

Circus Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101756
Inspection date	23 April 2007
Inspector	Miriam Sheila Brown
Setting Address	Haddo, Pittville Circus Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 2PZ
Telephone number	01242 253222
E-mail	sue@circusdaynursery.co.uk
Registered person	Susan Wilson
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?

Circus Day Nursery was registered in 1997. It is situated in a house in Pittville, a residential area close to Cheltenham town centre. Children attend from all areas of the town and surrounding areas. The nursery has a driveway so that children may be delivered and collected away from the main road. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday between 08.00 and 18.00.

Care is organised over four floors with each floor organised to provide care for a particular age group of children. There is a separate computer room on the top floor and a fully enclosed garden to the rear of the house for outside play.

A maximum of 119 children may attend the nursery at any one time and there are currently 237 children on roll. Of these, 82 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently support some children with learning difficulties.

The nursery employs 38 staff in total. These include the management team, kitchen staff, lunchtime cover and a student. Of the 31 staff working directly with the children, 17 are qualified and eight are working towards a qualification. The nursery has developed its own training centre

and offers a range of courses for staff with its own in-house, qualified assessors. The nursery receives support from the local authority Foundation Stage consultant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children throughout the nursery are developing their awareness of good hygiene and keeping themselves healthy through thorough and effective routines which support good practice. In the baby suite milk feeds are stored safely in clearly named bottles, nappy changing routines are organised to minimise the risk of cross infection and children's hands and faces are wiped with individual flannels. Pre-school children wash their hands at all appropriate times and take an active part in creating their own rules for use of the bathroom areas. For example, a list of their rules are displayed which encourage children to take care when toileting and when disposing of paper. Children independently collect tissues for nose blowing and dispose of them safely. In other rooms children use wipes prior to, and after, eating meals and snacks. Staff routinely use anti-bacterial gel or wash their hands after attending to children. Visual reminders of good hygiene rules are displayed throughout the nursery for both staff and children. All staff receive first aid training enabling them to manage accidents appropriately, and accident, illness and medication policies provide clear guidelines for staff and parents.

Children thoroughly enjoy snacks and meal times. They eat well using cutlery and crockery appropriate to their age and varying stages of development. All meals are freshly prepared and planned on a two week vegetarian menu and take good account of a variety of dietary requirements. Drinking water is freely accessible in all rooms throughout the nursery. Children's knowledge of healthy eating is further enhanced in topic work and planned activities such as tasting a variety of fruit and fresh vegetables and then making a block graph showing their favourites. Fruit 'smoothies' are a firm favourite and tried by all including babies.

Children benefit from excellent opportunities for physical play. They use a wide range of equipment in the garden such as climbing equipment, bikes, hoops, slides, balls and push along toys. Activities such as painting on the flag stones and digging the garden give superb opportunities for development of muscles and co-ordination. Inside older children take part in 'stretch and grow' sessions where they learn about the different parts of their bodies and confidently tap their bottoms when asked where their 'gluteus maximus' is. All children enjoy the soft play and sensory room. Throughout each day children use a range of small toys and equipment which assist in developing their small muscle control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for within an environment where safety is a very high priority. Risks of accidental injury are minimised because staff and nursery routines are extremely thorough and vigilant. Detailed and regular risk assessments are completed for the premises, equipment and activities. An independent company is used to assist the nursery in ensuring these are comprehensive and used effectively to maintain standards.

High priority is given to meeting fire and safety requirements. Regular evacuation drills are practised and daily a record of checks to emergency exits is well maintained. This helps to ensure that in an emergency situation all will be kept safe. Video entry phones and close circuit

television cameras enhance basic routines of parents and visitors being greeted by a senior member of staff and the regular visual checks on sleeping children.

Children have a high awareness of safety issues and are learning about keeping themselves safe. They know they walk in single file on the stairs, holding on to the side and why the safety gates are in place. Pre-school children have recently taken part in their own first aid session when they learnt how and when to dial 999, and the recovery position.

Children have a wide variety of areas in which to play safely including a sensory and soft play room. In their base rooms children develop their independence as they freely access resources which are stored invitingly on low shelves and in attractive storage boxes on the floor. Premises are well maintained and pleasingly decorated with photographs of children at play and large collage pictures. The baby suite is particularly welcoming and makes good use of pastel shades and music as a backdrop to toys, equipment and activities helping the youngest children in their transition from home to nursery.

Children's welfare is further safeguarded and promoted through comprehensive staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. These are clearly documented in detailed policies that are available in each base room.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages are happy and settled in the nursery. They are greeted warmly by staff and confidently join in with familiar routines such as circle and story times and free play sessions. Throughout each day children benefit from using a variety of areas in the nursery, for example, the music room, craft rooms, soft and sensory play and the garden. Staff make excellent use of 'Birth to three matters' guidance to help them plan a broad range of exciting and stimulating activities to help children progress. Activities are organised around a theme, for example, 'people who help us' and children enjoy visits from the local police and road safety unit as well as listening to stories and creating art work connected to this theme. However, displays of pre-printed materials, artefacts or children's work are not used to assist in developing children's imagination or awareness of themed work. Children relate very positively to each other and staff. They play well together and have a firm understanding of the need to respect others, for example, a child took his xylophone to another child when he had finished playing with it, without prompting from staff. All children spend their time engaged in activity. They explore using their senses through activities such as listening and dancing to music, playing instruments, painting and craft activities, cooking, imaginative play with dressing up, outdoor play and construction.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use the stepping stones effectively to identify children's needs and learning styles. The planning cycle is complete and is very well documented in each child's 'learning journey' book, meaning that children are challenged appropriately and encouraged to move to their next steps in learning. The play and learning environment is well organised to offer a variety of play areas, although use of displays and imaginary play resources to support topic or themed work is limited.

