

Sowerby Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400369
Inspection date	10 May 2007
Inspector	Vivienne Dempsey

Setting Address	The Portacabin, Sowerby County Primary School, Topcliffe Rd, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 1RX
Telephone number	01845 527321
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Registered person	Sowerby Nursery School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Sowerby Nursery School is a committee run provision. They have their own premises in the grounds of Sowerby Primary School which includes an enclosed area for outdoor play. The nursery school has been registered since 1992. They admit children from Sowerby and the surrounding area, if the demand for places is high, priority is given to those children who live in Sowerby. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Care is provided for a maximum of 24 children from two to under five years. Current opening hours are from 8.55 to 11.45 and from 12.55 to 15.25, Monday to Friday, term time only.

Funded nursery education places are provided for those children of eligible age, for which they have the support of the Local Education Authority. Currently, of the 46 children on roll, there are 16 funded three-year-olds and 16 funded four-year-olds. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and there are two children who speak English as an additional language.

There are a total of five staff who work with the children, of whom, all are appropriately qualified. The group also welcomes parental participation, mainly in connection with outings and committee responsibilities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Effective health and hygiene practices are in place which promote children's health. For example, young children learn and older children understand good hand washing practices as part of the daily routine, 'I wash my hands to make them clean and get the germs away'. A good standard of cleanliness is maintained throughout the nursery, ensuring the children's good health is promoted at all times. Organised procedures are in place for recording accidents and the administration of medication. Parents sign to acknowledge entry of accidents, keeping them informed at all times.

Children enjoy and benefit from the use of an outdoor area which is easily accessible from the main classroom. They enjoy taking part in physical activities, such as balancing on beams, playing with a variety of balls and pushing pushchairs. Children enjoy a variety of healthy snacks, such as ham, carrots and crackers and take part in a variety of healthy eating activities, all of which develops their awareness of healthy living. Children enjoy their snack time and staff ensure snack times are a sociable occasion. Staff provide children with drinks at snack time, however, children do not have independent access to fresh drinking water throughout the session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Good steps have been taken to ensure that children are cared for in a safe environment. For example, a visitors record is maintained, basic risk assessments have been conducted and the premises are kept secure. The environment is very warm and welcoming for the children, parents and visitors. The children have easy access to a good range of toys, equipment and furniture. Toys and resources are appropriate to the children's developmental stages and interests, keeping them motivated and interested.

Children's awareness of fire safety is developed. For example, regular fire drills are practised, an emergency evacuation procedure is in place, and a written log is maintained. Staff have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities under child protection and staff have attended training in this area. They are aware of the different areas of abuse, of possible signs and of the procedures that are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy close and warm relationships with staff who know them well, which increases their sense of well-being and security. They are happy and confident within the setting. Staff provide good levels of support which enable the children to experience a wide range of activities that contribute to their development and learning. For example, staff support children well as they paint a stone bee, using pictures in books to help children recognise the features of a bee.

Children enjoy their time at the setting as staff are very caring in their approach and spend time playing and interacting with them. This also means children have good self-esteem. Children engage in a broad range of activities which enhances their development; these include dough, paint, small construction and home corner. Children have independent access to most resources which they use with confidence. Staff are beginning to implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework for younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, how children learn and regularly maintain assessment records. This ensures that children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Plans clearly show the area of learning and the focus of learning is evident. Staff use observations to record children's development, However, observations are not used to inform future planning and next steps in children's learning.

Children enter the setting confidently and are happy to attend. They separate well from parents, demonstrating a feeling of security in the setting. Children show curiosity when they observe the changes to the tadpoles and the seeds they have planted. Children are involved in activities for long periods of time and enjoy using the plastic letters on the magnetic board. They eagerly take part in story time and enjoy joining in with familiar rhymes and songs. Children enjoy sharing books with peers and staff in the outside area, and describe to them what is happening in the pictures. They have a variety of opportunities to draw and children enjoy drawing a caterpillar on the floor outside. Children use number names accurately in their play; they count the number of legs on a spider confidently. They are able to use positional language, for example, 'I have put the dough under your hat'.

Children enjoy exploring and investigating; they use the magnifying glasses to look closely at the mini-beasts and patiently watch the acorns and conkers they planted grow. However, there are limited opportunities for children to develop an awareness of technology, information and communication technology. Children move freely with pleasure and confidence; they are able to adjust speed and change direction to avoid other children and obstacles. They enjoy exploring malleable materials and manipulate materials to achieve a planned effect, for example, using dough to make small worms and big snakes. Children respond appropriately to sound with body movements, wriggling their fingers as they join in the 'wiggly' song, developing their coordination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a positive attitude towards others as staff promote equal opportunities very well. All children are welcomed in to the setting and participate fully in all activities because staff know children well. Staff have a good understanding of the individual needs of the children who attend the setting. Appropriate and effective procedures are in place to support and integrate children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children with English as their second language. The setting has a named coordinator who has completed relevant training, who works closely with other support agencies to ensure all children are fully included and their individual needs are met.

Children are very settled and happy and enjoy very good relationships with staff and each other. They are very well behaved and staff demonstrate a good understanding of how to manage

children's behaviour and they receive lots of positive praise and encouragement. This means children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with their parents. Parents receive information about the curriculum through regular newsletters and daily discussions. Staff complete observations of children and use these to complete individual records of achievement; these show children's progress towards the early learning goals. These are shared with parents on request and at parents open evenings. This provided parents with an insight into their child's learning and development within the setting. Parents are encouraged to extend children's learning at home, for example, they are asked to bring objects from home relating to the current topic.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a well organised and managed provision which contributes to the children being happy and settled. Staff are suitably qualified and adult to child ratios are well maintained. The space, both indoors and outdoors, supports children's learning and development, allowing them to move around freely and independently. Appropriate records, policies and procedures are in place and used effectively to support consistency of care for the children. All records are retained for a reasonable period of time and are available for inspection.

Leadership and management of the nursery is good. The turnover of staff in the nursery is very low, some staff have worked in the provision for long periods of time. This ensures that children, and their parents experience familiarity and security within the nursery. Weekly meetings ensure the committed staff work closely together to plan and develop the provision they provide. Children's progress is monitored and staff regularly update their assessment records. Support and advice is received from the local authority which staff use to enhance their practice.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the provision was asked to ensure that the record of visitors is clear and retained. A clear record of visitors has now been implemented and is retained.

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):

- consider how to make drinking water available at all times
- further develop the implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework for younger children

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):

- further develop the use of observations to inform future planning and next steps in children's learning
- introduce more planned activities for children to use every day technology, information and communication technology.

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