



Sunny Day Nursery & Play Club

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Pamela Woodhouse

Setting Address Middle Farm Barns, Middle Farm Way, Poundbury Centre,
Dorchester, DT1 3WA
Telephone number 01305 268577
E-mail joy@sunnydays.co.uk
Registered person Sunny Day Nurseries 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Sunny Days Nursery opened in 1995 and transferred to the current premises in 2002. It is privately owned and is one of a chain of Sunny Days nurseries. The nursery operates from a converted barn situated in the village of Poundbury, near to the town of Dorchester.

The accommodation is on two floors. The ground floor comprises of an entrance hall,

four baby units, with two separate sleep rooms, three toddler units, and two pre-school rooms. Each unit has its own integral kitchen and toilet facilities. The first floor, which is accessed by a lift or stairs, is the Play Loft soft play centre, communal dining area and After School and Holiday Club room.

There is an enclosed, outdoor playground and grassed garden area, with chickens, two rabbits and guinea pigs housed separately.

The nursery is open from Monday to Friday, from 07:00 to 19:00 all year round, there are 292 children on roll, between the ages of 3 months to 14 years. This includes 43 children who are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children aged 8 to 14 years attend before and after school and during school holidays. Children may attend on a part or full time basis and come from a wide range of communities from the town of Dorchester and from within a 30 mile radius.

There are 26 full time staff who work directly with the children. The manager is supernumerary. Nine of the staff have early years qualification to level three, eight to level two and twelve are undertaking training. There is a full time cook who is responsible for the preparation of all meals and a part time driver of the nursery mini bus.

The nursery has an Investors in People Award and works in liaison with Dorset Sure Start. It is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn good hygiene practice through daily routines. They wash hands after using the toilet and before eating. Staff carry out good procedures such as, wearing protective gloves for nappy changing and regular cleaning of rooms and equipment, which helps protect children from the spread of infection. However, some equipment for nappy changing is not in good repair, therefore effective sanitising is difficult to maintain. Children's health is compromised because parents are not consistently being asked to countersign accident records.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. The nursery offers a good range of nutritious snacks and meals, or the option of bringing their own food. Children are offered drinks at regular intervals throughout the day, the older children can help themselves to a drink at any time, as staff provide water and equipment at the children's level. However, the younger children do not have this opportunity and must ask for a drink if they are thirsty between snack times.

The toddlers, pre-school and school age children have very good access and opportunities for exercise and physical play both indoors and outside. The play loft adventure play equipment allows children to develop their physical skills as well as giving them a sense of danger and excitement. Babies, however, have very limited opportunities to experience playing outside and benefiting from fresh air on a regular

basis.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure environment. The effective security system means that children are protected from un-invited visitors and cannot leave the building unsupervised. There is a procedure for daily risk assessments in each room to identify hazards and minimise risks to children. However, the staff are not consistent in completing these and the system for following up hazards identified is not effective. Some were identified by staff three months previously and have not yet been addressed.

Sleeping babies are well protected through the staff's rigorous procedure. They make regular checks which are recorded, and ensure the temperature in the cot rooms is comfortable. Children are involved in regular practices for leaving the building in an emergency, which staff evaluate to ensure effectiveness.

The staff's sound understanding of their responsibility in child protection issues contributes towards the children's safety and welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are happy, settled and secure. They are involved in a suitable range of activities and experiences that help them progress in all areas of development. For example, babies enjoy hearing and singing "the wheels on the bus" and begin to join in the actions by nodding and clapping.

The youngest toddlers benefit from being part of a small group where they develop social skills and enjoy the company of the staff and each other. For instance, they enjoy positive interaction from staff at lunch time where they begin to join in conversation and learn table manners. However, babies experience limited opportunities to be involved in messy, sensory activities.

The pre-school and school age children have developed firm relationships with their peers and staff. They enjoy a wide range of activities and support each other in their play, for example, teaching each other how to play a game and self govern the amount of time they spend on activities such as the play station so that all children have an equal turn. The school age children help to plan their own activities which gives them a sense of responsibility and ownership.

