

# Schoolgate Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	403972
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Marie Cozzi
<b>Setting Address</b>	Medway Block Potters Street School, Carters Mead, Harlow, Essex, CM17 9EU
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<b>Registered person</b>	Anita Parrish
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Schoolgate Nursery opened in 2001 and operates from a demountable building within the grounds of a primary school. It is situated in Harlow, Essex. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.30 to 15.30 term time only. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 44 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from both the local and wider catchment area. The nursery currently supports a child with special educational needs and a child who speaks English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven staff. Six of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are greeted warmly by staff and most settle into the routine of the nursery quickly. There are some procedures in place which are effective in preventing the spread of infection, such as staff wearing gloves when nappy changing and ensuring tables are cleaned thoroughly before and after children have their snacks and packed lunches. There is a frequent cleaning routine in place, however, this is not wholly effective and consequently children sometimes access toys and floor covering that look grubby. There are suitable hand washing and drying facilities, and most children know that they need to wash their hands at relevant times, such as after using the toilet and before eating. Some younger children receive gentle reminders from staff.

There is clear information which is shared with parents to help prevent the spread of infection. As a result, children do not attend if they are sick or infectious. They are assured of receiving prompt and appropriate care and treatment if they have accidents, as most staff have appropriate qualifications in first aid. All of the relevant policies and procedures are in place for the administration of medication, including prior written consent from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

There are systems in place which address the individual needs of children and particular dietary needs and preferences are catered for. Children are becoming aware that certain foods are considered to be good for them. These are promoted well through topics and the freshly prepared fruits provided at snack time. Packed lunches are supplied by parents who are encouraged to provide healthy options. Children have regular access to fresh drinking water.

Children have daily opportunities for outdoor play and they participate in some suitable physical activities at times during the week, for example, music and movement sessions. When they are outdoors they have some opportunity to further develop skills, as they, for example, use the slides and paint. However, due to the vast amount of outdoor play equipment, their development is somewhat inhibited.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

There are effective systems in place which ensure that children are prevented from leaving the premises unnoticed and that they are protected from strangers. These include the high-level lock and handle on the entry door, staff vigilance of persons accessing the provision and effective use of a visitors book. There is a daily registration system for staff and children in place.

Fire drills are practised on a regular basis, consequently children learn how to respond in the event of an emergency evacuation. Tests are conducted periodically on equipment, such as electrical appliances, to ensure these are in working order at all times.

Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children have access to toys that are safe, this is achieved through the daily checks made when they organise the nursery and outdoor play areas. As a result, children are less likely to injure themselves. Clear systems are in place to risk assess all areas of the premises, these are documented appropriately and displayed in all areas of the nursery in order to effectively monitor progress of safety issues.

The overall welfare of children is safeguarded because staff are on the whole suitably informed about their role and responsibilities in child protection. There are clear written procedures for staff to follow if they have concerns about a child. Staff show a developing knowledge of the procedure to follow if any allegations are made against a member of staff.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children appear confident and most of them are well settled. There are displays of children's photographs throughout the nursery which promotes a sense of belonging. They are familiar with the routines and on the whole know their immediate surroundings well. Children are engaged in a variety of activities that are age appropriate. Activities and resources are on the whole organised for them in advance and they happily select from what is on offer to them. However, the organisation of resources in the outdoor play area impacts on the children's ability to move freely. This is due to the large number of toys and equipment provided. In addition, the vast amount of toys and equipment in the indoor space sometimes hampers children's ability to access the wide range of good quality resources.

Children aged under three years clearly enjoy exploring malleable resources, such as dough and paint. This contributes to developing a variety of skills and experiences of different textures. Some younger children are learning new skills, for example, to use shape cutters. Staff on the whole encourage and support them well in developing their hand-eye coordination. Although a range of activities are provided for the younger children, they sometimes lack imagination and do not always offer visually stimulating and exciting opportunities in order that children become engaged and as a consequence, extend their learning and develop their cognitive thinking. Some staff working with children under three years have a developing knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. As a result, children's attainment on entry, observations and assessments are not yet secure.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a developing knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning. They understand the importance of planning a balanced curriculum to include all areas of learning, although in practice this is not always evident. This is because sometimes not enough consideration is given to ensuring that children can easily access toys and equipment and that a stimulating and challenging environment is created. Staff do not promote and encourage children to constantly access the six areas of learning. For example, children mainly access programmable toys or discovery tools at the time or the day that it is planned for. Staff are yet to record children's starting points in order to build on their individual areas of development. Planning is in place but observations and assessments are yet to be completed consistently across all six areas of learning. There are no clear systems to ensure that children's next steps for learning are identified in order to feed in to the planning process.

Children enjoy painting and drawing with chalk and pencils and are developing their skills using a range of tools confidently, such as paint brushes and pencils. They receive some regular opportunities for singing and enjoy music and movement sessions. Children have opportunities to mimic the world around them whilst playing with the small world play, such as the dolls house. They are frequent visitors to the role play area where they are able to express themselves freely. Some children are encouraged to participate in a range of number and problem solving activities through activities and the daily routine, for example, calculating and counting cups

and children at snack time. Some areas of the nursery are labelled in the English written language, this promotes an awareness in children that in their environment text carries meaning. Some children recognise their name card and independently put it into the post box in the entry hall before each session.

