

# General Day Nursery & After School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	315420
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Rowley
<b>Setting Address</b>	42-50 Sherdley Road, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA9 5AB
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<b>Registered person</b>	Helen Dew
<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?

General Day Nursery and After School is privately owned. It opened in 1996 and operates from six rooms within a converted church hall on the outskirts of St. Helens town centre. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area. Children come from a wide catchment area. A maximum of 96 children may attend at any one time.

The nursery is open every week day from 07.30 till 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. The out of school operates from 15.00 till 18.00 in term time and 07.30 till 18.00 during the holidays. There are currently 94 children aged from three months on roll. This includes children up to the age of 11 years who attend the out of school and holiday club. There are currently 21 children who receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports a small number of children with learning difficulties.

The nursery employs 16 staff including the manager, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

A range of effective procedures help protect children's health and mostly consistent hygiene practices are implemented. Staff use protective clothing in addition to anti-bacterial spray and hand gel when nappy changing. They ensure that all bedding is laundered between individual uses and they make up infant feeds with care. Robust procedures ensure the safe administration of medicines and sufficient numbers of staff hold a current first aid certificate.

Staff use guidance from the 'Birth to three matters' framework well, to promote children's emotional well-being. Babies sleep and feed in accordance with their own routines and preferences. Their main care is undertaken by a key worker who knows their health needs in detail.

Children are learning about being healthy. They exercise for short periods each day in the fresh air and sunlight, and babies sleep outside safely. Children use the range of equipment very confidently. They balance on the logs, run up the steps on the slide and ride the trikes at speed. They refine their movements during audio-taped music and movement sessions. Staff make good attempts to provide a range of activities outside, however, the area is not used to provide opportunities for learning across all areas of the curriculum.

All children have a diet including many healthy options. Fruit and vegetables are provided each day and all meals are prepared on the premises using fresh ingredients. This enables all children, including young babies, to eat the full compliment of nursery food. Children's tastes are extended because they are provided with regular food tasting activities, where they can try, for example, kiwi fruit, coconut and pineapple.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in adequately maintained premises. Some areas of the nursery are made bright and welcoming to children through attractive displays of children's artwork, posters and ceiling hung mobiles, which provide stimulation at all levels. Children have ample space to play freely and spread out their activities. However, space is not always used effectively to meet children's developmental needs, for example, when pre-school aged children are cared for in the toddler room.

Many good quality resources are available throughout the nursery and are updated regularly to support themes of learning and to sustain children's interests. However, in some areas the equipment is poorly presented and is unappealing to children. Additionally, despite a good range of quality large equipment based in each room, children's free choice is limited because it is frequently stored at the sides of the room and is often unavailable for play. Sufficient developmentally appropriate equipment is available for older and more able children, although their physical skills are unchallenged in the outside area.

Attention to safety is generally good. Children's security is given high priority. Close circuit television is used at key entrance and exit points and staff are vigilant regarding authorised persons to collect the children. Everyone is familiar with emergency evacuation procedures because they are practised regularly. Routine servicing of electrical equipment and fire servicing equipment takes place.

Children are suitably safeguarded. Staff are clear about procedures to follow in the event of concerns, and the management team have a working knowledge of child protection issues and procedures.

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

The provision is good.

All children are settled in the nursery. Many have formed secure relationships with their key workers who know them well. Informally, staff know what children can do. Through play and everyday interactions they provide many opportunities, which help them make progress in their own unique ways. The written assessments, next steps and planning of activities, however, are not as focussed. Babies are nurtured and staff spend time giving them a cuddle when needed. Older and more confident children readily tell their carer ' I love you', which is readily reciprocated.

Most children receive a wide range of interesting activities and experiences. Many activities promoting sensory stimulation are provided and encourages babies and young children to explore. All children enjoy regular stories. Children under two years join in and know which animal comes next when listening to 'Dear Zoo'. The youngest babies become skilful communicators at an early age because staff talk to them continuously with an animated tone of voice.

#### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Key staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage. They provide an interesting range of meaningful activities linked to a theme, which helps reinforce learning. They ensure breadth by planning across all areas of learning for each theme. Staff know their children well. They know what individual children can do and prioritise future learning needs, although, they do not focus on these in their planning. Occasionally, more able children lack challenge because focussed activities lack differentiation.

Most children develop independence as they make choices. They access a good range of continuous provision, which is regularly re-designed to sustain children's interests. For example, the role play area changes with each theme, the water play often contains different items and mark making takes a wide range of forms. With guidance, children set the table for lunch. They complete self-care routines in the bathroom, including brushing their teeth after lunch.