All children develop independence skills through routine activities such as using toilet facilities, washing hands, and using cutlery. However, the two to three year olds do not always engage fully in activities, particularly in large groups such as listening to stories, cooking activities and during meal times in the dining room. They are easily distracted as the environment is often noisy and sometimes activities are not planned effectively. Staff are developing their understanding and implementation of the Birth

to three matters framework to focus on the youngest children's development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff have an adequate knowledge of the foundation stage and a sufficient range of activities are planned which cover all areas of learning. They track children's progress through the stepping stones, however, because some staff do not have secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage, the next step in children's learning is not always clearly identified or understood.

Activities offer adequate challenge for most children and are well received. However, teaching methods are inconsistent and the more able children are not always challenged effectively. The more knowledgeable staff are able to encourage children's progress by increasing the level of difficulty in activities, for example, comparing number and questioning children to encourage children to think about what happens next during the story. However, the less knowledgeable staff do not effectively question or extend children's learning.

Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Their personal, social and emotional development is very good. Staff encourage children to have a sense of responsibility to themselves and others, for example, dressing themselves and helping to tidy away. They are very independent and make good, constructive choices when deciding what they want to do, for example, thinking about what resources they will need to complete their chosen activity.

Children are able speakers and confidently communicate their needs to others. They enjoy listening to stories and also looking at books independently, some can tell a simple story by interpreting the illustrations. They have some opportunities to develop their writing skills, however, there are limited opportunities for them to write for a purpose, for example, writing their own names on their drawings. Children are beginning to understand simple mathematical concepts such as comparing number, adding one more and taking one away. They can count confidently to ten and some children can count beyond this to twenty. However, children do not always practice these skills in everyday activities, for example, counting how many cups and chairs are needed at lunch time. Cooking activities offer them opportunities to learn about weighing and measuring.

Children are beginning to learn about the wider world in a range of ways which capture their interest. For example, a recent Caribbean theme gave children a practical and enjoyable introduction to music, dance, food and dress of the region. They learn about the life cycle of plants through planting and growing seeds, however, have limited opportunities to become familiar with everyday technology.

Children enjoy a range of creative activities which stimulate their imagination, such as role play and constructing from boxes. For example, a group of children play for a sustained period of time with a ship constructed out of several large boxes which they had stuck together with selotape, using tubes for telescopes and oars. They explore media and materials everyday which enables them to experiment with different textures and fixing materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies' individual routines are discussed with parents and respected. For example, they sleep either in cots in a separate room or on sleep mats in the play room. They eat when they are hungry which may not be at lunch time. They develop a sense of self awareness and belonging as they recognise themselves in photographs and low-level mirrors. Children are made to feel special when the group join in activities to celebrate their birthday and enjoy giving cards, singing and sharing birthday cake. However, not all children settle well when they arrive during the early part of the day as the environment is not always welcoming. This improves when the school age children leave for school.

Children behave well. From an early age, they learn what is expected through daily routine such as lining up to move rooms, and helping to tidy away toys. They proudly wear stickers which they receive from staff when they have been helpful. Most staff set good examples such as being courteous to each other and listening to the children, however, there are occasions when children observe staff talking at story time, or calling across the room which raises the noise level. This results in children being unable to focus appropriately on their activities.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved with the Parents in Partnership with Sunny Days (PIPS) group. This gives them an independent voice to comment on their children's safety and welfare in the nursery. They receive very good, comprehensive information about the provision, and are kept informed about their children's developmental progress. For example, staff complete daily reports for parents of the youngest children. These includes information about activities, sleep, food and nappy changes. They exchange verbal information daily with parents of the pre-school and school age children but the funded pre-school children's progress in learning is not regularly discussed fully. This usually happens just prior to the children's transfer to school, however, parents are encouraged to support their children, for example, through learning about shapes and colours.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The organisation of the premises, and staff deployment, is not effective in meeting the needs of all the children. This is particularly relevant at the beginning of the day when the youngest children arrive and are accommodated in one room with all age groups, including children over the age of eight years. The atmosphere is noisy and chaotic and leads to some children becoming unsettled as they arrive.

