



Cotton Socks Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY287323
Inspection date	06 September 2005
Inspector	Jane Plested
Setting Address	Cotton Socks, 13-15 George Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 2HU
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	St Nicholas Nursery 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?

The Cotton Socks Day Nursery registered January 2005, it is a privately owned nursery owned by Sunhill Day Care Nurseries, who own a total of six settings in total. There has been a nursery on the site for over six years. The nursery operates from several rooms on three floor levels in a converted office building in the centre of Aylesbury. A maximum of 100 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There is a small area for outside play. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 42 children under 8 years on roll. This includes seven funded children. The children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens all year round, Monday to Friday from 07.30 until 18.30.

Currently there are 12 staff working with the children. Of whom, six have Early Years qualifications and five are on training programmes. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. Practitioners support younger children when using the toilet, and encourage those that are more able to be independent. Many older children manage their own toileting needs confidently and know, for example that they wash their hands 'to get rid of germs'. Children's experience of nappy changing routines is good, as practitioners interact with the children, for example by smiling and chatting to them. They know and follow good hygiene practice by wearing gloves and aprons, wiping down and changing mat after use and disposing of soiled nappies hygienically. This effective practice minimises the risk of infection amongst children.

Children enjoy a satisfactory range of activities that support their good physical health within the planned activities for exercise or music. However, the duration of these can be quite brief. At present to outdoor area poses a risk to children's good health therefore is not used. This reduces children's opportunities for fresh air and exercise.

Children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. They benefit from nutritious snacks of apples and bananas. Main meals are healthy and provide children with ample fresh vegetables. Practitioner's sit with children and speak enthusiastically about their broccoli and carrots. They help children understand that vegetables will promote their good health and give them ample time to eat their meals. Menus follow a four-week cycle to promote a varied diet for children. As a result, meal times are generally relaxed and sociable and meals promote children's good health well.

Most children benefit from access to drinks routinely with their meals, for example milk at snack time. For older children there is a jug of water on the side in their day room. However, they do not have the chance to pour their own drinks. This reduces opportunities for them to develop skills to support their independence. Practitioner's feed babies as their daily routine demands. However, tot's benefit from a drink from breakfast until lunchtime, unless practitioners consider they are thirsty. Consequently, some are not sufficiently refreshed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the practitioners good understanding of how to keep children safe. The risk of accidental injury is minimised through use of an appropriate range of equipment such as socket covers, gates and reins. Spillages are wiped up promptly and practitioner's raise children's awareness of these and ask them to move aside so that they do not slip. They implement clear and effective procedures for moving children around the different floor levels of the nursery. All rooms have a phone to maintain contact with other rooms and the manager in reception. There are clear procedures for checking the premises and equipment so that they are safe. As a result, children benefit from a safe environment and can move around without risk of an accident.

Children learn to use the wide range of good quality equipment safely, for example staff ensure children sit as they use scissors. Children use large physical play equipment safely and they know and follow the rules, for example only one child at a time on the trampoline. This demonstrates that children are learning to use potentially hazardous equipment safely.

Children's welfare and security is a priority. There are effective procedures to keep children safe, such as intercom at the front door. There are agreed emergency procedures for collection by another adult. Parents sign children in and out, and all visitors to the setting report to the office and practitioners maintain a record of their presence in the building.

Staff are familiar with Child Protection procedures and know the signs that may highlight a concern. They know what to do if this situation arises. The nursery has reference material and a detailed policy in place to support their work in this area and follows recommended recording practice. As a result, the nursery is effective in protecting children's wellbeing.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are confident and settled. They have opportunities to experience a varied range of activities, the majority of which currently take place indoors. Practitioners provide activities as part of the planned programme for the day and as a result, children are generally busy. However, their play experiences at the start of the day are very limited and lack input by practitioners. On arrival, babies sit unoccupied in high chairs to wait for their breakfasts. Some wait for a significant period. Tots and toddlers also have limited staff interaction during the first hour that the nursery opens as a result, some wander aimlessly.

