

# Strawberry Fields Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103731
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Patricia Coccia
<b>Setting Address</b>	37 Stuart Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 4AD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 577282
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Strawberry Fields
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Strawberry Fields Day Nursery opened in 1990 and operates from four rooms in a house in Gillingham, Kent. A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 88 children aged from six weeks to under eight years on roll. Of these 40 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 staff, 12 of whom, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two staff working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

The children are protected by the excellent procedures used by staff to protect their health. In the baby and toddler rooms, cups and bowls are sterilised in the steamer before each use. Bedding is changed after each use and staff are robust in their efforts to maintain a clean hygienic environment. All children are accompanied to the toilet by staff as a security measure. Nappy changing areas are situated in suitable places with end partitions to protect children's dignity. Therefore, children are looked after in an hygienic environment.

Excellent procedures are in place to promote children's health. Meticulous records are kept of children's accidents, medication and allergy requirements. Parents and carers are fully involved in keeping records up to date. Cold compresses are readily available in each room to enable staff to react quickly to any minor knocks and bumps. Therefore, children's health is promoted.

Meals are prepared on the premises. Food preparation staff hold appropriate hygiene certificates.

A very varied menu is displayed in all rooms and meals contains fresh ingredients each day. Vegetarian options are available. Parents and staff work closely to ensure that children with other special diets are also catered for. At snack times children sit in small groups, giving them the opportunity to have some social time together. Children are offered a wide selection of food which is healthy and nutritious and their individual dietary needs are met.

Children use a secure outdoor play area where they can engage in a variety of different activities. They happily use large physical play equipment such as climbing frames and ride on toys which promotes their gross motor skills, as well as construction toys such as large interlocking bricks, which promotes their fine motor development. All children have scheduled daily playtimes and different groups of children are often in the garden at the same time. This allows for more social interaction between the different age ranges. Children enjoy their physical play.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The individual rooms are decorated with a wide range children's individual work and larger art displays. Brightly coloured posters and staff photographs help to give the nursery a homely, welcoming atmosphere. Appropriate safety equipment is used throughout the nursery such as stair gates and socket covers. A closed circuit television system is employed in each room to enable managers to monitor the rooms. Staff are constantly vigilant about children's safety especially when they visit the toilet. Regular maintenance in the rooms is carried out at weekends when children are not present. Children are looked after in rooms which are secure, safe and suitable.

The staff use very good procedures when taking the older children to and from school. They use a walking bus system. They all wear fluorescent tabards. The children practise road safety and staff are fully equipped with mobile phones and details of children. Therefore, Children learn about safety when off the premises.

There are very good procedures in place to safeguard children. All staff are expected to renew Child Protection training every three years. New staff are booked on courses as their employment starts. Reliable procedural information is given to parents in the prospectus. The nursery has

a Child Protection co-ordinator and children's existing injuries are fully documented. Staff rigorously adhere to procedures regarding children's departure and the collection of children by nominated persons. Therefore, children's well being is promoted.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are exceptionally caring and show very good concern for children. They constantly talk to the babies and toddlers, showing them toys, how to press buttons and manipulate toys. Babies happily investigate toy boxes by themselves and regularly approach staff for comfort or reassurance. All children are friendly and show real affection to staff, voluntarily offering staff hugs and kisses. They tell staff they will really miss them when they go off duty. Children have excellent relationships with staff.

Staff are professional and have a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework which they use competently for children under three years. Activity plans are well thought out as staff have a very good understanding of how young children develop. All children are involved in absorbing activities, from role play to craft work. For example three crawling babies sat with a staff member and had great fun pressing buttons to make a toy train rotate and play music. The staff member clapped her hands in time to the music and the children attempted to join in. Children participate in a variety of interesting activities which cover all aspects of their development.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children who are receipt of funded nursery education are making good progress towards the Early Learning Goals because staff are professional and have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. Children's capabilities are assessed and recorded as their starting points. Planning is documented and displayed for parents. Regular evaluations of planning help to monitor the effectiveness of the activities provided which build on what children already know and can do. Evaluations are completed in the form of a room book which staff write in daily. Parents have access to this book. The book also contains evaluations of how much children enjoy activities or not and provides some general evidence for the children's developmental records. Practitioners provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. These are ideally suited to the needs of the children and reflect the varied community the children come from.

The children in the pre-school room work and play in their key worker groups. The room is divided between the two groups with each group using one half of the room. Frequent changes ensure that children get to use the full range of activities provided. However, this practise can lead to children's play being disrupted. For example, a group of children might spend most of their time constructing a tent from chairs and blankets, but may not have the opportunity to play in it as they move to the other area when directed by staff.

Children show an appreciation of books as they use the book corner to look at story books and read to their friends. They are able to pick out the letters of their names both from the books and from computer keyboards.

