



Treetops at Castle Garden

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY101060
Inspection date	10 June 2005
Inspector	Georgina Walker

Setting Address	King Street, Duffield, Derby, Derbyshire, DE56 4EU
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Registered person	Treetops Nurseries Limited
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?

Treetops at Castle Garden Day Nursery originally opened in 1996. It was taken over in 2002 and is owned by Treetops Nurseries Limited and is one of a chain of 16. The nursery operates from what was once a village school in the town of Duffield, Derbyshire and serves the local area and surrounding villages.

There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The day nursery opens five days a week all year except Bank Holidays. Sessions are from 07.30 until 18.00.

A maximum of 58 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 79 children from 6 months to 4 years 9 months on roll. This includes 28 children who receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports children with special needs.

The nursery employs 10 full time and 3 part time staff who work with the children. Over half the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and three staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from Derbyshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). They are members of the National Private Day Nursery Association (NPDNA) and are being assessed for the NPDNA Quality Counts assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene through following appropriate daily routines, such as washing their hands before snacks and meals, and become increasingly independent in their personal care. The spread of infection between children is minimised as suitable steps are generally taken to prevent this. Children have few accidents as staff are very vigilant. The needs of children are met effectively if they do have an accident, as staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and maintain first aid boxes which are readily accessible. Accident records are adequately maintained and generally shared with parents. In the event of children becoming ill staff instigate the very well documented procedures and parents are contacted with the utmost priority to ensure any distress is limited.

Children benefit from the healthy snacks and exemplary menus provided. They are starting to understand why certain foods are good for them and serve themselves with increasing skill. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day, and babies are offered drinks and bottles according to their individual need. Individual dietary needs which ensure children remain healthy, are shared by parents with childcare staff and the well qualified, enthusiastic cook. Children's meals are produced from fresh ingredients and are well presented to ensure children eagerly enjoy meal times.

Children are supported effectively to develop their physical skills throughout the nursery. Staff have a very good understanding of Birth to Three Matters. They have developed an effective programme which promotes challenge and assists in promoting children's health and emotional well being. Children are happy and settled in the environment and rest and sleep routines are met according to their needs. They move with confidence and an awareness of personal safety throughout the premises, which have steps to some playrooms and the toilet area. Daily opportunities to play outdoors are programmed with purposeful activities and children

are able to negotiate competently around others as they climb up the slide or respond to staff instructions in games like 'Let's all do this'. Older children delight in demonstrating skills such as jumping between plastic stepping stones and over a 'tug of war' rope. Regular use of small tools such as scissors and paint brushes help children develop their fine manipulative skills, especially in the under three's playrooms, where creative and messy play is a feature.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a welcoming environment where the playrooms are decorated with posters and some of their own craft work, however this is often adult led or prepared. The children have access to a wide range of interesting activities. These are changed to promote challenge to children throughout the day and are safe, age appropriate and presented at suitable levels to encourage independence and development. Safety equipment for babies and toddlers is well maintained. Resources in the designated rooms ensure children develop safely in appropriate surroundings. They are protected effectively from potential hazards of older children's toys and resources.

Children are secure in the environment, very good security and collection procedures are effectively maintained. Comprehensive risk assessments, policies and procedures create a generally safe environment for children, however staff do not consistently follow these. There is no written evidence of recent regular practices of fire evacuation and fire escapes are inconsistently accessible. This compromises children's safety. Children are safe on outings as the nursery has comprehensive procedures which are implemented effectively either when children are out walking or in the company mini-bus, which has a designated and insured driver.

Children's safety is further assisted by staff who have a sound knowledge of child protection policies and procedures and give priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well in the nursery and have a friendly relationship with the staff. The children are confident and keen to access the range of play activities, such as mixing paint for older children and free painting for younger children. Their developmental progress is maximised, due to consistent staff interaction, monitoring children's use of activities and extensive planning linked to the Birth to Three Matters framework and the Foundation Stage. The children develop appropriate socialisation skills as they join in group activities and move between the age defined rooms in the nursery. Their physical development is promoted effectively both indoors and outdoors during the day. They eagerly respond to the question 'shall we go out to play?' and find hats and know they should wear sun screen to protect themselves.

Children become independent as they learn to sit with support and become mobile,

gradually leading to them accessing resources for themselves as the staff provide age appropriate access and high levels of challenge. The access to an extensive range of messy play activities linked to themes ensures children development is significantly enhanced across many areas of learning. They learn new words about such topics as the sea side as they practise co-ordination skills using paint brushes.

Children's daily activities and developmental progress is well documented and the staff throughout the nursery share information with parents regarding their child. However the starting point for new children is not consistently available to ensure staff know how to promote individual future need or share developmental progress made at home.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and use an interesting range of teaching methods. Children are challenged by staff who use open ended questions to develop potential well during such activities as discussing volume in water play. Planning is generally effective and staff use the stepping stones to identify children's achievements. However the assessment systems to immediately identify the stage which children are at in their learning and what they need to learn next is not yet fully effective to inform future planning and meet individual need.