Children benefit from a clear routine to the day, which helps develop a sense of security. Practitioners know the children and are generally attentive to children's needs. They can for example, identify children who are developing walking skills and are aware of the resources that will aid this. All records on children show a lack of detail and practitioner's complete these too infrequently. As a result, they may miss opportunities to move children on in their learning and development, especially those

with special educational needs.

Children benefit from access to a good range of toys and play resources. Activities such as sand play have plenty of appropriate equipment such as buckets, pots and spades. Construction activities are set up with ample amounts of wooden blocks or Stickle Bricks. Children of all ages participate in some creative and messy play. Examples of babies and tots paintings are on display. Toddlers enjoy potato-printing activities. They explore the texture of paint as they feel it between their fingers and move the potatoes around on the paper to make prints. As a result, they are developing a sense of colour and texture.

Children benefit from practitioners awareness of good behaviour management techniques. As a result, they comply with staff requests and follow the daily routine, for example by helping tidy away toys. Practitioners offer plenty of positive reinforcement to children so that they are secure and settled.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children experience a varied curriculum and often learn through first hand experiences. They closely examine insects and reptiles and go on outings to use scientific equipment. Practitioner's are successful in promoting learning during most activities and are skilled in using open questions. They encourage children to speak in a group and to draw with skill and imagination. They have a good range of strategies to promote children's good behaviour such as enlisting children as the special helper for the day. Children make good progress in some aspects of their learning, particularly in their personal social and emotional development, communication language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world. They are also making satisfactory progress in their physical, creative and mathematical development. However, practitioners miss some aspects of learning, for example, there is a lack of opportunity for children to calculate. Children are valued and settle quickly into the pre-school. They are all encouraged to participate in the planned activities such as, circle time and music. Some of the plans lack detail and there is little evaluation of the activities. This means that, practitioners may miss where they are successful in developing children's learning. The records link to the stepping-stones for children's learning. However, these are not completed sufficiently regularly and therefore do not identify progress effectively. This will hinder practitioner's ability to plan for the next steps in children's learning.

Children are confident in the setting. They speak proudly about their imaginative drawings to adults and with confidence at circle time. They describe recent experiences, for example what happened during the weekend. Showing children's developing feelings of self worth. Children are well motivated and persist well at planned and self-chosen tasks. They know the rules and behave well, for example children wait patiently and take turns.

Children are attentive to the stories read to them. They use books independently and with adults. Practitioners are effective in developing children's vocabulary and understanding. They talk descriptively about their collages and use words such as 'dark' and 'smelly' when relating to stories. Children join in enthusiastically with

familiar rhymes and songs such as 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' as a group, and spontaneously recite these during their play. Children are showing an awareness of how letters link to sounds as they know, for example, that Sunday begins with the letter 's'.

Children complete puzzles with increasing confidence. They successfully match puzzle pieces with and without picture images. Older children complete puzzles available with ease and pride. However, these do not always offer sufficient challenge. Children count successfully in a group and individually during their play. This shows an increasingly sound ability and confidence counting up to 12. However, the activities lack opportunities for children to calculate and practitioner's miss opportunities to help children to learn about addition and subtraction.

Children investigate with a range of scientific equipment, such as magnets, bug boxes and weigh scales. These resources help children to learn about the world around them. They describe feeling a range of reptiles and insects. One child describes how a snake felt like 'skin'. They become excited as they point to photographs of large spiders. Children build enthusiastically and are able to construct increasingly complex towers with wooden blocks. Demonstrating a secure understanding of balance and contributing to strong feelings of self worth. Children learn about different people through celebrations such as Diwali and Christmas. They benefit from access to a range of different resources such as books, dolls, a globe and many picture images on the walls. Practitioner's talk about a child the nursery sponsors from Sudan. However, the nursery does not provide opportunities for children to learn about disability.

Children experience some planned opportunities for music and movement and physical exercise for short periods. They enjoy participating in songs that require them to jump, march and move around. There are only occasional opportunities for fresh air during walks. Children are learning about healthy eating, during meals practitioner's talk about the fresh vegetables in the curry. Children wash their hands with increasing independence and know this is to 'get rid of germs'. Consequently, children learn to be healthy.

