

# School House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | EY292597   |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 14 June 2007                                       |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Janice Linsdell                                    |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Michelle McMaster                                  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated   |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](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 outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

School House Nursery first opened in 1995, but re-registered in 2004 following a change of ownership. The nursery is privately owned and operates from the old school house situated adjacent to Delamere Primary School in the Kelsall area of Cheshire. Children have access to three main play areas on the ground floor and a dining room located on the upper floor. There is also a separate baby unit to accommodate children under two years. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00, all year round. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 42 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for nursery education.

The nursery employs 10 members of staff including the manager. Of these, nine hold appropriate qualifications in early years. The manager holds a degree in early childhood studies and she has recently achieved Early Years Practitioner status (EYP).

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Staff promote children's good health very well and make sure they are cared for in a clean and healthy environment. They consistently follow hygienic nappy changing procedures and make sure the children's bathroom is cleaned after use. Additional domestic staff attend every evening to help keep the premises clean and well maintained. Children routinely wash their hands at appropriate times and understand why this is important. Staff frequently talk to children about how and why we need to keep healthy. This helps them to develop a positive attitude to their health and well-being. Most of the staff are trained in first aid, which ensures children's accidents are dealt with appropriately.

The quality of food provided for children is excellent. The weekly menus have been reviewed and amended by a qualified dietician. This means children benefit greatly from eating lots of home cooked, very healthy and nutritionally balanced foods, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. All staff are trained in basic food hygiene, which further safeguards children's health. Children develop a good understanding and awareness of healthy eating because staff consistently talk about certain foods that benefit their health and give them energy. Children independently help themselves to fresh drinking water and enjoy pouring drinks for their friends during outside play.

Children really enjoy a wide range of physical activities to promote their fitness, strength and skills. For example, they benefit from weekly sessions, such as 'stretch and grow' and 'world of music', where they enjoy music, movement and dance. Staff are beginning to introduce 'free flow' between indoors and outside so that children can choose where they want to play. The outdoor areas are well equipped and there are plans in place to continue developing these areas to further promote children's play and learning. Children have space to run, climb, and balance using various equipment. They enjoy playing with water, drawing with chalks and learning to peddle the wheeled toys. Staff make sure children wear sun cream and sun hats to protect them during warm weather.

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

The provision is good.

The nursery is small, homely and welcoming for children and parents. The premises offer appropriate facilities for children, with clearly defined play areas which are well organised and very inviting. Children have easy access to an extensive range of high quality toys and play materials, which are kept safe and in good condition. The new safety surface in the outdoor area enhances children's safety and reduces the risk of injury when they are playing outside.

There are very effective procedures in place to ensure hazards to children are minimised. For example, all safety certificates for the building are available to confirm the premises are safe and well maintained. Ongoing risk assessments and daily safety checks are carried out, and staff are alert and responsive to minor trip hazards. Staff give high priority to children's safety and carefully monitor their whereabouts as they move in and around the premises. They closely supervise the children when using the stairs and remind them to hold onto the hand rail. Children develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe because staff frequently talk about dangers and allow children to take some controlled risks in a safe environment.

Children's welfare is very well safeguarded because there are detailed procedures in place to help keep children safe from harm. All staff have completed child protection training and demonstrate a clear understanding of their role in protecting children. Existing injuries are recorded and monitored, and staff will take appropriate action if they identify any concerns relating to the children's welfare.

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

The provision is good.

Staff implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum very well to plan a wide range of play opportunities for the children, which are fun, exciting and purposeful. They are beginning to collate files of evidence to demonstrate how children are learning and developing through play. These include many photographs of the children involved in activities, such as baking, reading, construction, and a variety of art and crafts.

Children are well supported and the relationships between staff and children are excellent. This is because staff are very caring and responsive to children, showing sensitivity and understanding to their individual needs and circumstances. As a result, children are very happy, secure and enjoy their time at the nursery.

Children are busy and enjoy all aspects of their play. For example, they express their creative skills as they use various materials to make their own pictures and build their own models. They use their imagination well as they play with the small world toys and use the good range of dressing up clothes. Children particularly enjoy outside play as they paint the fence with water, search for bugs and examine the different shells in the water tray. Children participate in a variety of sensory experiences, such as exploring the different textures of sand, water, paints and jelly. Babies are encouraged to explore their environment and enjoy playing with the water bottles and handling interesting items in the treasure baskets.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and children are beginning to make excellent progress in all areas of learning. Children show much interest in the learning environment and settle quickly into the activities on offer. They concentrate very well on tasks, particularly during circle time as they listen to staff, follow instruction and respond to questions. Children are making friendships and learning to play cooperatively; taking turns and praising one another for their efforts. They are learning to be independent because they are encouraged to try things for themselves. Children's language skills are developing very well because staff are excellent at talking with children, asking meaningful questions and encouraging children to talk about what they are doing. Children have many opportunities to practise their writing skills in a variety of ways. Their interest in books is actively encouraged both indoors and outside, and they listen intently to stories read by staff.