More confident children are effective communicators and ask lots of questions. They understand that print carries meaning and see the written word all around their environment. More able children recognise their written name and with encouragement make good attempts to write their names. They are beginning to form some recognisable letters. Children use number in everyday language and confidently sing a range of counting songs. They know the names of some complex shapes, such as hexagon, because staff introduce them to shapes in the environment. Children are creative and many draw recognisable images with detail. They independently experiment with paint noticing change when they mix colours. They show keen interest and want to experiment more, which is encouraged and supported by staff who follow their interest and enthusiasm.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed into the nursery. Staff know about any additional needs and communicate closely with parents and external agencies to ensure any identified needs are met. Almost all children's needs are fully met. Staff know individual children well and are responsive to their likes and dislikes. A small number of children, however, do not always receive equality of opportunity when, due to organisational difficulties, they are not consistently cared for in one group or base room. In several areas of the nursery children receive many positive experiences of diversity. They see attractive posters within their room detailing positive images of different cultures and disability. Older children also explore traditions and languages as they taste croissants and learn to sing 'heads shoulders knees and toes' in French.

Generally, children behave well and in accordance with their ages and stages of development. Staff reward wanted behaviour appropriately. Children know when they have done well and applaud themselves. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour which ensures that, for example, they use their manners impeccably. However, on occasions expectations exceed children abilities and minor negative behaviours are reinforced when staff draw too much attention to it. This sometimes hinders the development of self-confidence. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Effective verbal and written communication with parents ensures that information about children's needs is shared. Informative nursery brochures are shared with parents as their child progresses through nursery. This clearly informs them about how each room operates. Clear contractual agreements are in place including a comprehensive range of written parental permissions.

The partnerships with parents of children receiving funded nursery education is good. In addition to a comprehensive nursery prospectus detailing how the Foundation Stage curriculum is provided, parents receive a good range of on-going information. Daily activity sheets are displayed. Parents are also encouraged to become involved in children's learning through suggestions of activities to do at home in newsletters linked to each theme. Parents receive regular opportunities to review their child's progress and to contribute to considerations for future learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are settled and confident in their relationships with a consistent staff team. All staff hold suitable early years qualifications and many exceed minimum requirements. Some staff show commitment to enhancing their knowledge and skills, although there is currently no system of ensuring that identified areas for development are followed up, including the updating of some first aid certificates. Clear recruitment and selection procedures ensure that safe, suitably experienced staff are employed to work with the children.

The leadership and management of the funded nursery education is good. The management team understand how children learn. Through regular observations of sessions, examinations of written plans and assessments of children's progress, they develop a practical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in relation to the quality of teaching. The quality is maintained because they evaluate effectively and take action where necessary.

All required records are maintained. Additionally, a comprehensive operational plan is in place and is regularly reviewed. Further documentation kept in the interests of good practice, for example, daily diaries for babies, sleep checking charts and admission questionnaires, ensures that the needs of children are known and met.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the last inspection, two recommendations were given in relation to the safety of medication administration and sleeping toddlers. Medication procedures and the documentation used to support them have been improved to ensure that parents give written parental permission with appropriate administration details. Along with staff vigilance, the procedures for administering medicines are considerably improved. Children's safety has also been improved because the nursery has implemented a sleep checking system for all children to use alongside the listening monitor.

The provider was also asked to consider improving one issue in relation to its nursery education provision. As a result, children's exploratory impulses are developing. They investigate some natural materials, such as pebbles and shells in the sand tray and they observe the growth of seedlings. Some opportunities are provided outside as children balance on logs, although the range of outdoor opportunities across all areas of learning continues to be an area for development.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Ofsted received concerns in relation to National Standard 1 - Suitable Person. The concerns were originally shared with another agency. The Compliance, Investigation and Enforcement Team then contacted the provision. The provision provided an investigation response regarding the concerns raised. Ofsted are satisfied that the provider remains qualified for registration.

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 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):

- improve the use of space and resources to ensure that children have access to an attractive range of continuous provision suitable to their ages and stages of development

- improve the methods used to manage children's behaviour so that positive behaviour is focussed upon and children's self-confidence raised
- improve staff development systems to enhance staff skills in identified areas and to keep staff certificates, such as first aid, regularly updated.

### **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 use of the outdoor area to enhance learning across all areas of the curriculum
- continue to develop clear links between assessments of children's learning, identified next steps and plans which differentiate to provide challenge for more able children.

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)