

Spring Lane Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY307211
Inspection date	03 October 2007
Inspector	Karen Scott
Setting Address	c/o Chaucer Technology School, Spring Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1SW
Telephone number	01227 479 696
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Registered person	Asquith Court Nurseries Limited
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?

Spring Lane Day Nursery is one of 108 nurseries run by Asquith Court Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2005 and operates from eight rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated on school premises on the outskirts of Canterbury. A maximum of 143 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 153 children under five years on roll. Of these, 55 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 42 members of staff. Of these, 26 hold appropriate early years qualifications, two are working towards a qualification and seven are working towards a higher qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery has good hygiene procedures in place and they continue to review them in order to protect children from cross contamination. Staff routinely wash their hands and remove their shoes before entering the baby rooms, helping to keep the floor that children are crawling around on clean. However, thorough cleaning of the bases of the potties is not undertaken, presenting a risk of cross infection. Children know they need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet, before preparing and eating food and after messy play and do so as a matter of routine. Although children's individual sleep routines are respected, there are not enough cots for the number of babies the setting is registered for. Children have their own bedding and are checked on regularly as they sleep, in order to keep them safe. All children have daily physical exercise indoors and outdoors on large play equipment, helping them to understand the need for exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. The setting is in the process of renovating the outside area for older children but has ensured that this is done in stages so that children still benefit from outside play. Children who are infectious do not attend the nursery and if taken ill whilst there, parents are contacted and asked to take them home. This helps to prevent the spread of infections.

The nursery has a good understanding of healthy eating for young children. Meals and snacks are made with fresh ingredients. Lunch and snack time is a social occasion; staff sit and eat with children, involving them in discussions. Children's independence is promoted as they serve themselves. Children are protected from food that they should not eat. As well as written information that is stored confidentially but is easily accessible, placemats show children's photographs and any relevant information, helping to ensure children are not given any food or drink that they should not receive. Children help themselves to drinks and staff encourage them to drink plenty, helping to prevent dehydration.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is warm and welcoming. Children benefit from playing in a well-organised environment, which allows them to move around safely. They have easy and safe access to ample toys and resources appropriate to their ages and stages of development. Furniture is child sized. Risk assessments of the indoors and outdoor areas are carried out regularly and steps taken to minimise risks to children. Babies and toddlers are able to crawl safely and pull themselves up using domestic furniture. They discover their own boundaries and limits. There are clearly defined procedures for evacuation of the building in each room and the group have taken steps to make evacuation easier by having a cot on wheels next to the fire door in the baby room, for example.

Procedures that detail what the nursery will do if children should become lost or are not collected help to keep children safe. They are shared with parents, meaning that they are aware of what the setting will do should such an event occur. The nursery understands their role in the protection of children and shares this with parents and carers. Staff have a reasonable understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and the steps to take should they have any concerns about a child in their care. This helps to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, relaxed and confident. Staff are warm towards children, making them feel valued. Children relate well to staff and the other minded children and are forming close relationships. Babies enjoy lots of positive interaction with adults in a warm and welcoming environment. They play with a range of resources that stimulate their senses such as interesting mobiles, looking in mirrors and exploring different textures such as sand and corn flour. Toddlers are able to help themselves to toys and resources with ease, making choices about what they wish to play with, and gaining independence. Children's creative and imaginative development is encouraged through activities such as art and craft, singing and pretence play. Staff read to children and ask questions to aid their language development. Staff make regular observations of children under three years and record these in children's books, which parents and carers are free to read whenever they wish. Staff use the observations to decide what children's next developmental steps are but it is not clear as to how the observations are used to inform the planning of activities in order to meet children's individual needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have received training on the Foundation Stage and consequently have knowledge about the different areas of learning and the developmental stepping-stones that children progress through. Plans show that children participate in a range of activities that are based around their interests. For example, children's interest in cookery was noted and activities planned around that. Staff make observations of children and plan activities based on the individual needs of their own key children, in order that they progress through the stepping-stones. Children's Birth to three portfolios are used by staff to establish children's starting points. Children show initiative, deciding where and what they want to play with. They concentrate on activities of their choosing although there are occasions when their interest wanes, particularly when they come together to play singing games in a small space for a long period.

Children's work is praised and displayed around the setting, making them feel that their efforts are valued. Children enjoy household chores such as laying the table for lunch and sweeping the floor afterwards. Staff involve children in lots of informal discussions, asking questions to challenge them. Children see many examples of the written word. Toys and resources are clearly labelled and children self-register, finding their name and photograph. The book corners have comfortable cushions to sit on and children enjoy looking at books on a one-to-one basis with staff. However, there is a small range of books in one room and a large range in the other meaning that children are not afforded the same choice. Children readily write their names on drawings and have easy access to note pads and pencils which they use to enhance their play when being waiters, for example, practising their pre-writing skills.

Children see numbers in the environment, as there are several number lines and height charts on the walls. Staff encourage children to count as part of their play. Children have access to resources to explore shape. They participate in cookery sessions, weighing ingredients and continue this thread of learning in the role-play area where they use kitchen scales in their play. Children have free access to the outside area where they explore mini beasts using magnifying glasses and enjoy gardening. They use construction toys and cardboard boxes to create recognisable creations. Children have access to computers and explore the components of old cameras and telephones, for example. Children learn about the local community as the group invites visitors such as police officers to the setting.