There are some opportunities for mark-making, such as chalking and water painting in the outdoor play area. However, there are fewer chances for them to engage in writing through play, for example, in the role play area or to write for a purpose, such as labelling their own work. Children are able to discover, explore and investigate living things through planned topics, such as growing tomatoes plants, green beans and peas. They problem solve as they work out how to manoeuvre the mouse on the computer in order that they can play a game. However, their access to everyday technology and programmable toys to support their learning is somewhat limited. Children have regular opportunities to develop physical skills as they, for example, use pencils and chinks with increasing control. They enjoy opportunities to develop their sense of balance and coordination during music and movement sessions. However, the outdoor play opportunities do not facilitate vigorous play which promotes children's physical development.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

There are systems in place to support children with English as an additional language. For example, staff liaise with parents and outside agencies in order to develop strategies to support children. Resources reflecting positive images of race and culture, on the whole, form an integral part of children's play and learning experiences. For example, the role play area is resourced with cooking utensils which are used in different countries and cultures. However there is a weakness in the resources reflecting positive images of disability. There are sound strategies to support children with disability. These include liaising closely with parents and other professionals, such as the area special needs coordinator to form individual education plans. This contributes to ensuring that individual targets are supported and later difficulties are avoided. The setting promotes an inclusive approach which enables all children to feel part of the group and secure in their surroundings. Children on the whole behave well and respond positively to staff because of the warm and friendly interaction they receive. The use of appropriate praise and encouragement for their achievements reinforces their good behaviour. Positive attitudes are formed as a result of the use of explanations children are given. This helps them to distinguish the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. For example, a member of staff intervenes to help two children resolve their issue and helps them to problem solve by providing them with options to either share or take turns. However, this is not always consistent. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents and carers are provided with information which is clear and well presented. In addition to the notice board, parents and carers are encouraged to spend time in the nursery. Meetings are organised to provide opportunities for parents and carers to meet key workers, discuss their child's development and learn more about what their child does whilst at nursery.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children of is satisfactory. The individual needs of children are recorded and there is a key worker system in place. This is developing to ensure accurate information regarding children's progress and development is exchanged and shared. Clear information about children's needs and preferences is documented at the start of the placement. The regular exchange of verbal feedback contributes towards a two way sharing of information. However, The system to share all children's individual learning priorities is developing. Newsletters and notice boards displaying, for example, activity plans and

photographs, ensure parents are made aware of how children spend their time at nursery. Parents receive some useful information about the nursery through informal parents' meetings, and meetings regarding children's development. Parents and carers can see their child's records at any time outside of scheduled meetings. They are also provided with information about the Foundation Stage of learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy and confident in a setting which is sufficiently organised to meet their needs. They enjoy an environment that promotes a feeling of security and which fosters a well established staff team who work closely together to ensure they deliver the daily routines smoothly.

Most required records are in place to promote the welfare, health and care of the children. One member of staff has attended training and some others demonstrate an awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, the implementation of the framework continues to develop.

Staff are generally deployed to ensure children receive adequate levels of involvement for their care and learning. But, at times, some staff adopt more of a supervisory role when, for example, in the outdoor play area and as a result do not always successfully engage with the children in purposeful play. In the main, space is used adequately to meet the needs of children in the nursery.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory. There is a commitment to ongoing training, this is facilitated by the provider and includes external and in house training. The provider monitors and reviews the practice, this, in the main, is done through evaluating planning and the use of informal observations. As a result, she has some knowledge of the setting's strengths and weaknesses, and has identified some areas for improvement, such as promoting parental involvement in the nursery. The provider is aware that there is a need to continue strengthening staff knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. She has sought some external help from the Early years Development and Childcare Partnership and the Pre-school Learning Alliance which assists in developing a balanced curriculum. However, children do not fully benefit from a clear assessment of how well their needs are met within the programme because systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision are not yet wholly effective.

Overall, meets the needs of children.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection the provider has provided parents with information regarding child protection. This assures that parents are aware of the nurseries responsibilities and procedures. They have also reviewed the lunch time arrangements of staff, ensuring that they always meet required ratios and as a result, children are safeguarded.

Nursery Education key issues.

Since the last inspection the nursery have developed outdoor play opportunities. This has assisted in towards broadening children's learning environment. The nursery have also reviewed practice in order to extend children's concentration and broaden experiences to encourage exploration, predication and creativity. Although these areas have been addressed in part, this

is ongoing and have been identified as areas for further development within enjoying and achieving at this inspection. Information received by parents regarding the Foundation Stage of learning has increased. This assists in ensuring that parents are well informed in order that they are included and can take an active role in their children's learning.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

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.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

## **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 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):

- review the cleaning procedures to ensure that children access play provision and flooring that is always clean
- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the child protection procedure
- develop the organisation of toys and resources inside and outside of the premises in order that children can access them and make choices about their play and learning
- develop resources depicting disability to ensure that they form an integral part of children's play and learning experiences
- develop staff understanding of the behaviour management statement in order that it is consistently applied; this refers to ensuring that children receive clear explanations.

#### **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 the planning to ensure that a more interesting and exciting range of activities are available which enable staff to extend and challenge children's learning and thinking; this also applies to care
- enhance the systems in place for the recording of children assessments so that observations are completed across all six areas of learning
- plan and provide a more balanced curriculum across all six areas of learning and ensure that children experience activities that offer sufficient challenge and learning

- identify children's starting points in order to build on their individual areas of development and use these to inform future planning and assessments; this also applies to care.

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