

Tortoise Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	208279
Inspection date	31 May 2007
Inspector	Olwen Pulker

Setting Address	Tortoise Nursery, Unit 7, Wrekin Professional Centre, Holyhead Road, Wellington,, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 2EH
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Registered person	Joy Annice Francis
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?

Tortoise Nursery opened in 2000. It is a single storey building situated in a business and care complex, close to Wellington town centre. There are three main rooms for the children and an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery has sole use of the building. A maximum of 42 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday, from 07:30 until 18:00, all year round, except bank holidays and one week at Christmas.

There are currently 37 children on roll. Of these 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also those who speak English as an additional language.

Eight staff work with the children; six have relevant qualifications in early years education and two are working towards a qualification.

The nursery receives support from a teacher mentor from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing a positive attitude to healthy eating as they enjoy the meals and snacks which are provided by an outside catering firm. They benefit from a nutritionally balanced diet where fresh meat, vegetables and fruit play a significant part in promoting their growth and development. Clear arrangements ensure any specific dietary requirements or food allergies are known to all staff so that children are served food that meets their individual needs. They enjoy a variety of healthy snacks including fresh fruit and wholemeal bread sandwiches. Children enjoy sociable mealtimes and are supported by staff in gaining good skills as most use cutlery successfully to eat their meals. Drinks of water are readily accessible for children to have when they are thirsty.

Children are developing a healthy lifestyle as they have regular opportunities to rest and to be active. They enjoy physical play outside in the fully enclosed play area where they develop their coordination and awareness of space as they ride on the wheeled toys, slide and play with balls and hoops. They relish sand and water play and are protected from harmful sun rays as staff position the play equipment in the shade.

Children are cared for within a clean and hygienic environment. In the event of accidents or medical emergencies, children's welfare is safeguarded as a number of staff hold current first aid certificates and there is written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment in place for all children. This consent is available on site so staff have ease of access to it if required. Good procedures are in place for sick and infectious children and staff adhere to a sound nappy changing procedure. These help prevent the spread of infection and help to keep children healthy. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through their daily routines and wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and after messy play and are provided with soap and a plentiful supply of paper towels.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Space is organised well so children can move freely and safely. Children are cared for in well-appointed base rooms and share a toilet area. Nappy changing takes place in a suitably equipped designated room. Children have access to a good range of good quality, well-maintained resources which are developmentally appropriate and stored in low-level units which allow children to easily access whatever they wish during their child-initiated free play activities. However, the baby room is devoid of comfortable seating for staff who may spend a lot of time holding and feeding babies. The outside play area provides a mostly safe environment for the children to enjoy a variety of suitable resources during physical play. However, both drains are exposed and accessible to children.

Premises are welcoming to both parents and children with colourful displays of children's work and posters or information which contributes well to children's safety and well-being. The main entrance door is kept locked and all visitors are required to sign the visitors book. Written risk assessments are in place and staff check safety aspects daily to ensure that children are safe and well cared for. Equipment is checked and cleaned regularly to ensure it remains suitable for children to use. Security and surveillance of children's arrival and departure is effective and an adequate level of supervision ensures children are kept safe. Fire precautions are in place

and fire drills are practised regularly so that staff and children know what to do in the event of evacuation. Timely reminders and explanations from staff about appropriate behaviour and use of equipment help develop children's understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe from harm.

Children's welfare is maintained because staff have undertaken training in safeguarding children. They are aware of the procedures to follow and who to contact should there be any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the group confidently and enjoy their time in the setting. An effective key worker system ensures they are cared for by consistent staff, whenever possible, which helps them settle quickly. They have positive relationships with staff and receive comfort and attention when they need support. They play happily together and with adults, using resources such as threading cards, dressing-up clothes and role play equipment. Musical activities include singing and action rhymes which contribute to children's developing communication skills. They enjoy listening to stories being read and enthusiastically join in familiar refrains. Children listen well and watch attentively as staff show them cards of different colours which they successfully recognise and name. Children benefit from a colourful, stimulating and interesting environment in which they are happy, content and well cared for. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively when planning activities and routines for children under the age of three.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a generally secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and apply this knowledge to plan and deliver the curriculum. Consequently children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Plans link clearly to the six areas of learning and individual activity planning sheets provide suitable guidance to staff about the main learning intentions and how the activity can be adapted or extended for individual children to help them progress. Activities are evaluated to show if they are successful in their intent and therefore inform future planning. Staff undertake observations and assessments of the children and key workers use these to complete a stepping stones profile for each child. These profile books also contain examples of their letter formation and craft work. Staff engage in children's play and challenge children by good use of questioning to extend their learning. Behaviour is mostly managed well and this results in a caring environment for children. However, at times, some children become restless during circle time and their behaviour interrupts the flow of the activity and detracts from others' enjoyment. They are sufficiently confident and content to work and play independently or in groups. Staff interact well with children and provide a comfortable environment in which children are able to learn and develop.

Children are excited and motivated to learn, they join in new experiences with enthusiasm. They form good relationships with staff and their peers which promotes their sense of well-being. Children have some opportunities to develop their independence through participation in routine activities, such as, managing their own personal hygiene and tidying away toys after an activity. However, there are missed opportunities, particularly during mealtimes, for the children to be given more responsibility and independence to progress their personal development. During 'free play' they independently choose from the array of toys and activities stored in clearly labelled storage boxes.

