

Heathside Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303439
Inspection date	14 June 2007
Inspector	Susan Patricia Birkenhead
Setting Address	Heath Road South, Weston, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 4QR
Telephone number	01928 560243
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Registered person	Network Nurseries 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

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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Heathside day nursery is one of six day nurseries owned and managed by Network Nurseries Limited. It opened in 1998 and operates within purpose built premises situated in Weston Village, Runcorn. A maximum of 42 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 19.00 for 51 weeks of the year. Children are cared for in age related group rooms and share access to a large enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 50 children aged from birth and five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery employs 13 staff. Of these, nine staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and two staff are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Consultant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is positively promoted because the staff use consistent practices and procedures. The children's understanding of personal hygiene is developing well from a young age as they wash their hands at certain times of the day, assisted by staff when necessary. The older children confidently explain that they wash their hands before meals to get rid of the germs which can make them poorly, and one child comments that they have 'antibodies'. Hygienic nappy changing procedures are followed, surfaces are kept clean by using anti-bacterial sprays and cleaning rotas are in place. The sickness policy shared with parents reflects the effective procedures followed and outline exclusion periods for illnesses to protect children from the risk of infection. Necessary action is taken for children who are poorly during the day because staff comfort them, monitor their temperature and contact the parent to collect the child, where they have concerns. Consistent systems are in place for the recording of accidents and staff administer prescribed medication at the parents' request. Parents acknowledge all entries to records because they sign against them on collection of their children. A number of the staff employed are qualified in first aid, which contributes to safeguarding the children's welfare.

Children enjoy a healthy, balanced and nutritional diet through the freshly prepared meals and snacks they receive. The rotating menus incorporate both traditional and cultural foods. The cook receives information about the children's special diets and caters for them by providing alternatives where necessary. The dietary needs of the babies are well catered for because nursery meals are pureed and parents provide bottle feeds, which are clearly labelled and stored in the fridge. Staff follow good hygienic practices in the main at meal times because they consistently wear protective clothing when serving meals to the children. They discuss aspects of healthy eating with children and talk about foods that are healthy for them. However, during meal times in the under two areas, dishes containing the baby foods are placed on the floor when staff are feeding more than one baby and some plates are positioned on the floor as staff plate up the meals for the toddlers, which poses a risk of food being contaminated. Meal times are a socially interactive time for all concerned. Children sit in smaller groups and staff are on hand to offer support where necessary as they sit with them. Children have independent access to their drinking bottles or cups containing water, which are available and labelled in the rooms throughout the day. At other times, children receive fresh fruit juice and milk.

Children have various opportunities to develop their physical skills both indoors and outdoors, which is incorporated into the planning. They have access to an extensive outdoor area where they access the fixed apparatus. They climb the steps confidently and slide or climb down with control, closely supervised or assisted by staff. They use the wheeled toys and manoeuvre the pedals using their feet. All children take part in the organised sports day where they can compete in the relay race and complete the obstacle course. They develop their finer physical skills as they use tools such as paintbrushes, spatulas, complete inset puzzles and build using the large and small construction materials. Non-mobile babies can freely crawl around the room and staff assist them in pulling themselves up to a walking position. However, there are limited resources in the room to enable babies to pull themselves up to standing independently. Children experience walks around the garden or locally to places of interest, such as the library. Therefore, children learn to develop good coordination and control of their bodies. Pre-school children learn about the effect that physical exercise has on their bodies through the planned activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment because the staff greet them and their parents warmly on arrival and develop positive relationships with them. Many children progress through the nursery and are familiar with the routines. Children are cared for in age related group rooms, which are prepared prior to their arrival to offer a sufficient range of free play opportunities on arrival. There is some consistency in the organisation of the rooms, for example, all children have their own drawer where they keep their pictures or personal belongings. The display of children's artwork reflects a mix of adult initiated activities and opportunities for children to express themselves freely.