Children have a good knowledge of primary colours and children that are more able know pink, grey, silver and white. A child talks of using silver foil for stars, demonstrating children are confident in their recognition of colour.

Children benefit from many opportunities to draw freely. They draw pictures to represent what happened during the weekend. Practitioner's successfully use open ended questions to extend detail in children's drawing of their news, representations of themselves and insects such as ladybirds. There are many displays of children's detailed drawings of observations of reptiles and insects. Consequently, children are confident and imaginative when drawing.

Children can identify and use a range of musical instruments such as a triangle, bells, and tambourine via pictures and real instruments practitioners help children to name a xylophone, they teach children about the different sounds that instruments make and compare high, low and dull notes. As a result, children are beginning to learn about pitch in sound.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children with special educational needs receive adequate support from the nursery. Practitioners are aware of their needs and are sometimes skilful in supporting these, but they do not sufficiently keep up-to-date records of their progress. They do have partnerships with parents and other professionals to support these children. However, the limited record keeping means they may miss achievements and are therefore unable to plan effectively for future learning and development.

Children behave well and respond to practitioner's requests to help. They are aware of and understand the rules that keep them safe. Practitioners provide positive role models as they speak to children and praise them regularly, for example as children complete jigsaw puzzles or participate in musical activities. They ensure children sit at the table for snacks and encourage them to use please and thank you. Children benefit from opportunities to take responsibility for example as 'the special helper', which allows children opportunity to help practitioners. Consequently, children develop self-esteem, take responsibility and use words like please and thank you spontaneously.

Children and families from a range of ethnic backgrounds are welcome in the nursery. They develop positive attitudes about cultural and racial differences as they develop friendships and complete activities such as, celebrating festivals and come across positive images in their play. Practitioners discuss with children details about the life of a child, which the nursery is sponsoring in Sudan. However, there are very few images of disability or planning in place to support children's understanding of this matter. Overall, the children's spiritual, moral, social and emotional development fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Each parent receives written information about the setting. The paperwork covers all aspects of their care and learning and the agreements between the nursery and the parents regarding children's care. On going information is available just inside the main door and there are many displays of children's work and of posters that explain how different activities encourage their learning and development. Parents spoken to comment that they value support from the nursery during difficult home circumstances. Management take account of concerns parents raise, provide opportunities for parents to feedback their views on the nursery and act to rectify the problems regarding children's care. Practitioner's share some details on children's progress and care with parents. For example, babies and tot's t parents get a daily feedback sheet documenting feeds, rests, nappy changes and comment about the activities enjoyed. Consequently, children's parents are aware of the day-to-day care that takes place and feel the nursery listens to their views.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery are satisfactory. Children benefit

from the well-planned daily routine and sufficiency of staff. As a result, most children are happy and secure. The indoor space is well organised and welcoming. Practitioners plan and provide a variety of activities for children. However, there is a lack of purposeful activity and staff interaction with children at times, for example before the planned programme commences at the start of the day. Consequently, sometimes children wander aimlessly or sit with nothing to do, other than observe those around them. Risk assessments are in place, as are daily procedures for checking the premises and there are well-planned routines for children as staff take them from one area to another. As a result, children can move around safely and confidently.

Practitioners keep all the appropriate records on children's care, health and welfare. They share these with parents, so that, they are aware of any concerns regarding their children. However, the records of children's learning and development and for evaluation of the activities are limited. As a result, practitioners teach children intuitively and cannot effectively monitor children's progress and plan for the next steps for learning.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 more opportunities for physical exercise and fresh air within a safe and clean environment

- provide tots with opportunities to have a drink of water between meals and encourage older children to pour their own drinks
- ensure that children experience a range of interesting and purposeful activities and are occupied throughout their time at nursery
- ensure that records kept on child with special needs are completed more regularly
- make sure students are aware of the settings policies and procedures.

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):

- ensure that records on children's progress and evaluations of activities are completed more regularly and use these to inform planning for children's next stage of learning
- ensure that opportunities for children to develop an understanding of calculation are planned into the curriculum.

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