

Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 127285
Inspection date 18 September 2007
Inspector Linda Patricia Coccia

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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 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?

Just Learning Day Nursery opened in 1998. It operates from a large house located near Maidstone town centre. The younger children are cared for downstairs, and the three to five year olds are cared for upstairs. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 78 children from babies to pre-school aged children on roll. This includes 26 funded children. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting is currently supporting several children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens all year round. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00 (except bank holidays and a week at Christmas). There are 19 members of staff who work with children, of whom 17 have an early years qualification to NVQ Level 2 or above. Of the staff, 13 hold current paediatric first aid or first aid at work certificates.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Procedures are in place which maintain good standards of hygiene within the nursery and which help children become aware of personal hygiene issues. Toys, equipment and work surfaces are cleaned with antibacterial cleaners. In the baby rooms dummies are individually stored in small pots of sterilising fluid. Children under two have their own drinking cups and bottles. In the toilets, colourful eye catching posters remind children to wash hands to remove germs. The children in the pre-school room receive additional reminders from staff. Therefore, children are protected from cross infection.

Children's health is promoted by a selection of policies, procedures and good staff practices. All rooms have their own accident record sheets which are completed by staff and countersigned by parents, senior staff and the manager. Meticulous medication procedures ensure doses are double checked and double logged. Medicines are stored appropriately in locked boxes. Written permissions are obtained from parents to seek emergency medical treatment. A few children have particular medical needs and senior staff have been trained to administer their medication. Children's health records are very well maintained and their individual needs are met.

Children are offered food which is healthy and nutritious. Lunch and teatime meals are provided by a specialist catering company who cater for all types of individual dietary needs, from vegetarian to gluten free. Staff who handle the food are aware of the company procedures to ensure food is served at the correct temperature. Parents of babies provide ready mixed bottles which staff label and store in the fridge in the baby room. In the pre-school room the children have a self select snack time and can choose when they have a drink and biscuits. The children help themselves to fresh fruit or vegetables and pour their own drinks, choosing from water or milk. They are encouraged to become independent. All staff are aware of which children have special diets and can cater for them appropriately. Children have their individual dietary needs met.

Children are involved in physical play in the garden at least once a day. A secure outdoor space is provided. Security procedures are rigorous as children leave the main building to walk to the play area at the rear. A wide variety of play equipment is available for the children to use, from a large play castle to smaller baby slides. Ride-on toys, balls and hoops are also available. There are lots of squeals of delight from children as they enter the area. They really enjoy their outdoor play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are looked after on a premises which is well maintained. CCTV is used to cover the grounds and entrance areas. The premises has a homely, welcoming atmosphere with plenty of brightly coloured posters, children's work and information for parents, displayed around the hallway. The pre-school children and the two to three year old groups each have two reasonably sized play rooms to use. These are adjoining and allow children to free flow around them. The one to two year old children also use two play rooms but these are separated by the hallway. The babies play in one large room which is divided into two areas. Children feel at home in their surroundings.

Children are looked after in rooms which are secure, safe and suitable. Staff carry out daily written risk assessments on their rooms and during play sessions; they constantly appraise toys for hazards. Appropriate safety equipment is in place throughout the nursery such as stair gates on the stairs. Children receive regular reminders about safety from staff which encourages them to learn about risks and hazards. For example, not running in the rooms and holding onto the handrail or banisters when walking downstairs. Toys are well maintained, safe and appropriate for the ages of the children using them. They are stored appropriately within easy reach of the children. All children have the opportunity to participate in the emergency evacuation drills, which are held regularly, are well recorded and regularly assessed for improvement. Children are beginning to have regard to their own safety.

Good procedures are in place to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. Staff have a good understanding of the nursery's internal Child Protection (CP) procedures and why they need to protect children. The procedures include keeping parents apprised of any nursery concerns as well as the nursery policy of recording children's existing injuries. Recently qualified staff have completed CP training within the past two years. However, it would appear that many of the longer serving staff have not updated their CP training within the past three years.

