

Toad Hall Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 127720
Inspection date 14 June 2007
Inspector Linda Patricia Coccia

Setting Address 83 St. Lukes Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5AS

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Registered person Just Learning Ltd

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?

Toad Hall Nursery is one of 51 nurseries owned by Just Learning Ltd. It opened in 1996. The nursery operates from the ground floor and lower ground floor of a large house in Maidstone. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 61 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 staff. There are 10 staff, including the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are three staff working towards a recognised child care qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children use a variety of good procedures which help them understand about personal hygiene. There are pictorial reminders in the toilet area about washing their hands, and staff remind them about hand washing before eating snacks and meals. Staff protect children's privacy when they are having their nappies changed. Parents provide their own chosen brand of wipes to avoid allergic reactions. The kitchen area is kept scrupulously clean and all eating utensils are washed in a dishwasher. Therefore, children are protected from cross contamination and infection.

Children eat snacks at break times which are prepared by staff. They choose when to stop playing to eat at the snack bar and have choices of fresh fruit and finger vegetables. Lunches are provided by a catering company. Meals which cater for children's individual dietary needs are pre-ordered by staff after consultation with parents. Food is served in accordance with food hygiene regulations. For example, food temperatures are checked and recorded prior to dishing up. Children have choices about when to eat or continue playing and are offered a selection of food which is healthy and nutritious.

All children use a secure outdoor play area at various times during the day. They have access to suitable climbing frames and ride on toys as well as a playhouse. They are protected from the sun by the use of a parachute strung over the area. The garden area is being developed with soft flooring and there are plans for a more appropriate sail type shade. Children use toys and equipment with great gusto as they pedal or scoot around the garden. There is plenty of equipment to go round. Children enjoy their physical play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the building. It is nicely decorated and made welcoming with displays of children's work and brightly coloured posters of happy smiling faces and different family groups. A good range of safety equipment is used around the nursery. There are safety gates across most of the doorways and socket covers are used throughout. Daily risk assessments are carried out each morning by staff and toilets are regularly checked throughout the day. All toys are well maintained and are suitable for the ages of children using them. For example, in the baby room there are lots of soft floor equipment. Toys are easily accessible to the children as they are stored in safe low level units. Children use equipment which is well maintained, hygienic, easily accessible and stored appropriately.

There are good procedures in place to ensure that all children and staff are aware of the emergency evacuation procedures. Fire safety information is displayed in each room. Drills are carried out regularly every three months or more frequently for new staff, students and children. Every drill is recorded and evaluated to ensure everyone evacuates safely. Children have the opportunity to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

Good procedures are in place to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. All staff attend safeguarding children training on a regular basis. A well written policy is available and Social Services referral procedures and information is displayed in the entrance hall. Children's existing injuries are recorded. Parents are very aware of the nursery procedures. So much so, they usually

fill the forms in themselves. There are also good departure policies in place to ensure children are collected by suitable persons. Therefore, children's well being is promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff are caring and show good concern for children. Children are welcomed into their rooms by staff who show great interest in them and their families. Lots of cuddles and hugs are given to babies. Babies are making good progress as they move around the room looking at and exploring activities. Older children have fun with staff and laugh and joke with them. The younger children are comforted when necessary, particularly when they feel unwell or are teething. Staff discuss individual children regularly to decide on how to provide appropriate care such as food, toileting, or the provision of individual age related activities. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework effectively and all activities used by children can be attributed to it. For example, toddlers who are encouraged to be creative with paint or play dough, are becoming competent learners. Therefore, children participate in a variety of activities which cover all aspects of their development.

However, after lunch, children who are not sleeping or resting, are expected to participate in one activity. This is usually something quiet, such as having stories read to them. Not all children are able to sit still or concentrate for the prescribed length of time. At times children are governed by a prescriptive routine.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children in receipt of nursery funding are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. Children's starting points are assessed and recorded. Staff use the observations on children to decide on their next steps. These individual assessments inform the activity planning. The planning records are full and cross referenced to the stepping stones and the Stepping Forward system use by the group. Each activity is evaluated and shows differentiation between the older and younger children. The plans are easy to understand and sufficiently detailed to allow all staff to use them effectively.

Children are progressing well in their personal, social and emotional development. They are confident and are used to making choices for themselves. For example, they make choices about what to play with as they move freely between play areas. They are proficient in self care such as helping themselves to water and taking themselves to the toilet. They enjoy acting out situations that they have encountered. For example, when the home corner is turned into a doctors surgery, the children use stethoscopes to listen to each other's hearts and bandage their legs.

Children use a wide range of books with a variety of topics, both fictional & factual. Children's listening skills are promoted as they listen to stories on cassette tapes. They ably operate the controls on cassette players and headphones which are readily available in the book area. Both three and four year olds are able to recognise the letters in their names and some attempt to write their own names. Lots of nice expressive language is used by staff. This in turn encourages children to use expressive language especially when talking about their feelings.

