

Apple Blossom Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	105825
Inspection date	09 May 2007
Inspector	Anne Legge
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Registered person	Karen Irene Winson
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Apple Blossom Day Nursery is privately owned. It has been registered since 2000 and operates from a cabin-style building on the outskirts of the village of Whimble in Devon. Children are cared for in three rooms, spending part of each day in their own age-groups and some time all together. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

A maximum of 29 children, aged under eight years, may attend at any one time and there are currently 68 children on roll, most of whom attend part-time. Of these, 15 are funded three and four-year-olds. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcomed and supported. The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 on weekdays, for 51 weeks of the year. The manager and six staff work with the children. Five staff, including the manager, have relevant child care qualifications and the remaining two are working towards qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from eating very healthy meals and snacks, including plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Breakfast and snacks always include fruit, and children enjoy a wide range of vegetables, which are grown on site and included in freshly-prepared hot lunches. For example, they eat ham and vegetable risotto, cottage pie or pasta dishes, including carrots, parsnips or red cabbage. Children attending after school are provided with a cooked meal, to ensure that they eat a balanced diet during the day. Children have plenty of fluids, as fresh drinking water is always available to older children, and younger children are offered drinks regularly. Special dietary needs are carefully recorded and met. Children have regular opportunities to be physically active and to enjoy the fresh air. They use the large outdoor play areas twice daily, running freely, riding on wheeled toys or climbing, balancing and sliding on the nursery's good range of play equipment. They crawl through tunnels or use hoops and balls, to develop their fitness and skills. Children enjoy watching the animals in the adjoining field, or feeding the ducks and chickens.

Children are very well protected from infection. The premises are spotlessly clean, due to the nursery's excellent systems for cleaning and checking all areas regularly. Outdoor shoes are not permitted in the nursery, so children play on clean floors. Rotas for cleaning are clear to staff and fully implemented, as are rigorous systems for checking the kitchen and all areas associated with food preparation. Nappy changing procedures are very hygienic, as staff use gloves and aprons, and disinfect surfaces after each use. Children learn good routines, washing their hands before they eat and after using the toilet. They use liquid soap and paper towels, to reduce the spread of infection. Staff are meticulous about washing their own hands, and they use a disinfectant gel after each wash. Children's care is very consistent when they are unwell or injured. Almost all staff have current first aid qualifications. There are very effective systems for recording and sharing information about accidents and medication administered, as well as good information relating to children who become ill when at nursery.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a very safe and secure environment. The premises and equipment have been thoroughly risk assessed, to provide child-friendly facilities. There is plenty of space for children to move around safely, in the three rooms used for their care. Their security is assured, as the doors are locked and the garden is fully enclosed, with a high fence and locked gates. The policy regarding collection of children includes a password system, to ensure that they are protected from unauthorised adults. Children choose from a large collection of toys and resources, which are checked regularly and maintained in very good condition. There is plenty of equipment for babies, including high chairs, bouncy chairs and cots. Toddlers sleep safely on mattresses on the floor, in a designated rest area. Toys are carefully managed, to protect babies from small items, which could pose a risk.

Staff have a good understanding of all safety issues and carry out daily checks on all areas and resources used by children. Gates across kitchen areas and covers for unused electric sockets are used effectively to protect them. Children learn to be aware of their own safety, as staff remind them, for example, not to run indoors, or how to carry scissors safely. Children are safe in emergencies, as fire equipment is checked appropriately and evacuation procedures are

practised regularly. Children are very well protected from abuse or neglect. All staff have undertaken relevant training and fully understand their responsibilities regarding safeguarding issues and procedures. There are effective systems in place to protect children, including the careful recording of all pre-existing injuries.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The youngest children enjoy a satisfactory variety of activities. Babies play with wooden and plastic toys, many of which are brightly coloured or musical. They use puppets made of different fabrics and staff help them to play imaginatively, with games such as 'peep-bo'. They are encouraged to move around and they enjoy using suspended bouncers, to experience greater mobility. They take part in some sensory activities, such as using cornflour and water, but they do not regularly experience a wide variety of materials, to challenge their curiosity. Babies do not have constant access to mirrors or family photographs, to help develop their sense of self and sense of belonging.

Toddlers spend some time with the babies, but they also enjoy planned activities each day, which help to develop their creativity. For example, they use sponge painting to make puppets of frogs and pigs, or they make models with dough. Children share books or complete simple puzzles, with appropriate adult help. They sing familiar songs and use musical instruments, or listen to taped music. Staff have attended training in the Birth to three matters framework and have begun to use it for planning activities. However, resources and activities do not yet provide for all aspects of young children's development, as their sensory experiences are limited. Staff interact warmly and effectively with babies and toddlers, promoting their communication skills and language. Very young children are generally settled and content.

