

Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	403955
Inspection date	01 June 2007
Inspector	Sandra Daniels
Setting Address	Howard Road, Chafford Hundred, Grays, Essex, RM16 6YJ
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Registered person	Just Learning 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

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 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?

Just Learning Nursery opened in December 1998. It operates from nine rooms in purpose built premises adjacent to a health and fitness centre in Chafford Hundred. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 186 children from six weeks to under five years on roll. This includes 40 funded three and four-year old children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special needs and there are no children attending who speak English as an additional language at present.

The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07.00 until 18.30.

There are 28 staff who work with the children including a cook and an administrator. There are 20 staff who have early years qualifications, and nine staff who are currently on training programmes. The setting receives support from a qualified early years teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff follow some current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, no outdoor shoes are worn in baby rooms where children are crawling and playing on the floor, and staff wear protective clothing when changing nappies. However, children's health and well-being is not consistently supported at meal times as tables and high chairs are not always appropriately cleaned. Practitioners help children to become aware of managing their own personal care and the reasons for it. Staff demonstrate to children how to wash and dry their hands appropriately and explain to them about germs. Most practitioners hold current first aid certificates and are confident in their ability to deal with minor accidents and medical emergencies. All accidents are appropriately recorded and shared with parents.

Children are offered mostly healthy snacks and their dietary requirements are recorded in detail and known by staff. Children's main meals are balanced and nutritious and suitable alternatives are provided for children with allergies or other specific requirements. Children sit together in their groups for snacks and meals and these can be social times where children often discuss the foods they like and dislike. However, some children who do not eat very well, do not receive appropriate encouragement from staff. For example, there is not always the space for adults to actually sit down with children and set them an example. Babies food and milk intake is carefully monitored and recorded and shared with parents in daily diaries. Drinking water is available to all children at all times.

Children enjoy regular opportunities for physical exercise as they play outside in the well-resourced garden. Children move with confidence as they negotiate the adventure playground apparatus, climbing, balancing, running and jumping. Some children participate in weekly Tots in Sport sessions where they develop skills of control and co-ordination as they play, for example, with tennis racquets and balls. There are quiet areas for children to rest. However, staff do not always ensure that children can rest or sleep comfortably when they are tired.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure environment where all risks have been identified and minimised. This includes a rigorous risk assessment, which is reviewed monthly, and daily health and safety checks to the entire setting, inside and outside. Many safety and security measures are in place, for example, intercom door entry system, plug socket covers and safety surface on parts of the outside play area.

Children begin to learn about keeping themselves safe as they practise regular emergency evacuation procedures with staff. When on outings in the neighbourhood, children learn about how to cross roads safely and this is reinforced with a visit from the local 'lollypop lady'. Children also enjoy visits from members of the emergency services, who talk to children about keeping themselves safe from fire, strangers and injury.

Children are warmly welcomed into the setting which is bright, with lots of natural light, and well ventilated. Practitioners monitor temperatures in rooms to ensure children remain

comfortable. Children have a personal tray in which to keep their belongings and place their work.

Children's welfare is protected through staff's understanding of their personal responsibilities to safeguard children. Practitioners are aware of the recording and reporting procedures to follow should they have any concerns for a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery. Their confidence grows as they become familiar with the routine and the adults who care for them. Children feel good about themselves as they see their work displayed attractively around the setting and look at photographs of themselves at play. The settling in process is flexible and tailored to children's individual needs. Staff have an awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and they are beginning to use this to plan for the needs of younger children. Staff include young children well in activities ensuring they are suitable for their ages and differing abilities. For example, toddlers thoroughly enjoy listening to tunes as they look at musical books, bobbing up and down. Younger children enjoy playing with dough and painting as they are supported by staff. Practitioners are aware of children's individual needs and provide some activities for them which are interesting and stimulating. Children are absorbed as they listen to 'Peek-a-boo, Winnie the Pooh' and they play an active part as they anticipate who is hiding where. However, there is not always a good selection of resources and activities readily available to children, and some activities are not particularly purposeful or worthwhile.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a basic knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn best. Planning for the curriculum takes place but not all practitioners are clear about the learning intentions of some of the activities provided. Outcomes for children are somewhat compromised because of this. Not all children's developmental progress records are up to date and do not, therefore show an accurate record of achievements and progress made. The learning environment is organised to cover all six areas of learning and is suited to the needs of the children. Practitioners use some different methods of teaching to help children make progress towards the early learning goals. They ask children questions which encourage them to think and provide some activities which help children to acquire and develop new skills. For example, children enjoy cutting out shapes to make pictures and staff demonstrate how to use the scissors appropriately.

Children enjoy opportunities to develop their independence as they wash their hands, pour drinks and sometimes help to prepare their snacks. They play well together in small groups and learn to consider the feelings of others. Children are polite and helpful, for example, helping one another to put their shoes on. They discuss their families and make family trees using photographs from home. Children are developing confidence in their language skills as they share experiences and interests at circle times, taking turns in conversations. Most older children are able to recognise their own names and some are able to write them independently or copy them. Resources around the room are labelled with words and pictures so that children become used to recognising familiar words.

