

Orchard House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY273551
Inspection date	10 July 2007
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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 inadequate - special measures.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Orchard House Nursery opened in 2004. It operates from three rooms in converted premises in the town centre of Tamworth. The nursery serves the town and surrounding locality. A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 07:30 until 18:00 throughout the year except for bank holidays and one week at Christmas. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 54 children aged from seven months to four years on roll. Of these, nine children receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff to work directly with the children plus a supernumerary owner/manager and domestic staff. There are 12 members of staff working directly with the children who hold appropriate early years qualifications and the remaining two staff members are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to develop independent self-care skills during daily hygiene routines which ensure they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. More able children also start to understand why such routines are important as they cheerfully sing 'this is the way we wash our hands' whilst waiting for food to be served. In addition, staff wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing children's nappies and ensure tables are wiped clean before meal times. This protects children from illness and infection. The procedures for administering medication are understood well by staff and a high percentage of staff are trained in first aid. A system is in place to regularly review accident records. However, not all accidents are recorded. As a result, children's well-being is not fully safeguarded.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. A cook is employed to prepare and serve a wide range of midday meals such as meat with potatoes and vegetables. Children sit with their friends and eat well. They also help to grow vegetables such as beans which helps them to adopt a positive attitude towards food. A clear system for recording children's specific dietary requirements ensures that their individual needs are met. Children throughout the nursery have easy access to drinking water.

Children take part in suitable outdoor activities which develop their physical skills, for example, they climb and balance and use water to paint their vehicles. They enjoy playing 'catch' with staff members using various different sizes and textures of balls. On occasions, young babies are taken outside, for example, staff take them outdoors to see a fire engine as part of a theme about 'people who help us'. Babies have good opportunities to develop their early mobility skills when playing indoors. They sit safely supported, crawl freely and have easy access to appropriate furniture which helps to progress their early walking skills. Children aged two plus have some opportunities for indoor physical play although space and resources are not always used to their full potential to maximise their physical development overall.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a fully secure environment where access to the nursery is carefully monitored by staff. Staff greet children, parents and carers with a smile as they enter through a designated foyer area. This creates a welcoming atmosphere and ensures children arrive and leave the premises safely. There are effective fire safety procedures, for example, all children take part in regular fire drills which helps them to react calmly and with familiarity should an emergency escape be necessary. Children are safe when on outings because the ratio of staff to children is increased. In addition, a useful risk assessment leaflet provides any helpers with guidance on how to protect children from harm, for example, being aware of cyclists and not sitting on walls where children can overlook the river.

Children have easy access to a wide range of good quality furniture, equipment and toys. The large majority of resources are clearly labelled and stored at a low-level which helps to promote children's independence. However, on occasions staff do not always provide children aged two plus with stage appropriate equipment. As a result, some children use equipment such as climbing apparatus unsafely and the risk of accidents is increased. This compromises children's safety overall.

Children are safeguarded from possible abuse or neglect. Staff have suitable knowledge of child protection issues and procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child. There is a written child protection statement. However, it does not contain up-to-date information about the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. This potentially compromises children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies play happily in their designated base room. They are supported by qualified and skilled staff members who deliver the 'Birth to three matters' framework particularly well. They become increasingly independent as they experiment with both natural and purpose-built toys which are within easy reach. They further explore their senses as they take part in finger painting and 'sparkle and shine' activities. Staff talk to babies and use happy facial gestures throughout daily routines such as feeding. This helps young babies to begin to value the importance of communication. The learning of babies is extended well because staff seize spontaneous opportunities to further their play, for example, they praise babies for waving with two hands and encourage other babies to try to do the same. This provides a cheerful and fun environment where babies settle well and enjoy their time.

Older babies are provided with a wide range of activities that are freely accessible to them. They drive their vehicles up and down garage ramps whilst standing watching what their friends are doing. Some children experiment with their physical skills as they balance whilst walking across soft cushioning, leaning on staff members at the end of their challenge for a cosy cuddle. Children's early language skills are making suitable progress as children and staff repeat familiar words such as 'more'. First-hand experiences such as bathing dolls in water give older babies meaningful opportunities to explore and experiment. Children make suitable progress in all areas of learning as the weekly and monthly plans are rotated to ensure inclusion for all.

