

Ellesmere Ducklings

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 224090

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Inspector Kathryn Mary Harding

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Registered person Jennifer Anne Wright

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

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?

Ellesmere Ducklings opened in 1987 and moved into the present building in 1997. It operates from one main room in a pre-fabricated classroom and is situated in the grounds of Ellesmere Primary School, Ellesmere, North Shropshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.15, term time only. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 67 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for early education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs six members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a warm clean setting where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene and personal care through the daily routines. Pictorial signs displayed in the toilet area encourage good hand washing techniques. Children are gently reminded to wash their hands even when they say they don't want to, helping to prevent the spread of infection. Good procedures are in place to keep children healthy during hot weather, such as regular application of sun cream.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet as they discuss what foods are good to eat and why. They are offered healthy and nutritious snacks such as fruit and bread sticks and can choose what they want to eat. Staff encourage parents to provide healthy lunch boxes and the setting have an healthy eating policy. Children are offered regular drinks such as milk and water but they are unable to access drinking water throughout the day, so they are not encouraged to deal with their own care needs. Staff recognise when younger children are tired and make provision to accommodate them within the setting.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. There are outdoor activities to help them develop control of their bodies. They can climb on the climbing frame and slide down the slide in different ways. They are encouraged to get plenty of fresh air and go for walks around the school grounds, to help develop their physical skills. They can access a wide range of equipment such as construction sets, play dough and scissors to help develop their fine control skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly greeted by staff on arrival. The setting is made more welcoming as children's artwork and posters are displayed on the walls. The rooms are checked prior to the children arriving and daily written check lists are undertaken, to help keep children safe. However formal risk assessments are not undertaken on a regular basis. Fire safety is promoted well within the setting and all staff have attended a workshop on fire safety.

Children independently select activities from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment, which meet safety standards and are regularly checked. Resources are organised in open containers and open shelf units, at child height, so encouraging children's independent access. Children learn how to keep themselves safe as staff encourage children to ask before using scissors and they explain how to use them properly and safely. They are also encouraged to sit on the chair properly and given reasons for this.

Staff have all the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Staff have a good knowledge of child protection procedures in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and have attended workshops on child protection matters.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well in the setting's calm environment and staff offer reassurance to younger children as parents leave. They take part in a good range of varied activities and play opportunities which they find interesting and enjoyable such as exploring in the sand with the containers. Staff know the children well and cater for their individual needs very well through the key worker system. Children in the setting develop very good relationships with staff and each other, as they pretend to make some cakes and bring them to staff to try one. They have made posters about 'hands are not for hitting', so encouraging good behaviour. They learn to share and take turns when playing with the cars, as adults explain how many they already have. Children concentrate well on activities such as when kneading and rolling the play dough. They enjoy their time in the setting and staff have fun as they join in with activities, as they march and play circle games outside, giving them a sense of belonging and making them feel valued.

At child-initiated times children have opportunities to make decisions about what they want to play with, so increasing their independence. They are encouraged to plan what they want to play with and talk about what they played with at snack time. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children work well together as they construct the train track. They freely and confidently approach staff and ask for their help when they need a 'baby' or a tea towel to do the washing up in the home area.

Staff offer a good level of support to children, explaining activities and guiding children before giving assistance. This helps children to develop independence. Staff have a good understanding of child development which enables them to offer good care. They use their knowledge of 'Birth to three matters' to plan a wide range of appropriate activities for the younger children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are interested in what they are doing and staff support them where necessary in their play, making children feel valued. Staff are sensitive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and language skills.

Children access a good range of well chosen resources which support their development across all areas of learning. They behave very well, with staff continually praising and encouraging them, so enhancing their self-esteem. They play happily together and concentrate for sustained periods of time when constructing the train track and playing with the trains. They are able to deal with their own care needs as they can access tissues for their nose.

Children confidently talk in small and large groups at planning and registration time. They listen well to stories, become involved in them and staff relay stories in a lively way, so encouraging and motivating the children's interest in books. However they do not readily access books during the session. The environment is well-labelled encouraging children's recognition of print and they are encouraged to find their name on arrival and record on the board. There are lots of opportunities to mark make and children can access a writing area and lots of different mark making equipment. They look at French words as they have painted a French rainbow.

Children gain confidence in using numbers in planned and spontaneous opportunities. There are lots of displays of numerals so encouraging children to recognise numbers. Children decide

what number chair they want to sit on at snack time. They are encouraged to solve problems in a practical way, for example, when counting the number of children present and singing number rhymes. They use positional language as staff talk about the bear going under and over. However there are limited opportunities for children to explore or talk about shape.

Children gain knowledge of the world around them and of time and place through a variety of activities. They freely talk about their families and their lives and important events to them, such as where they have been on holiday and when they went swimming, so making them feel valued. They have adopted a panda, as they learn about extinction. A computer with educational programs is readily available and children access this to support and consolidate their learning. They explore, predict and investigate when looking at the tadpoles with magnifying glasses and talk about them changing into frogs. They learn about the life cycle of a chick, as they help care for the chicks in the classroom and learn about what they need.