Children begin to use mathematical language in their play as they discuss bigger and smaller when they create footprints in paint and compare them. Routine times are used as opportunities

for counting, for example, as children hand out cups at meal times. Children learn to recognise two dimensional shapes and name them as they look at books and play games. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they enjoy a visit from the 'Zoo Lab' company who bring animals into the nursery. Children hold stick insects, stroke rats and hold snakes and other animals in a safe and controlled environment. They learn about how these animals live and what foods they like.

Children enjoy physical activity and begin to develop an understanding of the changes that happen to their bodies and what it means to be healthy. They develop control and co-ordination as they take part in Tots in Sport activities and play outside in the garden. Children confidently climb, balance, run and jump on the adventure playground area. They enjoy moving to music and 'flying' like birds. Children use their imagination as they play in the role-play area, recreating experiences with their friends.

Children are making progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum. Their confidence and self-esteem is raised as they receive praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have their needs met because practitioners work in partnership with their parents to ensure that all are included fully in the life of the setting. Those children with additional needs receive the support of the special needs co-ordinator and have individual play plans to help them to progress. The key worker system is used to allocate responsibilities for record keeping and liaising with parents. Children are comfortable and settled and have good relationships with staff and each other. Children begin to learn about the local community as the nursery is developing links with local schools and children are taken out on short trips around the neighbourhood.

Practitioners celebrate various festivals with children and help them to understand what life is like for people in other parts of the world. They benefit from the use of toys and resources which present positive images of diversity and discuss issues of similarity and difference amongst themselves and others.

Children generally behave well, although practitioners' approach to behaviour management is not always consistent in terms of giving children appropriate explanations and offering alternative strategies for dealing with conflict situations. Simple rules are displayed and discussed with children, such as being kind to one another. Children learn to share and take turns and staff give praise and encouragement to reinforce positive behaviour.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive good quality information about the setting in general, including some information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and how this impacts on their child. Notices about planned activities and themes are displayed on boards for parents to see and these include suggestions for parents on specific songs, rhymes and stories that will be incorporated into each theme. Children benefit from this as their learning and development continues at home. There is an effective two-way flow of information between parents and nursery staff. Parents receive daily feedback on their child's day and parents' evenings are held twice each year to ensure that parents are fully informed of their child's individual progress towards the early learning goals. Parents of new children contribute to an 'all about me' information sheet, which is designed to enable practitioners to get to know each

child's likes, dislikes and other important things about them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are kind and considerate as they work and play well together.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall children's needs are met. Children benefit from being cared for in a setting where staff have a good understanding of their individual care needs. Many staff are suitably qualified and some are currently on training programmes. There are many opportunities for practitioners to attend further courses in order to update and further develop their knowledge and understanding of childcare issues. Staff ratios are maintained and the nursery uses regular staff to cover for staff breaks and absences. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with young children and this is followed by a structured induction and appraisal programme.

All required documentation is in place and is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it remains in line with current guidelines and legislation. Policies and procedures generally work well in practice to ensure children's health, safety and well-being. Space and time are organised effectively so that children can move around freely, choosing their activity.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager has action plans in place for the future which addresses various areas for further improvements to the setting and the provision of nursery education. Daily management of children's education is under review and plans are in place for further training with a view to improving the planning, provision and assessments for children's learning and development. There is a clear vision for the setting with a focus on children learning through play. Equality of opportunity is promoted well to allow all children to take an active role in the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to ensure good hygiene procedures are in place regarding the serving of food, nappy changing and toileting. Children's health is supported as policies and procedures have been amended and the manager ensures that they are being adhered to. Practitioners wear protective clothing when changing nappies. The provider agreed to extend the range of resources for children aged three months to five years. Children have a sufficient range of resources to encourage play and learning as equipment renewals are ongoing. Resources are reviewed regularly.

The provider agreed to extend the risk assessment. Children's safety is supported as risk assessments have been developed which are generic documents and are reviewed monthly or as necessary. The provider agreed to make sure the registration system includes arrival and departure times of staff and children. Children's security is supported as all parents and carers sign their children in and out of the setting. Staff also sign in and out creating an accurate record of exactly who is on the premises at any given time.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to organise resources to enable children to operate independently within the programmes of knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Children have some opportunities to use multi-cultural resources and practitioners are developing ideas to support children's creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The provider also agreed to improve the

planning systems to detail activities and to include learning intentions and ensure that children's assessments are used to inform future planning. Curriculum planning is currently in the process of being changed to incorporate these recommendations and staff have received some training in the Foundation Stage so that outcomes for children can be improved.

The provider agreed to review the provision and experiences which challenge children, particularly within the programmes for physical development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Outcomes for children within these programmes are being developed through staff training and links with local schools.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1st April 2004 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 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):

- further review hygiene procedures, specifically with regard to meal times
- ensure that children are appropriately encouraged to eat at meal times and that children can rest or sleep comfortably when they are tired
- ensure there is a broad selection of resources and activities readily available to children at all times, which are purposeful and worthwhile

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):

- review staff training to refresh practitioner's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and its purpose. Ensure that planning is fully understood by all practitioners and that all areas of learning are covered
- ensure that records of children's developmental progress are all up to date and give a clear indication of the progress being made towards the early learning goals.

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