



Calthwaite Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337410
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Inspector	Andrea, Marie Paulson
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Registered person	Calthwaite Nursery
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 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?

Calthwaite Nursery is run by a Board of Directors. It operates from six rooms in a former post office building with an enclosed outdoor play area. It is situated on the main road through the village of Calthwaite, near Penrith. Children from the village and surrounding rural area attend. There are currently 28 children on the register, 20 of whom receive nursery education funding. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. No children presently attend for whom English is a second language.

The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 during term time. The provision includes a breakfast club, day care, nursery education and an after school club. Times of opening during school holidays vary according to need. The nursery employs five members of staff. The manager and deputy have Level 3 early years qualifications and experience. A member of staff has the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2, which another two staff are working towards.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because the nursery staff work closely with parents to share individual health and dietary needs, which are recorded and followed so that each child is cared for well. They are provided with varied, nutritious foods, a choice of milk or water, and water is available throughout the day in individual bottles. Children can rest and be active according to how they feel.

Children show a sound understanding of how to keep themselves healthy as they follow satisfactory hygiene practices as a matter of routine, such as when they wash their hands ready for snack time. They learn that the play areas are kept clean as they tidy up and the floor is mopped to clean up any spills. The nursery, however, does not make full use of the sinks available, which results in unnecessary delay while children line up in the small cloakroom area.

The continuous provision provides opportunities for all children to participate in a wide range of frequent physical activity in which they participate enthusiastically. The staff provide fun outdoor play activities which children enjoy as they have sack races, balance on low apparatus, practise ball skills, join tubes to make hoops, and thread ribbons on the fence to see them flutter in the wind. Children move freely indoors between play areas and move around to music tapes and action songs. They practise fine movement skills and coordination as they use crayons, scissors, paintbrushes, set the spinning top going and peel off tiny star stickers for their pictures. Children therefore learn to negotiate space well and the development of movement skills is well promoted. The quiet book corner in the nursery is well resourced with several big comfy cushions which are popular with the children and allow them to rest. The out of school areas are equipped with large comfortable sofas in the quiet room where older children can rest and relax.

Children either bring packed lunches or have school meals according to parental choice. They enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks during the morning and afternoon sessions which include fruit, such as apples and pears. The menu for school meals is varied and includes nutritious meals, such as sausages and mashed potato with green beans and sweetcorn, which the children enjoy. Water is available throughout the day in individual bottles which are accessible so that children can drink whenever they are thirsty. Older children in the out of school club have tasty snacks, such as cheese on toast. Children's understanding of why nutritious food is good for them is not promoted sufficiently through discussion, displays or activities. Meal times are social occasions where staff members are good role models in encouraging good manners, healthy eating habits and social interaction as children talk with adults and each other. Children take turns to hand out the drinks and make choices about having milk or water. School children have a 'helping with snack' rota to take turns and share responsibility to cater for all children present.

The required records and parental consents are in place so that children receive appropriate care. The staff group is trained in first aid and their level of interaction further promotes children's health and general well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery which is warm, welcoming, bright and colourful. The premises are well maintained to provide a secure environment where children are generally safe and secure. Staff show a generally sound level of awareness, for example, as they are responsible for daily checks of the rooms before children arrive. However, two fire extinguishers are not properly secured and a grid in the outdoor play area is not covered to minimise the hazard. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to protect children. Risk assessments cover all areas of the premises, resources and prior to taking children on outings to help keep them safe.

Effective systems are in place to monitor entry to and from the nursery. Staff closely supervise the collection of children and the routine of signing children out is well established. The ratio of staff to children is often higher than the required standard, so further supporting the safety of children in the nursery through close supervision. Resources and furniture are arranged in a way that enables children to access resources easily and move around freely. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they practise the emergency evacuation so that the procedure is familiar to them, they pull the chair up to the table so as not to fall and make sufficient personal space to play outside safely. Children, however, are not consistently stopped from running through the indoor play areas, which can cause accidents.

Staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and procedures. Child protection is an integral part of training plans for nursery staff which indicates the level of commitment that the nursery has to the protection of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and learning to be confident. Staff are actively involved with children throughout the day both indoors and outdoors. They are skilful in encouraging children's independence, for instance, when choosing activities and fetching resources needed. The good relationship fostered helps children to feel settled and participate well.

