

The Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305380
Inspection date	11 September 2007
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Setting Address	Huntsbank Farm, 356 Crewe Road, Wistaston, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 6QT
Telephone number	01270 568611
E-mail	
Registered person	Carol Ann Connolly
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Nursery at Wistaston is a privately owned and managed day care setting. It opened in 1996 and operates from a two-storey house in Wistaston, between Crewe and Nantwich. A maximum of 85 children may attend the setting at any one time, 69 of whom are under five years. A further 16 school age children may attend the out of school provision. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 218 children aged from birth to under 11 years on roll. Of these, 26 are on the out of school roll and 35 pre-school children receive funding for early education. Children come mainly from the local catchment area or their parents travel to work in the locality. The nursery currently supports no children with learning difficulties or disabilities and none for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 30 members of staff. Of these, 21 hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working to extend their qualifications. The setting has access to advisory staff from Sure Start Cheshire.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay very healthy because practitioners employ extremely thorough health and hygiene procedures. They keep all activity, kitchen and toilet areas immaculately clean and remind children to wash their hands and protect their clothes with suitable aprons. They ensure that tables are cleaned very regularly and use hygienic procedures for nappy changing. Colour coded cloths and individual hand towels, face cloths, bibs and aprons are laundered after every use to minimise cross-infection.

Good attention to individual children's health needs means that dietary requirements, changes of clothing and administration of any necessary creams or medication are hygienically undertaken according to each child's needs and their parents' wishes. Details of children's particular health needs are carefully recorded for staff reference and general advice about toilet training and healthy teeth is displayed for parents to use. Medication is only administered with written instructions and consent from parents and records are kept of every administration. Parents sign accident sheets to acknowledge each entry. Parents receive copies of a detailed health policy, including matters regarding antibiotics, diarrhoea, fever, sickness and rashes. There are also consents obtained detailing what first aid and temperature reducing medications may be given to each child. All these measures secure children's good health.

Young children enjoy good levels of physical activity indoors using ball pools, soft play apparatus and music and movement sessions. All children have plenty of fresh air outdoors because time is given to this in most weathers. For example, children use trikes, scooters, slides, climbing frames, tunnels, balls, hoops, tents and play houses on the soft all-weather surface and on the grass area. Children know how to dress according to the weather and out of school club children enjoy having direct access to the play area from their club room.

Children are well nourished and enjoy a healthy balanced diet through a varied menu for snacks and meals, cooked on the premises. Menus usually include five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Children drink only water between meals and their dietary requirements are sensitively met. However, children have minimal involvement in preparing, serving or clearing up after their meals and few staff devote their time to sitting with children at mealtimes. This holds back children's independence skills and knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, well maintained and welcoming environment. The nursery and out of school rooms are well organised, decorated and comfortable, with toilet facilities close to each room so that children move around the setting safely and with confidence. Rooms display children's work and resources and areas are labelled, so that it is stimulating, understandable and homely. However, some storage remains behind cupboard doors, with displays above child height. This means that resources are not freely accessible to help children to examine, choose, set up and clear away themselves. Nevertheless, there are interesting reading, craft, computer and role play areas to capture children's interest in the pre-school room and a lounge area makes the out of school room very comfortable. The toddler and baby rooms are bright and well equipped to enable non-mobile and toddling children to safely enjoy a good range of stimulating resources.

There is very good security to the only public entrance door because it locks upon closure and all parents religiously close it behind them. The intercom and closed circuit television camera are used to check the identity of all adults before the door is released. Staff take responsibility for signing children in and out and are very vigilant to ensure that children move about safely within the setting. For example, they supervise children closely in bathroom areas and escort children carefully down the stairs in a line, insisting that they use the banister. Staff keep areas clean, dry and safe, making good use of socket blanks, safety gates, mops, non slip mats and cleaning fluids. Maintenance issues are quickly rectified by on-site maintenance staff. Staff teach pre-school children how to walk outside and cross roads safely, but do little to involve children in keeping their play environment safe.