The babies do not experience many outdoor or messy activities as these experiences are not often planned or implemented with this age group. This is due to staff not being deployed effectively to allow for flexibility to move away from the base rooms

when babies are sleeping or eating.

Although there is a comprehensive induction procedure, staff do always carry out policies consistently. For example, risk assessments are not always effective, and the legally required accident records are not always maintained adequately. This means that children's health and safety is compromised.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and have regular opportunities to develop their skills through training. However, some have a limited understanding of the Foundation Stage. This has been identified by the manager and training has been arranged for those members of staff. Currently the systems in place do not evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and the impact this has on the children's learning. Observations and assessments are not regularly maintained. The newly installed staff team however, know what they want to achieve and are currently developing a system whereby the children's key worker will track children's progress on a regular basis. This means that their progress will be more closely monitored.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last childcare inspection recommendations were made to make sure that risk assessments are carried out effectively and to minimise any identified hazards; maintain required records and introduce a system to record room temperatures when babies are sleeping.

The provider has addressed these issues by introducing risk assessment, maintaining required records in relation to incidents and implementing a system to monitor sleep room temperatures. However, risk assessments are not applied consistently or effectively and parents are not kept fully informed about any accidents the children may have. This means that children's ongoing safety is put at risk on occasions.

At the last nursery education inspection key issues to raise children's awareness of other cultures, extend resources and opportunities for children to develop mark making and writing skills, and review, monitor and develop the planning system were made.

The provider has increased the range of activities to raise children's awareness of different cultures, for example, by inviting people to share their culture with the children and celebrating a range of festivals. These practical and real experiences help children to understand diversity. Children have independent access to a wider range of resources and activities, however, they are not always encouraged to develop their skills, for example, writing for a purpose. The current system does not effectively monitor planning nor how this links to the children's developmental needs. There has been a complete turnover of staff working with the funded nursery children since the last inspection and the new staff are currently developing a system which

will track children's individual development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted have received five concerns.

In May 2004 a concern was raised under standard 6: Safety regarding supervision in the 'play loft'. Ofsted asked the provider to investigate. From the report received, Ofsted judged that National Standards are being met and the provider remains registered.

In June 2004 two separate concerns were raised under standards 1: Suitable Person regarding staff checks and suitable staff, 6: Safety regarding supervision, 7: Health in connection with resources for nappy changing, and 11: Behaviour regarding staff's behaviour management.

Ofsted made an unannounced visit on 30/06/04 and actions were raised which required the provider to ensure that records of accidents are clear and always signed by a parent; to ensure that staff deployment allows required ratios to be met at all times; and to ensure that significant events are reported to Ofsted. Recommendations were also made to make sure that risk assessments are carried out effectively, and that all significant incidents are recorded.

Ofsted carried out a follow up visit on 15/09/04. The national standards were found to be met, and the provider remains registered. Recommendations were made to ensure that children's safety is improved with regard to the use of staples, and to ensure that parents always sign the accident records.

In August 2004 a concern was raised under Standard 1: Suitable Person regarding nappy changing procedures. An enquiry was carried out and from the report received, Ofsted judged that National Standards are being met and the provider remains registered.

In November 2004 a concern was raised under standards 1: Suitable Person, 3: Care, Learning and Play, and 12: Partnership with Parents about a child not settling well at the nursery, staff shouting, and the child or parent not knowing staff names. Ofsted asked the provider to investigate. From the report received, Ofsted judged that the National Standards are being met and the provider remains registered.

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve the organisation of the playrooms and the staff available, so that all children's needs are met effectively; taking particular regard to the beginning of the day, and the opportunities for babies to have time outside and messy play
- ensure that all accident records are signed by parents

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- improve the systems in place to make sure that observations and assessments are used to inform the next step in children's learning
- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to ensure sufficient challenge is consistently offered to all children

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