Children are making very good progress in all areas of learning and are actively involved in play throughout the day. Circle and group times offer excellent opportunities for them to express their feelings, thoughts and ideas whilst learning about taking turns and respecting each other. Their language is developing well and children use this to describe to others what they have done over the weekend and to act out familiar scenes. Many successfully identify initial sounds in their names and some are writing their names with letters correctly formed. Children count, match and weigh in planned activities and accurately name a variety of shapes whilst having their toast at snack time.

Children thoroughly enjoy exploring and investigating in the garden where they look for mini beasts, grow seeds and find out what happens to paint and chalks on the flagstones. Inside they use computers with growing confidence and play in the sensory and soft play room. Clay, gloop, modelling and painting, form a regular part of messy craft activities, whilst using musical instruments, singing and listening to music, help children to express their thoughts and feelings in a variety of ways.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued as individuals and staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of their individual needs. Babies individual routines are clearly documented and regularly updated with parents and a key worker system helps to ensure continuity of care for all children within the nursery. Parents and children are greeted warmly by staff each morning assisting positively with settling and separation routines. Children are learning about their community and the wider world as they enjoy visits from the police, the road safety unit, zoolab and first aid trainers. Through craft work, meal times, books and music, children celebrate a wide variety of festivals during the year helping to increase their awareness of different cultures and lifestyles. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with special needs are expertly assisted by their key workers and the nursery special educational needs coordinator. Staff regularly make detailed observations to enable them to plan for children's particular needs, visit other settings to aid later integration and attend meetings to liaise with other health professionals. Parents are involved in all aspects of nursery care.

Children are very well behaved and flourish within the clear and consistent boundaries set by staff. They learn about right and wrong as they are encouraged by staff to think of others whilst sharing toys and resources, waiting for their turn in group times and helping to create their own rules for acceptable behaviour. Staff use praise in a positive and meaningful way and provide strong role models for children.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents have clear information about the setting and their children's progress through individual 'learning journey' books. Twice yearly open evenings and written reports offer one-to-one opportunities for parents to speak with staff and also to increase their understanding of the Foundation Stage and stepping stones. This assists in developing parents' interest and understanding of how their children learn. This is further enhanced by activity mornings when parents are invited to come to the nursery to 'play', and monthly newsletters providing information about current topics. Staff are available each day to discuss, informally, children's activities and progress. Parents views are sought regularly through detailed questionnaires and discussion with them demonstrates very strong support for all aspects of the care provided. Staff are welcoming and friendly and children keen

to come to the setting each day. This excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for because staff are appropriately trained and extremely well supported in their work. Minimum ratios are met or exceeded in all rooms throughout the day and support in the form of emergency and break-time cover is in place. The organisation of the nursery into units and smaller age-grouped rooms within a unit, helps to ensure that each child has a sense of belonging without feeling overwhelmed.

All aspects of documentation is of an extremely high quality. Policy and procedure files are displayed in each room and these are comprehensive, providing both staff and parents with clear information about all aspects of nursery organisation. Children's details are stored appropriately to maintain confidentiality and regularly updated with parents. Records of meals, sleep, activities, accidents, medications and anecdotal observations for each child are effectively maintained by staff concerned.

Leadership and management of the nursery is outstanding. The staff team are exceptionally well supported by the manager and the owner of the nursery. They are encouraged to take an active role in organising their rooms, for example, each are given a budget for decoration, toys and equipment, and each member of staff takes their turn in planning activities. Regular meetings, appraisals, induction and training offer staff a firm structure to develop their practice and expertise. Staff plan 'fun days' and social events such as pamper evenings and self-defence training enabling both managers and staff to get to know each other outside of the working day.

The nursery have engaged the services of an outside company to assist them in producing and maintaining effective risk assessments, and employ a peripatetic teacher to enhance children's physical development programme. The local authority Foundation Stage consultant and reception teachers from local schools provide support for the pre-school unit. Recommendations for continuing development are minor and do not detract from the excellent provision. Recommendations from the last inspection have been successfully addressed and a twelve month development programme clearly demonstrates the nursery's commitment to continue to provide high quality care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery agreed to improve the quality of care by clarifying the child collection policy and ensuring that medication records are signed and approved by parents. To improve the quality of nursery education they agreed to develop children's assessments to ensure they fully inform staff and parents of the next steps in children's learning.

The nursery have made very good progress with each of these recommendations. The child collection policy provides parents with clear information about collection arrangements and the procedures taken if a child is not collected. Medication records are signed by parents, helping to ensure they are fully informed if their child receives medication following a request from the parent. Children's assessments are clearly linked to the Foundation Stage stepping

stones or Birth to three matters guidance, depending on the age of the child, and effectively assist staff and parents to plan the next steps in children's development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- develop the play environment to make greater use of displays which enhance planned activities and stimulate pride in children's work.

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):

- organise and use related resources to reinforce focused activities to encourage children to explore, investigate and develop their free play

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