Children are adequately protected from abuse because staff have sufficient understanding of their role in child protection and the manager has been on appropriate training. However, they do not display up to date reference information about child protection and have not yet assimilated the new safeguarding children information into their child protection policy and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are developing very good levels of confidence and self-esteem throughout the nursery and out of school club. This is because activities and daily routines are well planned and there are consistent key worker staff in most rooms. Children have plenty of free play time and enjoy making use of puzzles, role play equipment, books and going outside for climbing, sliding, and riding activities. Most staff make time to talk and listen to children, asking questions, putting forward ideas and challenging them to learn as they play. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is being used in all rooms with children under three to chart their progress with dated photographs and comments. However, staff are not recording what children can do on a very regular basis and it is not clear how their observations are used to plan the next steps for children's play, learning and development.

Children are happy, settled, and interested in what they are doing because staff are committed, enthusiastic and supervise and communicate with children well. Children are able to enjoy and persist with construction, small world, exploratory and role play with familiar adults beside them to help increase their engagement in activities. For example, the out of school children enjoy using the computer games and watching the younger ones in a music and song outdoor session. Babies reach out, point and watch as bubbles are blown near them and they chuckle to themselves as they explore the textures and sounds of the feely toys.

Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning for pre-school children is satisfactory. Staff are committed to providing a welcoming atmosphere and an organised daily routine. Children enjoy an adequate range of activity areas within their base room and can choose from a range of toys and games which are set out and planned for them. However, they do not sit together as a large group with staff to introduce or discuss the theme, the purpose of activities or what they should be learning through their play. As a result, children and staff are less aware of why they are doing activities and what they can gain from them. Nevertheless, children enthusiastically play together and their creative, small motor, numeracy and computer literacy skills are developing quite well.

Staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage is generally good and they have confidence to question, challenge and join in purposefully with all the choices children make. However, they waste too much time setting up activities, clearing up and moving equipment around. This is because they are not involving children sufficiently in the routines of the day or turning these into worthwhile learning experiences for children. For example, one staff member is reading a story to children while other adults are making the room ready for lunch. As a result, children have less meaningful time with adults to review their activities and they are also less knowledgeable about how to take care of their environment and how it works.

Children are making satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. Staff are promoting children's personal, social and emotional development by encouraging them to become independent in their personal hygiene. They are also helping children develop a sense of belonging to the group by adopting a name card system where children come in and attach their name leaf to the group's tree. However, there are few chances for children to talk in front of the whole group and there is insufficient contact time between familiar adults and children, especially when regular staff are away. This holds back children's chances to talk and share their ideas comfortably during their day.

Children's records contain photographs and examples of children's work to illustrate how they are progressing through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Observation notes are made from time to time and activities are evaluated to see how useful they have been in providing for progress in all the areas of learning. However, observations are not noted regularly enough to thoroughly reflect what each child knows or to highlight what staff should be working on next. Staff remember to promote literacy and numeracy throughout the activities of the day, for example, as children add eggs to their baking activity. However, at times staff are inflexible and do not capitalise upon children's own choices. For example, children choose to look at books, but are told to put these away because it is time to sing songs. This detracts from the enjoyment and learning which children could obtain from pursuing their own choices with adult support.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Most children join in well and feel at home from the outset because they have attended since they were babies. They are warmly greeted with their parents on arrival and are cuddled and held as they wave to their departing parents through the windows. Children usually go straight to play with their friends and are comfortable with nursery routines, even though these are not made very clear to children either verbally or using pictures. Children are helped to consider and value diversity because there are various books, dressing up costumes, dolls, musical instruments, play figures, and games which show positive images of culture and disabilities. Dual language books are used for children who speak English as an additional language and furniture and equipment is adapted to allow children with disabilities to access all activities.

Children behave well and work harmoniously together because staff provide an encouraging atmosphere and explain what behaviour is wanted. Staff model appropriate play skills and use short and simple language so that instructions are clear. Sticker rewards are used appropriately for pre-school children. Children are also taught to think of the needs of others, for example, through fundraising events for children's charities. Staff concentrate on showing children how to look after themselves, to look after toys, to move about safely and to use good manners. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is good. Children receive consistency of care between home and nursery because staff communicate well with parents and use a daily home communication sheet to formally liaise about children's routines and activities. Parents are also encouraged to be involved in pre-school children's learning at home by talking to their children about the monthly theme and helping to consolidate and extend their child's learning through songs and relevant conversations. In addition, a web site and parent brochure give a good overview of the nursery and the education offered to pre-school children.

Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the care offered throughout the nursery. They sign up to a 'partnership agreement' which clearly states what the nursery will do and what parents must do in response. For example, parents are asked to read the policies and procedures, attend parents' evenings, respond to information gathering requests, and contribute to children's progress records. In return, the nursery undertakes to keep progress records up to date, lay on parents' evenings, provide suitable policies and procedures and seek parent feedback.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are well protected and cared for by suitable staff, almost all of whom have qualifications in childcare. The staff group is stable and their files show contact information, evidence of vetting and qualifications and suitable contracts. However, staff supervision sessions are irregular and they do not yet have career appraisals or opportunities to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Staff have some opportunities to improve their knowledge by attending courses on first aid, the 'Birth to three matters' framework, child protection, 'movement and learning connection' and food hygiene.

Staff deployment contributes well to the outcomes for children in the nursery except in the pre-school room. There are insufficient staff in the pre-school room at the beginning of the day and various relief staff provide cover during the day, which detracts from the teaching and learning here. Nevertheless, staff in all rooms are vigilant and concentrate on motivating and enhancing children's enjoyment and social skills.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager supports the teacher in the planning of themes and helps staff to implement progress record files under the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. She provides cover to the pre-school room in person at times but has taken insufficient time to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education. As a result, staff and managers are not maximising children's learning because they are not organised to use all their time alongside children. Instead, they rely on the reputation of the nursery for high standards of health, safety and enjoyment and spend too little time on the delivery of learning in the pre-school.

There are suitable complaints, behaviour, equal opportunities, parent partnership and disability policies, but the most up to date versions of these have not been made available in the home rooms. This means that parents are reading some out of date policies. In addition, staff are not fully aware of the systems for complaints and incident recording. There have been no complaints or incidents to record, but if complaints and behaviour incidents are not logged, there is a lack of clarity when dealing with parents' issues or children's problems. Nevertheless, most procedures are organised and promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. For example, child details provide sufficient information to enable good care to be given and the daily registration system works well. The accident and medication recording systems also work well, although parents do not presently sign medication records

to acknowledge when a medication has been administered. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one action and five recommendations raised at the inspection of care in February 2005. The action to undertake appropriate vetting for all staff having contact with children, has been completed. All drivers and escorts working in relation to the out of school club are known to be suitable to do so. The recommendations concerned the details within some policies and the detail kept on attendance registers. The illness, behaviour, child protection and uncollected child policies have been amended to address all the areas that need to be covered for the safety and welfare of children within the setting. However, old copies without the required updates are still being given out to parents. Attendance registers have been amended to show the arrival and departure times of every child and adult, so that the record is accurate in case of an emergency.

There were four points for consideration raised at the inspection of nursery education, also in February 2005. The setting has made some improvements in the quality of planning, teaching, assessment and evaluations so that planning and recording of what children can do is now working quite well. There is more evidence of children's work, both on display and in individual records, showing the progress that children are making. Improvements in the quality of teaching and assessments are smaller, but are still noticeable. However, the routines of the day are still under used as teaching and assessment opportunities.

Children have more opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world, through use of cameras, computers and visits to local places of interest and museums. Likewise, children's creative development has been extended with more role play, acting out of stories and free use of craft materials.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 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):

- ensure that the complaint procedure is ready to use and that all staff understand how to complete it correctly
- ensure that parents sign medication records to acknowledge each entry and keep written records of behaviour incidents.

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):

- maximise children's learning and enjoyment by talking to them about the activity choices available to them and what they are going to be learning about as they play. Provide time for them to review and talk about what they have done and learnt
- extend children's responsibility, independence and involvement in their setting, and improve adult to child contact time, by including everyone in the setting up and clearing away of activities, meals and play equipment
- ensure that sufficient staff ratios and consistent staff support the care and education of pre-school children
- provide opportunities for staff to formally evaluate and improve their practice and learning environments, and ensure that changes in policy are applied promptly throughout the nursery for all staff and parents.

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