment to ensure that it supports the individual needs of the children and informs planning.

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