A suitable range of furniture is in place in the main to support the care needs of the children, which are checked for cleanliness and safety following the rota systems in place. However, suitable seating for the staff to comfortably feed babies their bottle and sit with those in highchairs as they spoon feed them is not in place. A wide range of play materials to support, extend and challenge children's learning is available. These are changed at regular intervals during the day to vary the children's stimulation. Storage systems throughout are labelled with written word to reflect the content.

Children are cared for within a safe and secure environment in the main because the staff take positive steps to minimise risks to the children, which include finger shields fitted to doors and all radiators are guarded. The entrance to the nursery is secure, and the record system in place monitors visitors to the setting. The garden area is fully enclosed, safe areas are created by using bark and staff restrict children from areas receiving attention, such as the sand pit. However, some items for disposal have been discarded in this area, such as blinds and cupboards no longer in use. Risk assessments are carried out prior to taking children on trips and outings, however they have not been completed on all areas children and staff have access to, and those that are in place reflect very basic information. Children learn to keep themselves safe because staff make the children aware of unsafe practices, the consequences of their actions and they practice road safety. They take part in regular fire evacuation drills, which are recorded and the procedures followed are clearly displayed in all areas of the nursery. However, the kitchen door is wedged open at lunch time, constituting a fire hazard, therefore, compromising children's safety at times.

Children's welfare is appropriately safeguarded because the staff have a clear understanding of their role in protecting children. They demonstrate during discussion the indicators of abuse and the procedures followed for reporting concerns. Staff are aware of the designated person appointed within the nursery and reference materials regarding the local procedures are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, settled and very confident within the nursery environment and on arrival quickly become engrossed in the daily routine and play accessible to them. The good relationships developed with staff means that children turn to them for support and comfort when required. Staff have developed a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and, as a result, the staff plan a broad range of play and activities, which are linked to the framework. They plan physical play experiences both indoors and outdoors daily. Children in the main benefit from the balance of adult and child initiated experiences. However, the

layout of some of the rooms limits children's choices to the play materials that are set out. Arrangements in the pre-school room do not allow children to access materials independently associated with the areas of learning.

All children have access to a range of creative experiences appropriate to their age and stage of development during the planned activities. For example, all children make cards in recognition of 'Father's Day' and some use pasta to make collages. They experience imaginary play, however resources are not sufficiently organised, for example, in the pre-school room the dressing up materials are stored in a large container, therefore children cannot see clearly what is available. The toddlers explore the environment and access play materials available on the carpet area, such as play foods and activity toys. Staff are on hand to support the children's play and readily read books to children when approached. The babies explore the musical instruments and the sounds they make as they shake the maracas and jingle the bells with enjoyment. The small treasure basket allows the babies to access more natural materials, and non-mobile babies are stimulated by the mobiles they can see, responding with gurgles and smiles.

The 'calendar of events' displayed refers to planned events, such as the annual trip which parents can attend, the sports day organised and the sponsored walk in aid of a charity the nursery supports. Positive procedures are in place for the settling in of the children initially and introductory sessions are agreed with parents. Children receive appropriate support in the transition to the nursery, when moving to another room and eventually on to school. For example, parents are consulted at each stage and the children's developmental records are passed on to the room leaders as children move from one room to another. Children's learning journeys are completed for all children who attend which outline their abilities from a young age when children have progressed through the nursery and this leaves with them on entering school.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some of the staff have only recently been deployed to the pre-school room and as a result are currently becoming established. They are currently working closely with the pre-school room leader to establish practices and procedures. All staff are involved in the planning of activities to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for children, which are linked to all areas of learning. However, opportunities to extend the children's learning in the outdoor area are not maximised. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, however, their questioning skills to promote children's thinking and challenge their learning are not fully deployed. Children have individual files which include examples of their work, which are in the main annotated and dated, however these are not linked to the areas of learning. Systems for completing observations on the children are in place, however entries are minimal and for some children no observations have been completed. Some activities are evaluated, however, the procedure is not followed consistently and information recorded lacks detail. Therefore, it is not clear how such information contributes to the next steps in children's learning and the planning of activities.