Children are able to choose from a wide variety of interesting and stimulating activities planned to promote their overall development and based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the early learning goals for nursery education. Staff monitor children's development effectively through daily observations which contribute towards future planning and ensure good individual progress. Children develop their senses well as they make pictures and models with a variety of materials such as tissue, papier-mâché, glitter and glue. They are surrounded by bright, colourful displays including topics such as 'mini-beasts', which is linked to several stimulating activities, for example, printing caterpillar pictures, making models of a ladybird and acting out the hungry caterpillar story.

Children are involved in much conversation during the nursery day and are encouraged to contribute their ideas at story time as they talk about outings to the park, so promoting their self-expression and confidence. They listen well and respond eagerly to 'how did the caterpillar

feel?' and repeat sounds like 'busy, buzzy bee'. Children learn new vocabulary as they discuss a 'cocoon'. There are many good opportunities for children to enjoy books in the inviting, comfortable quiet area. Children are interested and persevere, for example, as they guide a train through the turntable on the track, and peel off tiny star stickers for their pictures. They learn new skills, for instance, in mixing paints for themselves and enjoy exploring with the magnets and magnifying glasses. Children have many opportunities to practise counting as they count the number of boys and girls at snack time. Staff make activities particularly interesting, for instance, making the water yellow and hiding mini-beast models in the wood chips.

Children attending out of school care enjoy interesting and challenging activities appropriate for their age and skills, such as junk modelling, working with the computer, weaving mats out of paper, sudoku and painting a fun mural on the wall of the quiet room.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of all areas of children's learning supported with a training programme. They create a rich and challenging learning environment. Staff plan well through daily observations and weekly meetings to ensure the whole curriculum is covered and to extend individual learning with effective use of assessments. Children have individual profiles from when they start the nursery through 'entry records' so that staff have a good understanding of individual progress.

The interaction with children is effective with staff being closely involved in children's play where appropriate. They talk with children continuously and ask questions to reinforce learning, such as 'what does a caterpillar do before he turns into a butterfly?' Children are keen to learn, engage in play well and are eager to try out new experiences, such as mixing paints for themselves. Children are familiar with the flexible daily routine and settle very well. They show confidence as they approach adults to ask questions or talk to them about something they have done, such as drawing a picture. Behaviour is very good, with adults acting as good role models and setting boundaries. Children develop independence and self-awareness as they put on aprons and hand out drinks at snack time.

Their communication skills develop well as they speak confidently at circle time and learn to listen to others. There are many ways for children to enjoy books with whole group story time and in a small group. Children choose to look at books for themselves often and enjoy acting out the stories. They recognise some letters by shape and sound but learning is not reinforced through linking letters to sounds and familiar objects sufficiently. They particularly enjoy singing and at times children can be heard singing spontaneously and making up their own songs. Children enjoy listening to stories and respond well. Their vocabulary is extended through interesting activities. They practise writing skills, for instance, as they use resources on the writing table and try to write their name.

Children have several opportunities to recognise numbers and practise counting as they use number jigsaws and point out numbers on the wall display. They often practise counting, such as the number of boys and girls at snack time. However, there are fewer opportunities to develop calculating skills, such as basic adding and subtracting, to extend and reinforce their learning.

Children recognise shapes well through fun activities. They know that the caterpillar picture is made up of circles. They have interesting resources to develop their sense of varied shapes and sizes as they pour water using containers of different volumes along with a funnel to pour through.

Children show a great interest in living things through varied activities based on topics, such as 'mini-beasts'. They enjoy a good range of experiences which help them develop an awareness of the wider community as they learn about 'our favourite vehicles' and celebrating festivals. They learn about past and present and talk about yesterday and previous experiences, such as holidays. Children develop an awareness of caring for others. They enjoy role play and use their imagination well to make up games, for example, going for a picnic. Staff provide a wide range of interesting materials and resources for children to explore, build with and create pictures. Children are able to investigate in fun ways, for example, finding out what sticks to the magnet and what happens when they look at a picture through a magnifying glass. Children's Information Technology (IT) skills are well promoted as they are deft in using the computer mouse and learn how to use the calculator.

