

The Spinney Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305385
Inspection date	06 December 2007
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Setting Address	Warrington Road, Hoole Village, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 3PA
Telephone number	01244 348520
E-mail	
Registered person	Alison Dianne Thomson
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Spinney Day Nursery is owned by the provider and operates as a limited company. It opened in 1998 and operates from three activity areas in a purpose built extension attached to the provider's house. It is situated in Hoole Village, near Chester. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30, excluding bank holidays. All children share access to secure outdoor play areas.

There are currently 67 children aged from nought to under eight years on roll, of these 15 children receive funding for early education. Children come from both the local and wider catchments as their families either live or work locally. The nursery currently supports children with disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 23 members of staff, of these 17 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children health is outstanding because practitioners enthusiastically show children how to adopt healthy lifestyles and independently achieve consistently high levels of personal hygiene for themselves. For example, staff provide all areas of play outside when the weather is suitable and babies sleep in prams outside, so that children have large amounts of fresh air and exercise. Staff provide ample time and care so that children understand good hand washing, teeth cleaning and drinking routines for themselves. Toddlers are given wipes after lunch so that they can learn to wipe their own faces and hands. Staff also provide for children to grow, harvest, prepare and eat fresh fruits and vegetables, so that they have a good understanding of healthy foods and the natural world. Some learning about recycling and taking care of our world is incorporated in this too. At meal times children are often involved in helping to serve and they manage their own outdoor shoes, coats and hats exceedingly well.

Excellent attention to individual children's health needs means that dietary requirements and administration of any necessary medication are properly undertaken according to each child's needs and their parents' wishes. Most staff have first aid and food hygiene qualifications and accidents and medication records are fully maintained with appropriate parental signatures. Ongoing medication consents from parents are laminated and posted clearly for staff to refer to, as are lists including pictures, of all children with allergies or food intolerances. All staff follow good cleaning, food preparation and sickness procedures and are well aware of all children's dietary and health needs, including how to respond to allergic reactions.

Children are extremely well nourished and enjoy a healthy diet through snacks, such as melon, kiwi, apple, toast and homemade cake. Children enjoy lunch of spaghetti bolognese and garlic bread followed by carrot cake. Food is all home made with vegetables, such as peppers, onions and carrots put into the bolognese. Tea is a healthy buffet of crackers, cheese, celery and carrot sticks, tomato, ham, banana and yoghurt. A choice of water or milk is offered to drink and water is easily available throughout sessions. Staff sit in family groups with children and very successfully encourage good manners and discussion.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming, bright and safe environment with a happy and purposeful atmosphere. There is sufficient room for coats and bags in the entrance hall and activities are prepared and set out as children arrive, using three main activity rooms for babies, toddlers and three to four-year-olds. Carpets throughout, open shelving, chairs, cushions, tables, trays, posters and resource boxes enable children to play in comfort and they participate well in tidying up. However, some areas of the rooms are poorly labelled or uninviting, diminishing children's interest in these unless staff are there to explain or help them to get started. Nevertheless, staff are creating choices cards and more picture labelling to help children to make sense of and fully use the wide range of resources available.

Children's safety is supported robustly through documentation and good practice. Regular fire drills are held and records kept of these. Electrical appliances, wiring and fire equipment are checked and documentation about what to do in the event of any emergency is posted. Comprehensive risk assessments are undertaken to manage all planned trips safely and daily

checks contribute to safety and minimise hazards indoors and out. Staff are vigilant and ensure that children move about safely, especially when it is wet. Staff using the nursery vehicle and their own cars to transport children have suitable licenses, insurance and there is list of named drivers with the relevant documentation kept on the premises. There is good security to the internal public entrance door, which is accessed only by staff using a key pad and is manned by staff as children and parents arrive and depart. Registers are taken so that it is always known exactly who is on the premises and careful arrangements are made to ensure that staff know exactly who is collecting a child if this is not a parent or designated carer.