Children form very good relationships and their communication skills are developing well. For example, one child explains he is 'sitting with his friend whilst he finishes his snack so he won't be lonely'. Two children play well together imaginatively in the sand tray and are responsive to ideas and suggestions each other make. During circle times, children are attentive and recall aspects of the story they know well. They discuss what they want to be when they grow up as staff ask them individually, one child is confident to say 'can you come back to me' because he wants to think about it. They show consideration for others and develop their self-help skills

as they serve out the plates and beakers at snack time, and attempt to pour their drinks with staff support. Children have sufficient access to written words around the room and techniques used encourage children to progress from copying their name and tracing the dots, to writing their names without prompts during planned activities. Some children confidently sound out letters associated with their name and identify where such letters appear in other children's name cards. However, their independent writing skills are not encouraged because children do not have access to mark making materials independently during play.

Children are developing an awareness of mathematics in the main through planned activities. They measure themselves against the height chart and staff record how tall they are in centimetres. They spontaneously hold up two fingers to demonstrate how many pieces of toast they have had and recall how they have one left because they have eaten one. They confidently name familiar shapes when asked and have access to mathematical equipment to support their learning. However, children show little interest in the mathematical area and opportunities to extend children's learning of number during every day situations are not fully explored. Children in the main are developing knowledge of the world around them through the activities planned. For example, displays show the solar system and planets children have painted and they plot on the map of the world where they go for their holidays. Children recognise aspects of the local community as they talk about the school they will attend being 'near the fire station, but a long way away from' another child's house. Children develop their understanding of technology as they regularly access the computer individually or in pairs. They have access to a tape recorder, although this is not readily available for them to use independently.

Children have access to various creative materials during planned activities. For example, they display pictures of themselves made from paper plates, using collage materials and use shaped sponges and potatoes for printing. They choose colours by name as they paint, recognising primary colours as well as purple and pink. They express themselves freely as they draw pictures of what they want to be when they grow up as part of a planned activity conducted with them individually.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are included in the activities provided. Staff develop knowledge of their individual needs and circumstances through information obtained from parents. Therefore, promoting a consistent approach to their care. Children are treated with equal respect and have equal access to play materials without stereotyping. Good quality play materials are available to represent positive images of diversity to extend children's learning, these include jigsaws, books and play people to reflect race and disability. Staff extend children's understanding of the wider world through the celebration of cultural festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Easter. They complete creative activities, take part in the 'Easter hat parade' and sample cultural foods associated with the festival. The policy in place supports and welcomes children with learning difficulties or disabilities into the setting. If necessary individual educational programmes are agreed with parental consent and support from outside agencies.

Children behave well and learn about appropriate behaviour through the subtle staff intervention. Minor squabbles are successfully resolved. They apologise when their behaviour affects others both spontaneously and when reminded by staff. They receive regular and consistent praise and encouragement from the staff for their good behaviour and achievements. This has a positive impact on their self-confidence and self-esteem. Children learn to share and cooperate, for example, they take turns using the computer and allow others to play with the shopping

trolley. They respond to staff requests for assistance in tidying away toys and develop their manners well. As a result, they are polite and show respect to staff and others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the satisfactory exchange of information between the nursery and their parents or carers to ensure their needs are met. They have access to suitable information regarding the setting which includes the written policies, during the initial visit, which they sign to say they have read and the terms and conditions, which includes some policies. The display of information around the nursery in the main makes them aware of the activities planned, some staff qualifications, events and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum is shared verbally during the initial visit and no information is on display. Parents and carers receive written or verbal information regarding their child's day depending on their age. Procedures for including parents in the children's assessments are currently being developed because the current approaches are inconsistent. For example, some parents of the children under three have read and made comments to their child's assessment records, however there is little evidence of this for the children in the pre-school room. Opportunities for parents to extend the children's learning at home are not built on in the pre-school room, however, the recent introduction of parents evenings provides opportunities for staff to discuss children's developmental progress and the work they complete. Parents comment that they are happy with the care and education their children receive particularly following the recent changes. They value the support offered and are confident to approach the manager or staff if necessary.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are protected because of the suitable recruitment and selection procedures followed when appointing staff, which includes the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Staff are aware that persons employed and going through this clearance cannot have unsupervised access to children. Staff training records are in place, however additional short courses attended recently are minimal. Some in-house training during staff meetings reinforces the National Standards, practices and procedures, such as meal times. Staff complete an induction period and have access to the written policies and procedures. The nursery employs a good ratio of qualified staff and others are in the process of working towards a qualification. However, due to the recent re-organisation of the staff team, there are no qualified staff appointed to the baby room, although the staff in this room are very experienced. The manager confirmed she is aware of this and it is to be addressed within the very near future.