Children are well behaved and eager to try new experiences and ask questions about how things work or what happens to paint when colours are mixed. They are animated when suggesting their own ideas for play and share them with their peers and visitors, demonstrating confident personalities and good imagination in the role play area. Children are developing good recall as they listen attentively to stories and respond eagerly, by putting their hand up, to staff questions regarding the sequence and content of a story tape. They have a good understanding of maths and spontaneously use their knowledge effectively during play, including language for calculating volume of water and how many can use the role play area at any one time. Children are developing awareness of the needs of others and creatures of the natural world appropriately as they enjoy the varied topics presented by staff. Younger children on visits to pre school are welcomed by the older children who supportively include them in their play. Children's physical development is promoted effectively through the use of an extensive range of small resources and a well balanced programme of activities which can be adapted for indoor or outdoor play. They relish the opportunity to go outside and eagerly join in the large group games. Children enthusiastically develop their creative experiences as they have access to an extensive range of craft, role play and musical activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are respected and treated as individuals, they are welcomed and valued. Staff use their childcare expertise, have ongoing discussions and use information

sheets completed by parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Daily diary sheets for under threes are shared which contain worthwhile information. Increased support is available for children with specific needs and staff work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure the child's needs are met appropriately.

Children are developing an understanding of how everyone positively contributes in society as the staff promote inclusion with language and posters to assist learning. Pre-school children learn many words in Spanish each day, also speaking them at home as they continue their learning with parents. Equality of opportunity is promoted well as activities are adapted to ensure children's needs are met. Their knowledge and experiences are successfully extended as craft activities linked to culture and festivals are included in the well planned activities. However the resources in daily use to positively represent society are limited. Children's understanding of others needs are promoted successfully through discussion and positive routines such as ensuring children are safe in their age appropriate rooms and when welcoming new children who are visiting the next room.

Children develop a strong sense of independence and self worth as they are encouraged to share, take turns, follow rules and listen to others as they progress through the developmental stages linked to Birth to Three Matters. They are very confident in the setting and show a sense of belonging to a wider group. All are well behaved as they accept the rules and respond to the firm and consistent expectations of the staff. Older children take responsibility for order with pride as a monitor in the pre school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnerships with parents and carers is satisfactory. Ongoing sharing of verbal and some written information ensures any changes to children's circumstances can be addressed which contributes to partnership with parents and children's care needs being met. However this does not extend to the child's starting point regarding their development and therefore cannot fully contribute to meeting the child's needs through the planning of activities. Parents receive extensive information about the services provided and have access to comprehensive policies and procedures which staff follow to assist in meeting children's needs. Photographic evidence of the children at play enjoying a wide variety of activities is displayed and contributes effectively to the sharing of information with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are in the care of qualified or experienced staff who support them well to ensure they are happy and settled in the nursery. Good organisation of well planned routines and developmentally appropriate activities, which the children are eager to engage in, ensures children's time in the nursery is worthwhile and challenging. Procedures to follow if staff are unexpectedly absent ensure children's well being is not compromised as relief staff are sought. There is regular support for the management team from the company and EYDCP. The leadership and management of the nursery is good.

Children benefit considerably from the regular training the staff attend and the sharing of new knowledge during staff and group room meetings. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The welfare care and learning of the children is generally promoted through the maintenance of records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision. However some require consistent implementation by the staff, minor adjustment and further discussion with parents.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care and nursery education inspections recommended that the staff ensured children's learning was developed in an number of areas and children had sufficient and appropriate challenge. Staff were to ensure their organisation and monitoring of the safety of the premises was effective.

Under the leadership of the company area manager and EYDCP the setting staff developed a comprehensive action plan, which continues to be monitored and updated. Their efforts to improve the pre-school children's understanding of respect for property such as books, has been significantly enhanced with the introduction of one of the children being a book monitor each session, which works very successfully. Mathematical knowledge is consistently extended by staff, who ensure they successfully integrate language into activities and routines such as counting the spoonfuls of food as children skilfully serve themselves at lunch time. Development of children's gross motor skills is regularly provided in an interesting variety of physical activities and access to increased resources such as stepping stones, which are used competently both indoors and outdoors. The staff have evaluated and successfully changed the routine and as a result the children are provided with good levels of challenge and are encouraged to play an active part in all activities.

Resources to reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability throughout the provision have been specifically increased in the form of posters. Children are developing a greater understanding of society. Staff have also attended training and discuss issues more confidently. However children have limited access to other resources. The organisation of the staff and children at lunch times did not meet children's individual needs. Staff have effectively changed practices to ensure all children age appropriately serve themselves at snack and meal times and have relevant cutlery at lunch. They sit with the children and occasionally eat their own meals to provide good role models and have greatly improved the children's independence. The safety of the children outdoors was not ensured as there were potentially hazardous natural materials in the play areas. An ongoing maintenance plan and vigilance of the staff ensures hazards are regularly removed and children's safety assured.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 there have been two complaints concerning National Standards 1,2,3,7,11,12 and 14. Concern had been raised that there were allegedly a number of

staffing issues which impacted on the care and welfare of the children. Initially the concerns were addressed by the owners who responded in writing to Ofsted but following the second similar complaint an Ofsted child care inspector visited the nursery to investigate these concerns.

The inspector interviewed key staff and reviewed relevant documentation. Observations of the setting were also made during the visit. The concerns were considered against national standards and no evidence was found to suggest a breach in these standards. Recommendations were made by the inspector to help improve the day care service which were detailed in a letter. The provider continues to remain qualified for registration.

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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):

- further promote children's safety by ensuring members of staff follow the comprehensive policies and procedures, especially with regard to fire safety
- continue to increase children's access to resources which promote positive images of society and equality of opportunity
- continue to develop methods which enable parents to share information regarding their child's starting point and ongoing development.

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 the children's assessment systems to identify the stage at which children are in their learning, what they need to learn next and use this to inform future planning

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