Children are learning about how to keep themselves safe because staff show them how to manage tools, such as cutlery and scissors as they make things or prepare vegetables. They are careful on the wet paving stones and remind others to be careful too. They are taught to avoid accidents by putting their chairs under the table and keeping their hands on their laps when sitting on the floor so that they are not trodden upon. Children are also protected from abuse because all staff have a good understanding of their role in child protection. Training is kept up to date and is shared with all staff. However, the policy does not contain the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and the policy is not clearly shared with parents unless they read the full policy document displayed in the entrance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children quickly settle to play, discover and create. Staff invite them to get started right away on activities set out in the various rooms. Staff come alongside children and play with them, acting out stories using small props, playing simple board games, or using the sand and water with them. Children attending before school occupy themselves with colouring or construction activities and mix happily with their younger siblings attending the nursery all day. Children are developing good levels of self confidence because purposeful staff and key workers talk and listen to them constantly and have high expectations of what they can achieve. They help young children to extend their knowledge and develop their natural curiosity as they play with the cars, musical toys, activity centres and shape sorters. Good use of paints, shaving foam, water and modelling sand enables children to explore the properties of different media and learn about textures, shapes, form and measure. As a result children are confident, concentrate well and enjoy playing alongside one another and adults.

The session routines involve plenty of choice and activity planning which is altered to take account of each individual child's needs for the next steps in their learning. Good use is made of the 'Birth to three matters' framework for children up to three-years-old and daily routine sheets are completed when parents request these for babies up to two years. Staff talk to children sometimes about what is happening now and next. There are few visual or verbal prompts to help children understand the structure of the day and staff do not always spend time reviewing activities with children to help them consolidate their enjoyment and achievements. Nevertheless, children settle well, enter into activities fully, behave well and enthusiastically join in with group activities like preparation for the Christmas presentation, story and song times.

Nursery education:

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Staff are committed to providing a caring, welcoming atmosphere and an approach which fosters self-confidence and good social behaviour.

A varied programme of activities, based upon children's choices, learning needs and a general overall theme, ensure that all the areas of learning are covered. Role play, reading, mark making, creative, construction, small world and physical activities are all available and supported by the experienced staff. Experimental and technology based activities are less well developed, however, staff do not all make use of the routines of the day as learning or reviewing opportunities. Nevertheless, extended use of outdoor areas is made when the weather is drier and warmer, diversifying children's learning opportunities. Staff are also skilful in delivering one to one, small group and teaching, using props, story characters and positive good humour to capture children's interest and challenge them to take the next steps in their learning.

Children are making good progress in all the areas of learning. This is because staff are very successful in providing for their personal, social and emotional development. Staff spend as much time as possible directly working with children and build fruitful relationships with them. They foster an emphasis upon care and concern for all others and an appreciation of the community so that children have a strong sense of place and are in touch with their world. For example, they frequently learn about aspects of community life and the world outside as adults visit from the police or local zoo. They also raise money for children's charities and learn about varied cultural festivals. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They plan in detail and know their key children very well. They regularly adjust and tailor their plans to ensure that individual children make progress according to their individual starting points. They assess and evaluate some planned activities and use these to plan children's next steps, but they make few observation notes during sessions about what they see children can do. They make too few entries of photo or written evidence examples into children's progress profiles to illustrate how their play is leading to learning in each of the six areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children join in very well because the warm environment and friendly, purposeful staff help children feel at home from the outset. Parents leave their children at the inner entrance and they confidently go inside to play. Staff are warm and tactile, frequently hugging children and allowing them to mix with their siblings of all ages in the open plan nursery. Parents are warmly welcomed too and staff communicate clearly and openly with them all, exchanging information about children's particular needs, so that sensitivity and due regard is given to children's present circumstances and feelings. More use of photos of adults and children is planned to enhance children's sense of belonging and ownership of their play environment.

Children are helped to consider and value diversity because there are good books, dressing up costumes, dolls, play figures, puzzles, posters and games which show positive images of various cultures and disabilities. There are also numerous topic activities and project work undertaken to bring other countries and cultures alive for children. For example, children have done varied topic work and displays during Diwali and enjoy varied authentic dressing up costumes supplied and explained by a parent knowledgeable about Indian cultures. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children and adults with physical disabilities and behaviour or learning needs are included fully in the life of the setting because the setting is on one level and staff are committed to inclusion. They liaise well with parents and relevant professionals to ensure that they plan and work together using recognised and consistent techniques which benefit children with emerging learning difficulties.