Children are competent with mathematical language and use it frequently without prompts from staff. They can easily identify numbers and shapes. Four year olds can identify numbers

out of sequence. Staff and children regularly refer to the clock for timings for activities. Measuring equipment such as pouring jugs and tape measures are readily available to the children. Children also explore and investigate the world around them. Their large project for this term is 'the world'. Children have coloured flags from different countries and have constructed the 'Continents' on a large wall map. They discuss their family holidays, looking at photographs and postcards sent back from their destinations. These are then posted on the map. Children have free use of computers. Four year olds load games and ably use a mouse to navigate around the system. Children are also able to use magnetic activities and use magnifying glasses to look at their developing tadpoles. However, the garden is not used to it's fullest potential to help children see and learn about wildlife.

Children are learning to control their bodies as they use a variety of different ways of moving when playing in the garden. They tiptoe on foam feet and hands which are used as stepping stones. They balance flowerpot walkers and try to hula hoop. Their hand and eye co-ordination is developed as they throw and catch balls to each other and negotiate the climbing frame.

Children are encouraged to express themselves as they use a variety of craft activities such as paint and drawing. They investigate different textures as they stick different mediums to create pictures for their parents. They model with wet sand and play dough. They use musical instruments and enjoy singing well loved songs. A music teacher visits every couple of weeks to help develop children's understanding of beats and rhythm.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from different cultures and different abilities attend the nursery. Therefore, children are becoming aware of each other's differences. Staff have a good understanding about equality and how to promote it. Children use a good range of toys showing positive images of all areas of equality every time they attend. For example, small world figures used in the baby room to books and puzzles showing culturally different family groups for the older children. Children who are less able are well supported by staff. They provide additional aids for children to help them in the daily routine of the group, such as providing large registration name cards for children who may have visual impairment. Children's individual needs are met.

A variety of good behaviour management strategies are in place to help children learn about their behaviour. These range from distraction to time out and discussions with children about undesirable behaviour. Children are polite, well behaved and co-operate well with staff. They help each other with activities and are kind to younger children. They share toys and equipment fairly. They also show concern for living animals. Staff give lots of praise and encouragement to children as they play. Children build good self esteem and play within well defined boundaries. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work closely with parents. They have lots of verbal discussions with parents about their children at arrival and collection times. An informative parent notice board provides plenty of appropriate information about holidays, complaints procedures, and staff qualifications. An attractive display in the hallway on the Birth to three matters framework give parents insight into the system being used to assess their children. Parents report that staff are approachable, friendly and very supportive. Parents have worked with staff to address individual children's needs. For example, using speech exercises which have been recommended by a child's therapist. One parent reported that he had no complaints about the group and was satisfied with the care offered to his child. Children benefit from continuity of care.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents whose children are in receipt of nursery funding report that they receive information about the Foundation Stage. They receive written information and can see information about the stepping stones on a display in the hallway. It explains the current topics that children are engaged in and how they are used to help children meet the stepping stones. It includes suggestions for activities which parents might like to try at home with their children. Parents also report that they have regular opportunities to regularly see and discuss their children's progress with their Key workers. Parents are very happy with their children's progress records which show pictorial as well as written evidence on how children are progressing. Finally, parents report that they are involved in their children's learning. They take a soft toy duck on holiday and photograph it so that the children can talk about it on their return to nursery, as well as borrowing books and reading with their child at home or allowing their children to finish craft work at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provider has good procedures in place to ensure staff working with children are suitable to do so. There are a good selection of policies and procedures in place, from staff recruitment and vetting to dealing with staff discipline issues. The manager carries out interviews aided by other Just Learning managers. Children are looked after by suitable persons. The provider has all regulatory paperwork in place, which is well maintained. The nursery's registration certificate is displayed. The nursery's operational plan is made up of lots of individual documents which are stored appropriately in the office but relevant information, such as staff lists and safeguarding children procedures are displayed for parents. Children's records are maintained confidentially and stored appropriately. Staff are experienced and hold suitable childcare qualifications. Their first aid training is regularly updated every three years. A staff training file is kept in the office and details are also entered on a Just Learning national data base. Children are cared for by staff who are qualified and experienced. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. The provider employs a manager and three supervisory staff who, together, provide strong leadership for the nursery. They ably implement a range of national policies and procedures but are also able to implement the policies in way that best fits their individual nursery. The manager is highly visible in the nursery as she has a hands on approach. The room supervisors meet with her regularly to discuss their individual team issues and the children in their care. The manager is supported by area development staff.

Toys and equipment are suitably provided, regularly maintained or replaced periodically. Risk assessments on the building, toys and equipment are a high priority for the management team. The manager welcomes staff input in to procedures and encourages staff to work as a team. This is reflected in the harmony and ease with which staff work together and deal effectively with children. There are good monitoring systems in place to ensure staff are adhering to procedures and to ensure the Foundation Stage is being delivered appropriately.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider has followed some previous recommendations to improve the provision; to consider recording accidents in a book form; to provide children with better access to available toys and resources and to review resources and images which positively reflect disability. The provider has provided more low level storage which children have access to and has included more images of disability in the small world figures and books. The provider has considered the

recommendation about recording accidents in a book format but feels that as a national organisation the procedures in sending accident reports to the head office, and having easy access to reports via their computer network is sufficient in meeting the standards and therefore, children's well-being is still being promoted.

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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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):

- ensure that children have a choice of activities at all times. For example, after lunch

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):

- consider ways to use the outdoor area to promote children's learning about local wildlife

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