Children are making good progress in early communication skills. Most speak clearly and with confidence; sharing their news during group time and talking actively to both their peers and staff within their play. Children enjoy listening to stories; they sit well and listen with focus. They are able to help themselves to books from the selection available and 'read' to others, turning the pages carefully and showing the illustrations before putting them away neatly. Older children link sounds and letters; they confidently identify flash cards and call out "Freddie fireman" followed by f sounds and "Sammy snake" followed by a sibilant sound. Children have opportunities to practise their writing skills and write their names and form numbers with varying degrees of competency. Some older children write their names clearly in well-formed letters.

Children are beginning to count and use numbers well. Staff extend children's learning by introducing counting during free play and focus activities. Children confidently count to ten and the older ones recognise numbers up to 20 when shown number flash cards. Children are learning to recognise shapes within their environment and make attractive mobiles of three dimensional structures such as squares, pyramids and cones. They become familiar with weights when preparing ingredients for cooking activities and are able to place recipe cards in the correct sequence. Children recognise and match patterns and sizes when sorting socks and paint their own pairs to hang from the washing line displayed on the wall.

Children are introduced to a range of topics that help to develop their awareness of their environment and the world in which they live. They learn about living things as they observe the growth of flower and vegetable seeds which they have planted. They know that plants need water, air and sunshine in order to grow. Children learn about other countries as they plan their holiday destinations and book their tickets through the travel agents. They have some opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) through play equipment, such as, phones and a computer.

Children move confidently and are developing good coordination skills. Some handle a range of tools and small equipment well, such as, cutlery and pencils. They enjoy making displays using a variety of different materials, such as, cotton wool, tissue paper and card to develop their creativity. Their imagination is well developed as they dress up and have tea parties with the dolls, go shopping in the clothes shop and devise plays using the puppet theatre.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children have many opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities. Children have access to a range of play resources such as books, puzzles and small world figures to raise their awareness of other cultures and diversity. There are suitable arrangements in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or children who speak English as an additional language; staff ensure they work with parents and other professionals to meet each child's needs.

Behaviour is generally good with children developing positive relationships with other children and staff who use appropriate techniques to foster positive behaviour. Children receive consistent messages about behaviour and manners and are learning to share toys and show care for each other. Staff build their confidence and self-esteem by offering praise and encouragement and valuing their achievements. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents receive good written information on how the setting operates and have access to all policies and procedures. Verbal feedback and the sharing of daily diaries produced for the younger children ensure parents are informed about what their children have been doing whilst attending. Staff actively seek parents' views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Parents evenings are held twice a year to inform them of their children's progress and achievements. A detailed and effective complaints procedure is in place. The partnership with parents and carers who receive nursery education funding is good. They receive clear information on the educational programme provided for their children. Notice board displays are effective in informing parents of the six areas of learning through written explanation supported by photographs of children's related activities. Topic sheets on the notice board inform parents of the current topic. An 'open-door' policy is maintained to enable parents to talk to staff if they wish to do so. They are kept informed about their children's progress as key workers produce personal profiles for each child, recording their achievements in relation to the stepping stones and including examples of their drawings and writing. The setting encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning by agreeing ways in which they and staff can work together to extend children's learning in areas of weakness identified in the personal profiles. Children benefit greatly from the involvement of their parents in projects, which contributes to their development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. Children are comfortable within a secure environment and benefit from a stable staff group who enjoy caring for children and work well together as a team. Systems are in place to ensure that staff are aware of current good practice guidelines and can develop and extend their experience, for example through training. Staff appraisals, regular supervision, team meetings and a clear management structure all help to ensure that staff remain committed to providing an exciting, happy and comfortable environment for the children in their care. Parents questionnaires help identify strengths and weakness within the setting and are used to formulate action plans to improve the service provided to children and parents.

Most staff working with children have appropriate childcare qualifications and have a commitment to accessing ongoing training. Good child to staff ratios within the toddler room mean that children have individual attention where required and this helps them to develop well. Good procedures are in place for ensuring that children are cared for by staff who have had appropriate experience, enjoy working with children and have completed appropriate checks. Children are grouped according to their ages and level of development in separate base rooms.

Documentation, policies and procedures are organised well and all legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed. Records relating directly to children are stored confidentially and in line with requirements. Registers within the base rooms show the arrival and departure times of children; however, staff sometimes forget to enter the time if children are collected at an earlier time than normal. The manager addressed this issue with staff during the inspection and the register was moved to a more prominent position, clearly within view, near the door.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were several issues raised in relation to the care inspection. These issues related to the recording of children's and staff presence within the setting, the grouping of children with key workers, the organisation of resources, the arrangement for fire drills, the safety of light fittings and the confidentiality of children's records. These have all been dealt with effectively to help ensure that children's welfare is promoted. It was also recommended that a drain be made inaccessible to children. This has not been dealt with and therefore remains a recommendation from this inspection.

The provider was also asked to address issues in relation to the provision of nursery education for funded children. The first of these issues related to staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the planning, observation and assessments of activities and children's progression in the six areas of learning. Another area to be addressed was the information shared with parents about areas of learning and their children's levels of achievement when they join the pre-school room. Finally, the provider was asked to ensure that staff receive regular supervision and to continue to evaluate the setting's overall effectiveness. The provider and manager have successfully addressed these issues, resulting in children making good progress in their learning, parents being well-informed and staff being motivated and committed to helping children develop in all areas.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- promote children's safety in the outside play area in relation to their access to drains
- provide domestic style furniture to meet the needs of babies and staff within the baby room.

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 further opportunities for children to develop their independence, particularly at meal and snack times
- improve the organisation and management of whole group activities so that children's behaviour does not adversely affect the enjoyment and achievement of others.

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