Staff use their time constructively to give children both one to one time and encouragement to join in with group activities. Children behave very well and are able to share and cooperate. Staff model appropriate play skills, using short and simple language and make it easier for children to conform by making it very clear what they want them to do. However, there are a few times during sessions when children seem to be waiting, such as snack time. This is because some staff overlook this time as an opportunity to allow children more independence to take ownership and responsibility for doing things for themselves. There are good behaviour incident record sheets and these are used well to alert parents and to deal promptly with individual behaviour issues that may arise.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is good. Children receive consistency of care between home and pre-school because key staff communicate well with parents. Some parents also come in to share their own talents. Parents can view activity plans and some information about the Foundation Stage in the entrance, but details of this are not included in the prospectus. Newsletters inform parents about the activities of the nursery, including charitable efforts, but parents do not regularly see their child's developmental profile or receive clear ideas about what they could do to be more actively involved in their child's learning outside the nursery. The complaints system is notified to parents through the policy document. Parents know how to contact Ofsted and their levels of satisfaction are very high. Parents seen on the day of inspection are extremely satisfied with the happy atmosphere in the nursery and the progress their children are making.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Recruitment, vetting, induction, training and appraisal systems work well to ensure that children are well protected and cared for by trained, up to date and motivated staff. Staff come from a range of backgrounds and work various shifts, providing children with a good balance of variety and consistency, where staff ratios are high and children and parents have sufficient access to their key worker. All staff are vetted and have good opportunities to attend ongoing relevant training. Most are highly motivated to interact with children throughout all routines of the day, although a few staff stand back and are more detached on a few occasions.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The partner directors provide good support to all staff and employ efficient and comprehensive administrative processes to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff and children are maintained. They act as good role models, living on the premises and participating regularly with staff, children and parents. They evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the care and education offered and delegate responsibility for implementing change appropriately to the manager. As a result, the whole staff team ensures good outcomes for children.

Policies and procedures work well in practice to promote good outcomes for children. Accident, incident and medication procedures work fully. Likewise child details, parent consents, daily registers, safety checklists and a full policy document are in place to support children's welfare and safety. Information technology is used to provide an up to date website for the setting and secure but accessible child and parent information, which can be accessed away from the premises should an emergency occur. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were six recommendations made at the inspection of care in February 2005 and there were three points for consideration for improvement in nursery education made at the inspection of education in November 2004. Generally good progress has been made to improve resources, information to parents, policies, documentation and sleep practices. Some improvements have been made in monitoring the teaching, learning and assessment. Children also have much improved chances to undertake individual art work for themselves.

The nursery places its policy document in the entrance where parents can refer to it and the contact number for Ofsted is contained in the complaints policy.

Evidence of staff vetting and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance is also now kept according to data protection rules. However, policies are not generally read by parents and reference is seldom made to them in newsletters or poster information.

Staff are aware of the child protection procedures through their named contact person who receives up to date training and shares this with the group. However, the procedures are only made available to parents if they read the policy document sited in the entrance.

A good range of resources and toys are being used to reflect diversity, including disability. Puppets, books, play figures, dressing up clothes and input from interested parents with knowledge of various cultural events and crafts are being successfully used to enrich children's experience of diversity.

Sleeping children use either buggies or prams and usually sleep outside or in the baby room.

Senior staff monitor and evaluate some aspects of the teaching and learning and endeavour to tailor this to help individual children to make progress. However, developmental records still contain few examples to illustrate this, although staff seem to have a clear idea of what teaching style and activities benefit each child. Staff's own performance is now carefully appraised each year, with an emphasis upon being able to undertake training to develop and build upon strengths and interests. The 'Birth to three matters' framework and the step by step profiles are being used as tools to document children progress, with generally good levels of success and children are enjoying much greater choice and independence in developing their creative skills.

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

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 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):

- improve labelling, organisation and accessibility of the resources so that children can choose activities freely, see where things are and can be more involved in getting them out and putting them away
- ensure that the child protection statement is shared with parents and includes the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

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):

- extend the use of observations and evidence in children's developmental profiles and parents' access to these, so that they are a full and up to date record of children's progress and next steps
- ensure that parents are given relevant ways to support and extend their child's learning at home.

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