Children aged two to three years receive adequate but less consistent care because of the impact of the weak educational programme for funded three and four-year-olds. On occasions, children concentrate well. They sit quietly and are settled as they complete inset jigsaws, showing curiosity as they lift up the jigsaw base to look what is underneath. They have good opportunities for sensory play and show excitement as they manipulate big lumps of cooked spaghetti when making creative pictures. In addition, children enjoy hiding in a painting easel playing peek-a-boo with their friends. They are imaginative as they place swimming rings around their waist and walk around the room, returning to the pretend beach hut to wear armbands as part of a summer theme. Children's play is restricted at times due to the ineffective organisation of space and resources. During these times a high density of children play in one space at one time with a more limited range of resources. This hinders children's ability to play freely and to follow their natural curiosity as learners.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff have insecure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. There are written activity plans which outline the basic learning intention for the day. However, these activities do not always link logically to the identified areas of learning and a lack of structure for the rest of the day often leaves children under stimulated. During these times, children do not behave well. They run around the room carrying toys and pushing resources off table tops. Staff take little immediate action to rectify the situation, showing a weak understanding of why children are not complying with the necessary rules and the many ways in which children learn. Consequently, children are unresponsive which hinders

their progress. On other days and occasions, the environment is much more conducive to learning. Staff sit with the children and share stories with them, such as 'Whatever next!'. Children listen and respond to open-ended questions and ask their own such as 'what's he called?' whilst pointing to a character in the book. Overall, children are making insufficient progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are unable to continuously implement a successful programme of activities which ensure the breadth of the curriculum is provided with appropriate challenges for all children.

Children are developing an adequate level of personal independence within daily routines, for example, they pour their own drink at snack time and take off their own shoes when playing on a slide. They are able to move freely for much of the session and make many choices about where they wish to play. On occasions, children concentrate well on their chosen task and show pride in their own achievement, keenly showing the inspector a drawing they have completed. However, they do not sit quietly and concentrate for much of the time because there is a very high noise level in the room. The majority of activities are not tailored to provide individual levels of challenge, for example, an activity where children are asked to find the colour yellow is not differentiated to include more complex colours for more able children. This demonstrates that staff have low expectations of children. When space and resources are used well, children are mostly calm and focused on their play. They sometimes enjoy writing for a purpose as they sit with their friends to cut with scissors, draw and glue. Throughout much of the session, children have free access to materials which enable them to explore their unique creative talent. They become excited as they mix sand with clay, saying the words 'more sour' over and over again, furthering their imagination as they link the sand to the use of salt and pepper. At times, children work well together when using the computer. They move the mouse with increasing levels of competence and begin to take turns as they name changing colours on the computer screen.

Children show little interest in text, numbers and counting. They see some text and numerals in the environment such as a number line, occasionally explore the meaning of numbers as they count how many apples they would like to eat and recognise their name during the morning register. However, they are not consistently prompted to link sounds to letters, count, calculate and problem solve within everyday routines and practical activities. Consequently, when staff do seize the opportunity to further their learning, for example, counting the number of children queuing for outdoor play, children do not always join in. This demonstrates that at times learning is mundane. Children do self-initiate imaginative play, for example, on hearing a music CD they pretend to be elephants, giggling as they swing their arms to represent a trunk and using their hands to form the sharp claws of a tiger.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Younger children are learning how to play cooperatively. They stand beside a sand tray, laughing and giggling with staff and other children whilst digging into the sand making castles. Babies play alongside each other with the close support of staff, building and exploring soft blocks. The behaviour of children aged over two years is sometimes good. On occasions, when they are playing in a positive and stimulating environment, children work harmoniously together often passing resources such as spaghetti during messy play and sharing ideas. However, children do not benefit from a consistently positive approach from staff when their behaviour is not appropriate. As a consequence, they sometimes play in a negative environment which is not conducive to learning. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Children enjoy learning about the wider world and their local area. They take part in community fundraising events, enjoy visits from 'people who help us' such as fire-fighters and various festivals are celebrated. Staff build a picture of children's individual needs through talking with parents and carers and through the active use of documents such as a 'moving rooms' form. Staff use their knowledge gained from these systems effectively in the baby and toddler rooms where children form warm, close and caring relationships with staff. The nursery has suitable systems in place to work with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children benefit from mostly consistent care because there are effective working relationships with parents. All parents receive daily information about their child's care which helps to keep them up-to-date with important issues such as how much their child has eaten or if their child has had a sleep. Bright and colourful photographic displays help parents to recognise staff members and to see what activities their child has been involved in. Parents can express their opinion about the quality of care through freely available questionnaires. They have access to some policies through the nursery prospectus. The full range of policies and procedures and a complaints log are available to parents on request. However, the complaints policy does not include the name and address of Ofsted as the regulating body which potentially compromises children's well-being.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Parents receive sufficiently detailed information about what their child will be learning throughout a topic and how they can further support their child's learning at home, for example, staff plan to identify letters in theme-related words such as 'hospital' and parents are asked to support their child to recognise letters within their own name. The long term plans for learning are displayed together with a brief outline of the one learning intention for the whole day. This helps parents to feel involved in their child's education.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are significant differences between the quality of care and the quality of nursery education at this nursery. Children are cared for by a new staff team who are working together to try to establish consistent care practices. There are effective recruitment procedures which help to ensure that children are cared for by suitably vetted staff. Each staff member is allocated to a mentor and regular staff meetings take place to address routine and emergency issues. This helps the staff team to continually reflect on and to strive to improve the quality of care children receive.