Children make very good progress in their physical development. They learn about keeping healthy because staff give high priority to children's diet and make sure they have plenty of exercise. Children demonstrate their coordination skills as they peddle, climb and balance using various equipment. They show increasing control as they competently use small tools, such as scissors, pencils, glue spreaders and paint brushes. A wide variety of attractive wall displays around the nursery show very good examples of children's individual creativity, and children freely express themselves through music, dance and song.

Children are developing an understanding of mathematics, for example, as they discuss numbers, weights and patterns. They eagerly join in with counting songs and readily use mathematical language to describe size, shape and position. Children access information technology to enhance their learning and show skill as they use the computer to complete educational programmes. They learn about the natural environment and the wider world through a wide range of planned activities and outings.

The manager takes overall responsibility for the delivery of the nursery education programme and her knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum is excellent. She works closely with key workers to maintain an overview of children's progress, so that any gaps in their learning are quickly identified and addressed. Staff take great care to ensure the learning environment is inviting and stimulating for children. They offer many practical activities to encourage children to learn using all their senses.

Planning systems are meticulous and carefully linked to the stepping stones to ensure all areas of learning are fully promoted. Plans are evaluated frequently to make sure they continue to meet the individual needs of the children. Observations are consistently carried out by all staff and used very effectively to inform assessments and future plans. Staff review and evaluate children's progress on a monthly basis and clearly identify the next steps in their learning. Folders containing information about children's individual 'learning journeys' are beautifully presented and highlight their ongoing progress and achievements.

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

The provision is good.

Staff know all the children and their families very well, which enables them to provide individual care according to their needs. Children have access to some good quality resources and play materials that reflect positive images of culture and disability, and take part in topics, such as 'food from around the world'. This promotes their awareness and understanding of diversity. Staff are able to demonstrate through discussion how children with learning difficulties or disabilities are appropriately supported and included.

Children's behaviour is good and they learn how to share, use good manners and be kind to their friends. They make lots of choices in their play and they are keen to help with small tasks, such as tidying away resources and serving snacks. Staff offer plenty of praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour and they help children to understand the consequences of their actions. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and significantly enhances the children's care and education. Parents are valued and made to feel very welcome. They are actively involved in supporting the children's learning, for example, by becoming involved in planned topics and attending the 'healthy foods' workshop delivered by the dietician. The library system in place also encourages home reading. Parents are fully informed about all aspects of the children's care and the educational programme provided, for example, through ongoing informal discussions, display boards, newsletters and open days. Parents' opinions matter and staff issue regular questionnaires to seek their views and ideas. Parents speak very highly about the nursery and particularly about the staff, for example, their care of the children and the exciting things they do with them.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The nursery is very well organised and staff are deployed effectively to promote children's safety, care and welfare. Robust procedures are in place to ensure the suitability of staff, and evidence is available to confirm all staff have completed appropriate checks to work with children. The nursery is almost operating with a fully qualified staff team, which well exceeds minimum requirements. Further professional development and ongoing training for staff is actively encouraged and many staff have attended a wide range of additional training to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Staff work very well together as a team and their enthusiasm and commitment significantly enhances the high standard of care and education that children receive. Overall, sufficient staff ratios are maintained, but the organisation of staff breaks means that children are not always appropriately supported during lunch time. Detailed operational policies and procedures that reflect good childcare practice are available and extremely well organised. In the main, required records to promote children's safety and welfare are detailed and accurately maintained, although the hours of attendance for a small number of children and staff are not consistently recorded.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The owner is currently undertaking a degree in early years and she is fully involved in supporting the staff and children, and making sure high standards in the nursery continue to be maintained. The manager is an Early Years Practitioner and an excellent role model for staff, which significantly enhances the delivery of children's care and education. Managers work extremely well together to ensure the safe and efficient management of the nursery. There is a real commitment to continual development and improvement, with detailed action plans in place to further enhance experiences for children and staff. Excellent systems are in place to monitor the education programme, for example, through regular one-to-one and team meetings, staff appraisals and ongoing feedback on performance. 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, one minor issue was raised relating to the behaviour management policy, which has been appropriately addressed.

## **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.

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### 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):

- make sure the daily register showing the hours of attendance for children and staff is accurately maintained at all times
- review the organisation of staff breaks, so that minimum ratios are maintained and children are sufficiently supported over the lunch time period.

#### The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)