Good departure policies are in place to ensure children are collected by suitable persons who are nominated by parents. These include identification pin numbers, telephone ring backs, and identification photographs kept in baby diaries. Children's well being is promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle well in their respective rooms. They are greeted warmly by room staff with whom they hold conversations about home life, siblings and such like. Babies happily crawl around their room, exploring the range of activities provided for them. They play with soft toys, push button toys, get involved in sensory activities such as paint and corn flour and listen to different types of music. All areas of their development are being catered for. Children aged between one year and three years discover the world around them through construction play, imaginary play and a wide range of craft work. Their pictures are displayed. Plenty of photographic evidence is also displayed showing them enjoying a varied range of activities. Activities are all planned and linked to the Birth to three matters framework. Some activities are adult led, which generally the children enjoy, but occasionally during these activities there is a restriction of choice which can lead to children becoming fractious and un-co-operative. All children have close relationships with staff. Throughout the nursery staff can be seen comforting children, smiling and laughing with them, joining in their play and offering support and suggestions when necessary. Children are very happy and appear at home within the setting.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Initial individual assessments are carried out on each child. Their 'next steps' are identified on their observation record. However, it is difficult for staff to identify each child's 'next steps' in order to inform the planning. Key workers plan a range of activities which allow children to explore and investigate. But, the planning does not always give details of the differentiation within the activities, which allow staff to gauge their different expectations for three and four year olds. Regular observations by all staff are carried out on each child and informative notes are kept.

Children participate in concentrated play in the home corner, making each other food and buying fruit and vegetables off of the market stall. They learn to work with each other as they share toys and utensils. Their personal, social and emotional development is further progressed as they help staff with small tasks such as clearing up after themselves at snack time and taking themselves to the toilet. Children select books from the book boxes and enjoy reading each other stories. They are becoming proficient at identifying letter shapes as they select their name tags at snack time and many of them can identify other words which start with the same first letter of their own name. Mark making equipment is available throughout the activities such as in the home corner or in the book corner as well as in the writing area. Four year olds can write their own names unaided on their pictures.

Children are becoming familiar with mathematical concepts as they weigh and measure items at the market stall or decide with staff how much sawdust they need for the hamster cage. Three year olds can count, with the help of their fingers, up to 10 but can also identify some numbers out of order. The four year olds have no difficulty with this at all and can put numbers into order when all jumbled together. Staff are adept at challenging children regarding number, calculation and shapes.

Children obtain knowledge and understanding of the world as they ably use computers, cassette players and pretend mobile phones. The older children can switch on the computer, use the mouse and follow simple on-screen directions. Children develop a sense of time as they use timers to take turns on equipment.

Children are developing physically as they use a variety of equipment both indoors and out. Outside they become confident in the use of hoops and other small equipment and feel able to take risks as they jump from high up on the climbing frame onto the soft flooring. Indoors they exercise to music, wriggling as snakes or tiptoeing as mice. Children experiment with paint and a wide range of other art and craft equipment. They mix colours to 'see what happens' and are quite happy to help construct a large wall mural. For example, children painted railway carriages as part of a wall mural for the current transport theme. They use construction toys imaginatively. For example, two children used a train track to make a roadway for an imaginary monster living in the sidings under the craft cupboard. They built a wall with bricks to keep him in so that he wouldn't frighten anyone.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from a variety of different cultures attend the provision. Children are becoming aware of each other's differences as they see and use a good range of toys showing positive images of race, culture and gender every time they attend. However, there are still very few positive images of disability in the toys or pictures around the nursery, despite having been increased since the last inspection. Staff have a good understanding of promoting equality to the children particularly in the festivals and celebrations that they participate in. Staff also use good working procedures to cater for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Apart from creating individual development plans for the children, they also seek help from other health professionals in conjunction with parents. Children's individual needs are met.