Mark making equipment is made available in home corners and on craft tables.

In-depth conversations with staff encourage children to think and utilise their construction and mathematical skills. For example, three and four year olds work together to construct a camp. They consider how many pegs they would need to secure blankets to the chairs, the best places to place the pegs to stop the blankets from sagging and how to make the camp bigger to allow more than one of them to go in.

Imaginary play encourages children's learning about the world around them and to recall their own experiences. For example, children select holidays from travel brochures and use telephones and mock credit cards to book them. Staff skilfully use the time to ensure that children relate to the activity by asking about their own holidays and their own travel experiences.

Children's creative abilities are obvious as the walls are covered with art and craft work relating to the chosen topics. These range from a Chinese new year display using tissue paper and red paper to printing with paint. Children construct their own special books into which they can paste anything they want to keep their own pictorial records of time at the nursery. Children plant and grow seeds and plants in their own growing area. They tend plants regularly, carefully watering them and watching them grow.

Physical development activities include the use of music and children dance and move in time to it. They learn about their bodies as staff encourage them to drink lots of water when its warm and commenting on flushed faces when children have been running around.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children use a very good range of toys showing positive images of equality every time they attend. There are disabled and elderly small world figures in the small world house and an excellent computer programme where characters are seen at the doctors in wheelchairs and walking with sticks. Many of the books have very good images of race and culture. Staff have a good understanding of equality through attending regular training updates every three years. The nursery has an equalities officer. Children use toys and equipment which show positive images of race, culture and gender and disability.

There are good procedures in place to cater for children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

A written policy covers working with parents and other professionals in order to assess the needs of a child before they are accepted. Due to the staircases within the building, children with walking difficulties would be assessed with staff lifting and safety in mind. The provision welcomes other health professionals onto the premises to visit children. Children's individual needs are met.

There are good behaviour management strategies are in place to help children learn about their behaviour.

Staff use lots of distraction with babies and toddlers. Older children have any undesirable behaviour discussed with them and lots of praise is given for good behaviour. Children are well behaved, kind to each other and co-operate very well with staff. Children welcome each other and invite their friends to 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. Record sheets are given to parents of babies and toddlers daily, but staff also give verbal information to parents as well. Parents reported that they liked this

and the fact that they are fully informed about accidents or incidents. Parent notice boards give additional information about the day-to-day running of the nursery including menus and staff changes. Parents receive a full verbal explanation about the use of the Birth to three matters framework but they do not receive any written material to enable them to study it at their leisure.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents report that they have regular discussions with key workers and can see their child's development records at any time. Parents feel they get involved with their children's learning as they are involved in project work, sending items in for interest tables, or providing similar activities at home for children to practise skills learnt at nursery. However, parents do not receive any written information about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The provider has an excellent range of comprehensive procedures in place to ensure staff working with children are suitable to do so. Full recruitment and vetting procedures are used. Disciplinary procedures are available. A full induction programme is available for new staff and completed over their trial period. Children are looked after by suitable persons.

The provider has all regulatory paperwork in place, which is very well maintained. Her certificate of registration is displayed. Staff photographs are displayed in main hallway. The display also gives parents full details of each staff member's qualifications and the training courses that they have attended. Attendance records are well maintained and show arrival and departure times for all children, staff and visitors. The operational plan consists of a range of written policies from 'Settling children in' to 'What to do if a child is not at school when collected'. Staff deployment and room plans are also available. Children benefit from the provider's excellent range of policies and procedures.

Leadership and management is good. The provider and her management team provide strong leadership for the nursery. She has clear aims for her provision and she strives to ensure children's experiences are good. Although the provider is not always present on the premises she has daily contact with her managers and can look into the nursery at any time through the CCTV system which she can access from home. This allows her to monitor the implementation of procedures and staff practise. She encourages staff to work as a team. They attend regular staff meetings and can offer suggestions to improve practise and procedures at any time. The provider acknowledges that her staff are her best asset. The provider undertakes regular maintenance of the nursery building which is ongoing. Recently new storage equipment has been purchased for toys to give children more access to toys and opportunities to self select from the activities.

Every year the provider monitors the nursery's performance with a parent survey. Any suggestions for improvement are considered and whenever possible acted upon. Overall the provider is very well organised.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The provider has followed a recommendation made at the last inspection to ensure children's privacy in toilet areas. The ground floor children's toilets have recently been refurbished. The three toilets are now individually contained in their own cubicles, which are modern, washable

and fully functional. Upstairs the toilets are soon to be refurbished. Steps have been taken to ensure children's privacy.

### **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):

- ensure parents of children aged under three have access to written information about the Birth to three matters framework

#### **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):

- ensure parents of funded children have access to written information about the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones
- consider ways to give children choice about when they play with activities and move around freely.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)