

Elswick House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218426
Inspection date	17 April 2007
Inspector	Christine Holmes
Setting Address	Fisherwick Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9LH
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Registered person	Linden Ann Green
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?

Elswick House Nursery School opened in 1986. It operates from a wing of the proprietor's home, which is a converted seventeenth century stable block. The nursery serves Whittington and surrounding Staffordshire areas. A maximum of 28 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are 60 children on roll aged from 5 months to 4 years. Of these 29 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery employs 11 members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications, one is a qualified teacher and two staff have many years experience in child care. The nursery receives support from an advisory teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit greatly from the regular opportunities they have to be active in and outdoors. The attractive large garden area is used extremely well to provide children with a wealth of activity and fresh air. For instance, on most days children spend a large part of their day outdoors where they climb, jump, twist, swing and balance on the climbing frame and practice rolling, going through, under and over on large soft play equipment. They ride bikes and cars on the patio area, dig sand in the large sand pit area and push boats along the winding channels in the water play. Indoors children take part in weekly music and movement sessions run by a visiting dance instructor. One member of staff is a designated physical activities coordinator. She plans another two sessions each week where children move imaginatively to music and take part in physical exercise. Taken together these types of activities significantly enhance children's physical development and help them to develop a very positive attitude to exercise.

Children are learning about healthy eating. They pick apples from the tree in the garden and strawberries and raspberries from a local farm and have discussions about healthy foods at snack and meal times. Staff work well with parents to identify and meet children's individual dietary needs, particularly in the baby room. Children are developing healthy appetites. A growing emphasis is being given to providing a healthy diet for children. Organic milk, at least three of the five recommended portions fruit and vegetables and home made meals such as fish pie are served daily.

Arrangements are in place and effective to ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of children becoming ill or sustaining injury. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection. Most staff have attended training events relating to health and hygiene and there are comprehensive hygiene routines in place such as using disposable gloves and aprons to change nappies which helps to minimise cross-infection. Children learn about personal hygiene. They are supported to learn the skills of hand washing and know they must wash off the germs from their hands. This helps to develop their independence and also helps to further minimise the risk of cross-infection.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery provides a very friendly, welcoming, homely environment where children are happy to stay and play and parents enjoy the 'open house' policy. Parents often stay a while when they bring and collect their children to watch them play or chat to staff who are always on hand to provide support and encouragement to both parents and children. There are lots of colourful displays and photographs of children which promotes a sense of belonging. All areas in and outdoors are set out for children to play with a wide range of age appropriate toys and resources which meet their needs. At times during the day older children are able to move freely between in and outdoors. This supports their independence and allows them to initiate their own play and follow their own interest extremely well.

Children are kept safe and secure. Staff are very vigilant to ensure children's safety at all times and the premises are kept secure at all times. Risk assessments are in place and mostly effective, although the current system is not yet comprehensively identifying all potential hazards. Children are learning about keeping themselves safe. They know how to use the stairs safely and to hold

on the 'crocodile chain' when they are on walking trips. Children have regular opportunities to practise the fire drill so that they are confident about the evacuation procedures; records of these drills are maintained.

Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They attend child protection training events and the very clear and comprehensive written child protection policy which is available for parents and understood by staff helps to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the welcoming and caring environment. Very young children benefit from routines which are consistent with their experiences at home. They also benefit from the very individual care and attention they receive from their key worker. This helps them to feel confident and develop a sense of belonging. However, the key worker system is not yet fully implemented for the children moving from the baby room into the large play room. Children's social skills are fostered very well. A number of children have brothers or sisters in the nursery and they are able to spend time together during the day as older and younger children are encouraged to interact and play together. This helps younger children watch and learn from older children and it helps older children develop a sense of concern and care for others. Throughout the day children are often praised. This helps them develop confidence and self-esteem.

Children take part in a wide range of fun and varied activities and experiences. Frequent visitors and visits are planned by the staff. For instance, children make regular trips to the theatre and to a local private estate where they go on nature walks. Parents come into the nursery to talk about their jobs and to show the children tractors and trailers which are used on a local farm. Importance is placed on providing varied sensory play. All children enjoy experimenting and exploring with paint; water and sand in and outdoors which help them represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Children's language and communication skills are effectively promoted by staff through constant conversation, questions and individual attention. Looking at books and singing play a big part of the children's daily routine. These types of activities all contribute to helping children progress.

There are effective systems in place for recording children's progress reflecting the 'Birth to three matters' framework and staff use this to inform their planning and to identify children's next steps, although children's individual next steps are not always recorded.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good, and in some areas very good, progress towards the early learning goals. Teaching is influenced by a strong knowledge of how children learn. Staff place much emphasis on developing warm and trusting relationships. They know the children very well and use this information to link nursery and home experiences. This significantly contributes to children confidence and self-esteem. Staff are also highly skilful in asking children questions which creates a constant learning environment for children where their interests and imagination are fostered. Planning effectively covers all the aspects of the six areas of learning. Activities are well matched to children's abilities and planned to include all children. Children's progress along the stepping stones is monitored. This information

is used to identify children's next steps in learning, although children's individual next steps are not always recorded.