All of the regulatory documents are in place. Both staff and children's files are stored confidentially and contain clear factual information. The large majority of supportive policies and procedures are up-to-date and most are suitably understood by the staff team. The well maintained adult to staff ratio adequately supports children's safe care. However, staff do not always make full use of the environment to maximise children's learning in all areas.

Leadership and management funded of children is inadequate. There is not a systematic or rigorous method for monitoring the quality of the nursery education. Although some staff have adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage, children do not always benefit from a stimulating environment and they are not always inspired to learn. Consequently, there are significant weaknesses regarding the consistency in which the Foundation Stage is managed and subsequently delivered to all children.

Overall the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the nursery has worked in a proactive way with external organisations to improve the quality of care provided for children. The last care inspection was judged as inadequate. The nursery were asked to provide an action plan detailing how they will ensure all staff interact with children in a way to ensure they feel valued and respected. An action plan was provided and many new staff members are now in post. They deploy themselves effectively to settle and comfort any children who are upset or unsettled, for example, they gently wipe away tears with tissues and offer for children to sit on their knee. Overall staff interact well with children. They sit at their level, support and talk to them as they play. For example, they help children to make people out of play dough. Children smile as they play commenting that they 'want to make a Daddy'. This helps younger children to learn, to build confidence in the nursery environment and to feel valued.

The nursery was also asked to provide an action plan detailing how space and resources are effectively organised to provide children with a stimulating and accessible environment. An action plan was provided and several changes have been made. As a result, children are becoming increasingly independent. They now have much easier access to their toys and equipment and staff are less prescriptive about what they would like children to do or where they would like children to be. However, staff, space and resources are not always used appropriately or consistently well to stimulate all children aged over two years. Consequently, children's initial interest in some activities is not always captivated and staff do not always react accordingly to ensure their learning is maximised.

Since the last education inspection the nursery has made insignificant progress towards improving the quality of funded nursery education children consistently receive. The last actions relating to children's education requested the provider to provide a detailed plan demonstrating how staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage will be improved; how planning will effectively ensure the breadth of the curriculum is provided with appropriate challenges for children; how the systems of observations and assessments will inform planning for children's next steps in learning and how the nursery provision will be rigorously monitored and evaluated.

The nursery did provide detailed plans which outlined action for improvement. With the support of the local authority they have enabled staff to attend some training events such as the 'Stepping Stones Profile Course'. However, staff do not implement their knowledge of the curriculum consistently. At times, they show little awareness of the principles of early education within their working practice and use a very limited range of teaching methods. Consequently, children are not always motivated to learn. Some observations of children's learning take place but they are not used effectively to identify what children need to learn next. As a result, children are making little progress towards the early learning goals. There are significant gaps in delivery of the Foundation Stage. The practice gives cause for concern because the nursery has demonstrated little capacity to improve.

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):

- ensure a record of all accidents occurring on the premises is consistently maintained
- improve the use of staff, space and resources to meet children's needs effectively; this refers to the room base for children aged two to five years
- develop further staff's knowledge and understanding of positive methods to manage children's behaviour (this also applies to nursery education)
- update the complaints policy to include the name and address of the regulator and update the child protection policy in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

The setting requires special measures to improve the provision for nursery education. The following urgent action is required:

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and delivery of the curriculum taking into account the many ways in which children learn
- implement a rigorous planning system to ensure the breadth of the curriculum is provided with appropriate challenges for all children
- ensure the provision for nursery education is closely monitored and evaluated.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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