The written policies and procedures in place, in the main, contain detailed information relating to the nursery practices. These are reviewed and contribute to the operational plan in place. All legally required documentation that contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is in place and, in the main, consistently completed by staff and available for inspection. However, the attendance registers within the group rooms do not always accurately reflect children completing introductory visits to other rooms.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed manager is clear about her role, delegates individual responsibilities to other members of staff and is committed to the continuous development of the setting. She values the input she receives from the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and is working on advice received. She is aware of the need to further develop areas of practice and plans to monitor more closely aspects such as the completion of children's assessments and observations, to ensure a consistent approach is maintained. Staff

appraisals are planned to take place twice annually, staff meetings are held monthly and records in place reflect the content of discussions. In addition, meetings with senior staff and company directors take place regularly.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

During the last inspection, recommendations were raised. The provider was asked to give attention to the following aspects: documentation regarding children's dietary needs and the visitors record; the provision of appropriate play opportunities for the children's ages; and to ensure equipment for sleeping children is suitable and that toys and equipment are stored appropriately. Since the last inspection, staff are made aware of the children's dietary needs, record systems are held within the rooms and alternatives to the meal are provided to ensure the children's needs are met. All visitors to the setting are monitored and details are recorded in the visitors book to maintain children's security. Appropriate play materials are set out which are suitable for the children's ages and stages of development. Some play materials are stored in the group rooms and others are accessible from the central store. Floor mattresses, travel cots and individual bedding are in place to enable children to sleep in comfort in their rooms, therefore, developing practices within the setting to meet the needs of the children.

During the last education inspection, the provider agreed to formalise plans to ensure the curriculum remains broad and balanced in all the areas of learning. The pre-school rooms now use long, medium and short term plans, which are linked to the Foundation Stage and all areas of learning, therefore, providing a broad and balanced curriculum. In addition, the provider agreed to encourage parents to contribute to the children's assessments and provide children with free access to activities, such as paint, sand water and play dough, so that they can consolidate their learning. However, since the last inspection there have been recent changes to the staff working in the pre-school. Sand or water are provided daily, children paint as part of the planned activities and therefore, do not have free access. The procedures followed to ensure parents contribute to the children's assessments are being developed, as a result, further recommendations have been raised during this inspection.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- provide appropriate seating for staff in the baby room to enable them to bottle feed babies comfortably and sit with others in highchairs. Ensure hygienic procedures are followed when serving meals to avoid contamination of foods
- ensure fire safety is adhered to with specific reference to the kitchen door and ensure discarded items in the outdoor play area are removed
- review the layout of the rooms to further promote children's independent access to resources associated with the Foundation Stage curriculum and the 'Birth to three matters' framework (this also applies to the education inspection)
- ensure accurate details are recorded in the individual room attendance registers and make sure 50% of qualified staff are employed in 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):

- extend opportunities for children to use mathematical language in everyday situations and develop the outdoor area to provide a more effective learning environment for children
- review the current procedures for completing children's assessments, observations and evaluation of activities to ensure they are completed regularly and used to inform the planning of activities, recognising the children's next steps in their learning
- review the procedures for informing parents of the Foundation Stage curriculum and further develop ways for parents to extend children's learning at home and contribute to the children's assessment records.

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