Children develop very good levels of concentration and as a result they develop the ability to listen well and follow instructions which promotes all areas of their learning. They become motivated learners eager to demonstrate what they know and learn more. 'I will show you' a child says as she jumps up from the mat to write the number 15 on the white board. Another child takes out his words to show his friend that he can read them, asking him if he knows the words he does not know. Children's skills in communication, language and literacy are fully and effectively supported. As a result children's progress along the stepping stones leading to the early learning goals in this area is very advanced. For example, children progress to read a range of familiar and common words and identify the sound of letters in their own name and other children's names. They become confident to take an active part in conversations, including French. As a result children are continually extending their vocabulary and their understanding of the meaning of words. Children make very good progress in their mathematical development. They progress to be able to identify which group has more or less and to identify the correct number when they add the number of boys and girls present in the group. Some older children are able to recognise and write the correct numeral associated with the number. Children's curiosity for their immediate and wider environment is very well fostered. They visit local farms to see and handle baby lambs. Maps, globes and children's individual experiences are very well used to help children develop their awareness of the wider world. They have wonderful opportunities to see living and growing things first hand on a daily basis. They watch eggs hatch into a family of quail who now live in a small paddock in the garden and continue to lay eggs, some of which are sent home with the children. Three Guinea pigs run freely in another small paddock and tadpoles in the nursery play room provide further interest as they swim around and change their shape. Children develop their skills and understanding of computers and become able to complete a simple programme on the computer. Designing and making skills are taught to children using a wide range of resources and techniques. For instance, children make large scale papier mache models such as 'Dinosaur Island' and they made a large Stegosaurus from cardboard boxes during the dinosaur project. Children's creativity and imagination is valued and fostered. They move imaginatively to music and acquire a wide repertoire of songs. Daily craft activities provide good opportunities for children to work with a wide range of different materials in a variety of ways.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. They make choices and decisions about how and where to spend their time. They have opportunities to learn about themselves and others through well-planned activities and outings in the local community. They have equal access to a wide range of resources and activities that help them to appreciate the wider world, including celebrating different festivals, role play equipment, books and puzzles showing positive images. Staff demonstrate a commitment to ensuring all children are included and work in collaboration with parents and other agencies to make sure children's individual needs are met. Children are cared for in a harmonious environment which benefits their emotional well-being. They respond well to the clear and constant behaviour boundaries set by staff. They learn to share, take turns and show consideration for others. This helps them to develop a good understanding of responsible behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the very good relationships between staff and parents. Parents are made very welcome. They are invited into the setting to share their knowledge, join in with activities

and take part in trips. Staff spend time exchanging information with them on a daily basis regarding the care of their children and their involvement in activities. This contributes to the continuity of care for children. Comprehensive information is available to parents regarding the setting's policies and procedures.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early years education is good. The nursery has a very informative website which provides parents with up-to-date information about activities, staff's roles and responsibilities and lots more. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress and involved in their next steps in learning through formal and informal channels of communication such as reading book diaries, daily discussions, parent's consultations and newsletters. This approach is effectively supporting children's learning. Parent's views are sought, valued and acted upon. Discussions with parents demonstrate they are extremely happy with the nursery education their children receive.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. Children are cared for by a well-established staff team. Most of the staff team hold early years qualifications. Some have many years experience of child care and there is also a qualified teacher. Staff regularly attend a range of training opportunities, which means that children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation. Appraisals identify areas for professional development to further improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the needs of the children. Comprehensive records, policies and procedures are in place which ensures the efficient and safe management of the provision. This promotes the welfare, care and learning of all children.

The effective organisation of the setting contributes to the high quality of care and learning for children. Younger children's care is greatly enhanced by the effective key worker system which ensures that all their needs are clearly known and met. Children's learning is greatly enhanced through staff maximising play opportunities in the outdoor play area and the organisation of regular visitors and visits.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are good. Staff have clearly defined roles which are conscientiously and effectively carried out. They continually strive to make learning a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which children explore, investigate, discover and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills and understanding.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to make a number of improvements to ensure children's health, safety and learning was fully promoted. A comprehensive action plan was devised by the nursery which comprehensively and successfully addressed all areas. This helped to ensure the nursery's operational plan explains how the setting runs and shows how the needs of children are met. Children's health and safety are now fully supported because all health and safety procedures comply with environmental health and fire regulations. Children's health has been further promoted through the implementation of a robust policy about the exclusion of children who are ill and infectious and an effective procedure to ensure written permission from parents is sought for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and before administering medication to children. Children's safety has been further promoted because staff are now guided by a comprehensive written policy and procedure which ensures appropriate action is taken to safeguard children.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery was asked to improve opportunities to share information with parents about the curriculum and their child's progress. Good improvement has been made in these areas. An informative web site, newsletters and daily reports of activities informs parents about the curriculum and individual consultations, daily discussions and reading diaries ensure parents are kept up-to-date with their child's progress. Staff were also asked to use everyday practical situations to consolidate children's mathematical understanding and develop their independence. Everyday practical experiences such as snack time are now used to consolidate children's mathematical understanding and the organisation of the day fosters children's independence well as they are able to move in and outdoors freely during free play time. Improvements have also been made for staff to discuss planning, share information and identify training needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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):

- continue to develop the keyworker system
- ensure the written risk assessment includes all identified potential hazards.

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 a more formal system of identifying children's next learning steps (this relates to all children in the nursery).

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