Children learn about their own behaviour as staff implement a range of good behaviour management strategies. Children are polite and well behaved. They say please and thank you to each other and staff without prompting, share toys well and are interested in and respectful to visitors. Staff give children appropriate praise for their achievements and affirm their good

behaviour. Children show good concern for each other and animals as they daily care for the pet hamster and provide food for birds in the garden. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children build self esteem and confidence throughout their nursery life.

Staff work closely with parents. Parents report that they receive lots of verbal information from staff about their children. They also report that they can see their children's development records at any time and know about the Birth to three matters framework that they are based on. One parent commented that knowing about 'the framework' has helped her with her child at home. Another commented that she always feels supported by staff with both her children and always feels welcome. Children benefit from continuity of care.

Partnership with parents is good. The parents of funded children receive lots of up-to-date information about the Foundation Stage. A large, informative display is situated in the entrance area to the pre-school room. It is changed regularly to include the activities the children are doing. There are plenty of photographic examples of the individual stepping stones that children are meeting. Parents report that they have regular opportunities to see and discuss their children's progress with their child's key worker. Parents also report that they get involved in their children's learning as they help them to look after the nursery hamster at weekends and take stuffed toys home to experience holidays, parties or just home life. Children benefit from activities at home with their parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provider has good procedures in place to ensure staff working with children are suitable to do so. A rigorous and robust recruitment and vetting procedure ensures that children are looked after by suitable persons. Staff undergo an induction period and work to stringent discipline and conduct procedures. Students on placement and any voluntary workers also have individual policies governing their conduct and are made aware of the confidentiality to be maintained throughout the nursery. Staff hold suitable childcare qualifications and current paediatric first aid certificates and most staff members are very experienced in childcare. Children benefit from being with experienced child-carers.

The provider has all regulatory paperwork in place, which is well maintained. The registration certificate is displayed in the entrance hallway. Each room has its own attendance record and children's arrival and departure times are recorded. A visitors book is in the hallway which also records arrival and departure times. The nursery's operational plan is readily available on request and comprises a full set of policies and procedures which all contribute to keeping children safe and promoting their well being. All children's records remain confidential between staff and parents. Children's records are stored in lockable cupboards. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. The manager and her senior staff team provide good leadership for the nursery. They all have 'hands on' experience of working in the rooms with the children. The manager and her deputy are supernumerary, are very experienced and lead by example. They are always available to staff for guidance and support. The toys and equipment provided are suitable for the ages of the children attending, regularly reviewed and updated or replaced periodically. Staff report that they have wish lists for toys to increase the enjoyment of the children as well as being learning tools. The provider welcomes staff input in to procedures and policies and encourage staff to work as a team. There are clear reporting procedures for

staff through their room seniors and up to the deputy and manager. A series of room meetings, senior meetings and management meetings ensure that everyone gets to know about each child. Regular, full staff meetings ensure that staff suggestions for the smooth running of the nursery are listened to, and staff have the opportunity to receive information and in-house training to keep their knowledge up to date. Managers encourage the staff in the pre-school room to develop their own system for delivery of the Foundation Stage and their own methods to deliver it. A new system is currently being worked on which allows more choices for children. Overall, the Foundation Stage is being delivered appropriately.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the provider received two recommendations to help them improve the provision. They have followed the recommendations which concerned the format for the keeping of the complaints log under National Standard 12 and the range of toys and equipment that positively reflect disabled people in society under National Standard 9.

The provider has ensured that the complaints log is in an easy to understand format which gives clear information to parents regarding any complaints the provider has received. The provider has also increased the positive images of disability within the toys that the children play with. However, positive imagery within the posters and books within the provision have not been addressed. This remains as a recommendation for this inspection.

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 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 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 all staff have the opportunity to attend up dated training for safeguarding children
- ensure that all children are given choices regarding activities, particularly when they do not wish to join in adult led activities
- ensure positive images of disability are visible throughout the nursery.

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):

- consider ways to include differentiation and children's individual next steps in the planning and the focus activities.

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