Children move around confidently and with increasing control. They have many opportunities to use small and large equipment. Their coordination and handling of small tools is promoted well as they regularly use an interesting selection of tools in the water and craft activities. Children enjoy music through songs, music tapes and by making sounds with musical instruments. They have many opportunities to express their creativity and ideas through a wide range of stimulating resources.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children become aware of their own community through interesting topics, such as 'journeys and transport' as they make a wall chart which displays 'our favourite vehicles'. They have access to interesting resources which reflect the wider world as they enjoy activities based on Easter and the festival of Spring and colour, and see pictures of national costumes linked to countries such as China and Mexico. All children have the same access to all the resources so that each child fully participates. Children learn about the needs of others as they play with computer software to identify 'which part of her body is poorly?' on a picture of a girl in a wheelchair. The nursery works with parents and professionals to give additional support when needed so that all children are actively involved in the nursery day.

Children are well behaved throughout the nursery with staff giving much praise and encouragement to reinforce good behaviour. They learn what is acceptable behaviour through 'class rules' displayed on the wall about not fighting, not running, sharing and being kind. Children demonstrate responsible behaviour as they tidy up and put toys back in place, put aprons back when finished painting, and give out drinks as part of a rota. Children learn to share and take turns as they wait their turn on the computer or to make Mother's Day cards. They work together as they play with the train track and collect the mini-beasts out of the wood chips to give another child for putting away. Children develop self-esteem as their work and ideas are valued through encouragement from staff and their pictures are displayed, such as the butterfly paintings. Older children use their skills to download pictures taken in the

nursery as a screensaver, so adding interest and fun to this activity for the enjoyment of all the children and staff.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Useful ways used to share information with parents about the children's day and their progress include newsletters, display boards and informal chats on collecting children. Wall charts link activities to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the early learning goals to help keep parents informed. Staff create a friendly atmosphere where parents feel welcome in the nursery and can talk informally with staff. Parents speak positively about the standard of care of the children and the activities enjoyed by the children. The systems in place, however, do not at present ensure that all parents are regularly informed of their children's individual progress through effective two-way communication. Policies and procedures are thorough, comprehensive and support the nursery's good practice. Parental consents are in place so that each child receives appropriate care.

The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The good standard of childcare is supported through efficient organisation by the knowledgeable and experienced manager and staff. The manager has clear aims and expectations for children's individual learning during their time in the nursery. Staff work closely as a team to ensure the smooth running of the sessions so that children grow in confidence as they know the routine. The clear management structure supports staff members who know their roles and responsibilities well. Appraisals and a training programme promote the continuing professional development of staff so that the standard of care is maintained well. The good standard of care is maintained for this age-range of children including those attending the out of school clubs.

Policies and procedures are comprehensive and well implemented to ensure individual children are cared for appropriately. The nursery employs a good ratio of qualified staff with others working towards a qualification. Staff care very much about children's welfare and follow nursery practices which protect children, promote their well-being and plan for their individual progress. The recruitment procedure is thorough and well monitored. Staff are well deployed throughout the play areas so that children move freely around while being well supervised.

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

Leadership and management are good. The manager and staff ensure that the Foundation Stage is delivered well through sharing observations and meeting regularly to update planning. Strong leadership helps to ensure that individual progress is monitored so that each child can achieve well. The manager has a clear oversight of the curriculum delivery. She works closely with staff to keep updated with assessing progress made and identifying additional support needed. Staff members are very good role models for children and create a colourful, inviting and stimulating learning environment.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- consider a more effective procedure for children to wash their hands before eating to make full use of the sinks available which meet the required ratio of one sink to ten children
- further promote children's understanding of nutritious food and the benefits for their health
- ensure that the fire extinguishers are secured and that the outdoor drain is covered
- further reduce the risk of accidents by consistently reinforcing the 'class rule' about not running indoors

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):

- provide more meaningful opportunities for children to practise simple calculation such as adding and subtracting, and to practise linking letters with sounds and familiar objects
- further develop systems for sharing information with all parents about their children's day and individual progress

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