Children play indoors and outside, making good use of the space available to them. They show an awareness of space, manoeuvring around obstacles and each other. They have easy access to tools, equipment and materials that support their play. Children use their imaginations in the role-play areas, using props from around the room to extend their play. Staff support children's play in this area by adding resources, such as menus to the restaurant, and by playing alongside children enhancing their language and imaginative development. Children participate in music and movement games. They explore different medias and materials and have free access to resources to create their individual pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The setting has a good understanding of equality of opportunity and a positive attitude towards diversity. Children have access to a reasonable range of resources that promote the diversity within society. They celebrate festivals from various cultures and see the written word in different languages. Staff know the children well and involve them in discussions about their families and pets, for example. Babies learn about themselves and their own capabilities. New children to the setting are shown compassion and staff help them to settle, calming them quickly as they distract them with toys that they enjoy playing with. Children's work is displayed around the nursery, making them feel that their efforts are valued. Older children's artwork is put in drawers for them to take home. However, in one room, children share a small drawer with several other children and their pictures are crushed and difficult to access with ease. The nursery has experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A special needs coordinator liaises with parents and other agencies to ensure that children's individual needs are met. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from praise and encouragement. Appropriate strategies such as one to one support, distraction, calm intervention and reminders of how it feels to be treated unkindly help children to understand right from wrong. However, older children playing on the computer are not in direct eyeshot of staff and when conflict takes place there staff are slow to react to it.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. There is lots of information displayed in a bright and interesting manner around the setting. Policies and procedures are easily available and parents and carers are kept fully informed of the setting's practice. Informal chats are held at the end of each day and parents are very happy with the care that their children receive. Parents and carers are informed about the Foundation Stage through displays and written information. Plans showing the activities that children are participating in are displayed on the doors to each of the rooms. Newsletters also inform parents about the activities children are participating in, asking them to join in if they wish. The group holds parents evenings and staff talk to parents informally at the end of each session, updating them on their children's progress. However, children's portfolios are not easily accessible to parents and they have to ask to see them.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from well-organised space and resources. However, staff do not always organise their time well. For example, staff take care to meet children's individual needs but sometimes this is detriment to the other children in the room. The group keeps themselves informed of

current childcare practices. Staff attend training and frequent training is held at the setting. The group meet together regularly, reviewing their practice, thinking of ways in which it can be improved. All relevant and mandatory documentation is in place, well maintained and is easily accessible when needed. Photographs of key persons with a list of their key children underneath are prominently displayed, ensuring that parents and carers are aware of whom to liaise with. Visitors to the setting sign themselves in and out, recording the reason for their visit and times of arrival and departure. This and secure entry systems help to keep children safe from harm. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. A member of staff has the role of monitoring the education. This is a new role and therefore the member of staff is just beginning to monitor the delivery of the Foundation Stage and to work with the other members of staff, in order to enhance the education that children receive. Staff are motivated and interact with the children in order to enhance the delivery of the Foundation Stage.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection four actions were raised to improve care and four were raised to improve education. The four actions within care related to National Standards six, seven and fourteen.

Within care the setting were told to maintain a safe environment for children ensuring all required safety equipment is in place, to ensure staff implement the nursery's policy about the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious to prevent cross infection, to ensure the steps taken to prevent the spread of infection are adequate and to ensure registers record accurately the hours of children's attendance.

Staff ensure that socket covers are in place. For example, they take immediate action to make play areas safe for children by sweeping up spilt sand and ensuring that the floor is not strewn with obstacles. Staff now implement the setting's policy about the exclusion of sick children, sending them home when unwell. Parents and carers are made aware of this policy through written procedures that are displayed around the setting. This helps to protect children from infections. Cleaning procedures are in place to prevent the spread of cross-infection and overall are being followed. However, the cleaning of some areas is being overlooked and further improvements to the procedures, in order to protect children from germs, requires further development. A record is kept of children's actual times of arrival and departure meaning that there is an accurate record of attendance should it be needed.

Within education the setting were told to ensure staff improve their understanding of how to use assessment records effectively to plan relevant activities, to improve the systems for monitoring and evaluating the educational programme ensuring all children are suitably challenged and making progress towards the early learning goals, to ensure children with learning difficulties enjoy the same full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education and are making progress towards the early learning goals (this action also applies to the care inspection) and to ensure parents have adequate knowledge about the Foundation Stage, their children's progress towards the early learning goals and are made aware that they are able to contribute to their children's records.

A member of staff has been given the role of Childcare and Education manager and it is her role to monitor the delivery of the Foundation Stage and to support staff who have received training in order to improve their knowledge. The group also receives support from the local authority. As this is a relatively new role this is still an area that needs further improvement

and it is recommended that the setting continues to make improvements in this area. The Special Educational Needs coordinator is undergoing training to improve her understanding of the issues relating to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. She works with parents and other agencies in order that children receive the care that they require. The coordinator and the child's key person work together, observing then planning and adapting activities to meet children's individual needs. In order that parents have adequate knowledge about the Foundation Stage, they were invited to attend a meeting to learn about and discuss the Foundation Stage and there are many notices around the setting explaining the different areas of learning and stepping stones that children progress through. Parents are invited to contribute to their children's records but they are relatively new and this is a new concept for parents too.

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):

- continue to make improvements to the procedures to prevent the spread of infection
- develop the use of observations to inform the planning and ensure that activities are based on what children already know and what they need to learn next
- ensure staff are deployed appropriately at all times in order that staff and children are not vulnerable.

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):

- continue to improve the systems for monitoring and evaluating the educational programme; ensuring all children are suitably challenged and making progress 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