Children's large scale movement skills develop and improve through a wide variety of experiences, including activities to develop skills of climbing and pedalling. As they sing 'Dingle Dangle Scarecrow' they stretch, dance and enjoy moving to the song. They move confidently around the indoor and outdoor area and access a wide range of activities to develop their fine control skills including construction sets, threading and play dough.

Children explore using their senses, different textures and materials. They talk about the different colours of the cups and of the paints and can freely mix the colours. They access an art area so enabling them to make their own creations. They play imaginatively in the home area as they make a meal for each other. As they make some chocolate with their play dough they go to the home area to get a plate to put it on, showing connections in their learning. They sing their favourite songs with actions and freely access musical instruments and explore the sounds they make, whilst marching outdoors.

Systems are in place that support children with special educational needs to effectively meet their needs. This includes liaising very closely with parents, external agencies and drawing up individual education plans. Plans link to the six areas of learning and the stepping stones. Activities for children at adult led time are differentiated in order to offer sufficient challenge for more able children. Thorough observations are undertaken on the children and are linked to assessments and the planning to ensure the next steps in children's learning are catered for.

Overall, children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued, listened to and respected as individuals. Their awareness of the wider world is extended as the setting have a range of activities, toys and resources to positively reflect diversity. They have raised money to purchase desks for Masai children in Africa and look at how other people live in other countries, such as Inuit's and look at their dress and what they eat. They take part and raise money for Red Nose day to encourage their understanding of others.

Systems are in place, such as individual education plans and staff liaise very closely with parents and external agencies to effectively promote children's learning. If appropriate, daily diaries are used to ensure information is given to parents. They access courses such as Makaton, to enable them to deal with each child's individual needs.

Staff have a calm, consistent approach to managing children's behaviour. As a result children behave very well and understand what is expected of them, as they are given explanations why the behaviour is not acceptable. The 'golden rules' are displayed and good behaviour is encouraged as the staff give lots of praise and encouragement to the children for their efforts. A sand timer is used, so they can learn to share the toys and resources. Adults model good behaviour as they thank children for helping to tidy up. At snack time good manners are encouraged and kindness and respect is promoted so children relate well to each other and learn to have consideration for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff, parents and external agencies all work together to meet each child's needs. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child by completing a home school link sheet giving staff information about the child's interests. Parents are invited into the setting to discuss their child's achievements at a parents' evening and can write comments in their child's profiles. They can also talk daily about their child with the child's key worker. An informative notice board containing what the children are doing in the session is available so ensuring parents are fully aware of topics and projects. Parents spoken with commented very positively on the setting. They say staff are 'very approachable, caring and friendly and will always be flexible in trying to accommodate any need'. A complaints procedure is in place and parents are made aware of the procedure to follow if they wish to raise any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. They are shared regularly with parents to keep them well informed about the service and their child's activities. This contributes to continuity in the children's care.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. The registered person uses effective recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. Staff complete annual appraisals to ensure they are all working to effectively meet the children's needs. Most of the required paperwork is in place. Staff are approachable, friendly, enthusiastic, caring and work very well together as a team to promote children's health, enjoyment and achievement. They attend regular training so demonstrating a commitment to developing their practice.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection staff agreed to:

Increase the level of challenge during activities for more able children;

Encourage children to initiate activities and self-select resources;

Continue to develop planning, considering the learning potential within everyday activities;

Involve parents in the on-going assessment process for their children;

Ensure that all snacks provided are healthy and nutritious;

Ensure that hand-washing procedures are extended to include hand-washing before snack time;

Ensure that premises are checked for risks prior to opening each day;

Ensure that procedures in place for the use of colour-coded cloths are effective;

Ensure that the setting complies with all Health and Safety legislation and

Improve the nappy changing environment.

Staff now plan differentiated activities and work with children on a one to one basis if needed and time is now planned in for child-led activities, so encouraging children to be independent. Staff now have a plan of all the learning opportunities available during routine activities, such as circle time. Staff now have a home link sheet, so children's interests are sought prior to them starting in the setting. Parents' evenings and children's profiles have been developed which parents can add comments to, so involving them in their child's learning.

Staff now only provide healthy and nutritious snacks, such as fruit at snack time and have signs up to encourage all children to wash their hands prior to eating. A daily written check list is in place to ensure everywhere is checked for safety prior to the children arriving. Staff now have colour coded cloths and attend health and safety courses to ensure they are updated with latest legislation. The nappy changing area has been decorated to improve the environment.

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.

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):

- ensure that drinking water is accessible to children
- ensure that regular risk assessments are undertaken.

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 children have access to an attractive book area and have opportunities to look at and talk about shapes.

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