Children who attend before and after school have good opportunities to make choices and to be involved in organising their own play. They choose to be physically active, playing ball games in the outdoor area, or they select from a range of quiet games and resources. They use a computer or engage in craft activities, to develop their creativity. They are able to relax if they wish, but there is no comfortable area in the room they use, where they can read or watch the newly-acquired television and DVD or video player.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff plan a range of topics and activities, which cover the curriculum over time. They have good systems for monitoring children's progress and for using assessment information to set targets for future learning. However, children are occasionally bored, when they do not have access to sufficient activities and resources during free play sessions. They sometimes make good progress, as staff interact effectively with them, using questions to develop their thinking and language skills. For example, during story time, staff ask children to relate events in their own lives, effectively linking the experiences of story characters to their own understanding. However, able children are not consistently challenged, especially in their creative development and in their understanding of numbers and letter sounds.

Children make very good progress in developing a sense of time and place, as they talk constantly with staff about past experiences and places they know. They learn about the natural world, as they take part in topics about the beach, or watch eggs hatch in an incubator. Their learning is sometimes limited, due to a lack of natural resources to explore, such as sand, water and

seaweed. They develop their creativity, as they make models of sea creatures or birds, although this is sometimes over adult-directed. Children do not always have access to a good variety of materials and resources which they can use freely, to develop their own ideas. They enjoy singing familiar songs throughout sessions, and they use musical instruments to explore sounds and rhythms. They have access to dressing-up clothes, and they take part in role play, serving imaginary meals to staff, who ably extend their imaginations.

Children develop their counting skills in a variety of daily routines and practical tasks. For example, they count toys as they put them away. However, able children are not consistently challenged to compare and combine groups of objects, nor to consider one more or less. They do not regularly match numerals to groups, as none are readily available for them to use. Children recognise and name two-dimensional shapes during their play, such as when building models with shaped bricks. They make marks, using chalk boards and white boards, and they begin to write their names, with appropriate support from staff. Children make good progress in developing their physical skills, using scissors, crayons and glue sticks with good co-ordination. They gain control over their large physical movements, as they manipulate the nursery's good range of outdoor play equipment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy consistent care, due to the nursery's very good systems for communicating with their parents. Policies and procedures are shared in detail, when children first attend, and are always available for reference. Settling-in procedures are flexible, to suit the needs of individual children and parents. The youngest children have daily record books, used by staff and parents, to share information about all aspects of the child's care. Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents of funded children receive good information about topics and activities, and are invited to contribute resources or ideas. They are able to fully support their child's development, as they receive termly reports, detailing progress in all areas of learning and outlining targets for future achievements. Children's records are always available for parents to read, and include clear details of their progress towards the early learning goals. Parents feel very well informed and able to contribute effectively to their child's development.

Children behave very well. They respond to the warm, loving environment created by the nursery, and to the positive and consistent approach of staff, to the management of behaviour. Children enjoy copious praise and staff gently support them in developing social skills, appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children know the nursery's clear routines and they respond to the staff's high expectations of their behaviour. For example, very young children are gently helped to share toys and resources, and cuddled when they succeed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn to respect differences, as they celebrate a range of festivals and use good resources, such as books, dolls and puzzles, which reflect diversity. They enjoy a family atmosphere within the nursery and their individual care needs are accurately recorded and fully met. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported sensitively and effectively, as staff work closely with parents and other professionals, to meet their needs.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by well-qualified staff, who are committed to developing their skills, through ongoing training. They enjoy the facilities of a clean, safe and child-friendly nursery, which offers a caring family environment, in which children are nurtured and secure. Ratios are satisfactory and staff devote their time to playing and talking with children, promoting their development. Space is generally used well, although there is no comfortable seating area for the oldest children. Children have access to a large selection of toys and resources, although these do not include natural resources or a good range of materials for sensory play, investigation or creativity.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education and is committed to addressing them. She has identified the need for better resources and a wider range of activities for funded children. She meets regularly with staff and reviews planning and activities, as well as identifying appropriate training courses. She is keen to receive advice and to make changes, for the benefit of the children. Children's care is underpinned by all the required documentation, and there are good systems for regularly updating policies and procedures. However, complaints records and procedures have not been fully updated, to reflect recent changes. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the nursery was asked to update systems for recording medication administered and attendance details of children and staff. Good systems are now in place to record and share information relating to medication administered, so that children's care is consistent. Registers now include exact times of attendance of children and staff.

At the last nursery education inspection, the nursery was asked to improve opportunities for children to make marks and to express their creative ideas. Staff were also asked to review the use of time within sessions and to improve systems for planning, monitoring and evaluating activities. Children now have better opportunities to make marks during free-play sessions, using the recently-installed white board and chalk board. They still lack daily access to sufficient resources to freely express their creativity. Systems for planning and evaluating activities are satisfactory, but the management of time is not always effective in providing a good variety of challenges for able 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.

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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):

- continue to develop practice with very young children, using the Birth to three matters framework to plan a wide range of sensory activities and tasks which promote the development of their sense of self and belonging
- provide a comfortable area where children attending after school can relax
- update complaints records and procedures to include current contact details of Ofsted, and to preserve confidentiality.

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 a wide range of activities and resources, ensuring that all children are consistently challenged appropriately, especially in their creative development and in exploring substances and materials
- increase opportunities for able children to learn about numerals, number patterns and letter sounds, through a variety of practical tasks.

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