

Parkfield Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	317393
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Inspector	Karen Ling
Setting Address	143 Dalston Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 5PG
Telephone number	01228 543 034
E-mail	hooper.parkfield@virgin.net
Registered person	Anne Hooper-Brown
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?

Parkfield Nursery is privately owned. It opened in 1984 and operates from the ground floor of a Victorian semi-detached property. The owner lives above the nursery on the first floor of the premises with her husband. The nursery is situated approximately one mile south of the centre of Carlisle. A maximum of 28 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 08.30 until 17.30 for 49 weeks a year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area.

There are currently 49 children aged from two to under five years on roll, of these, 27 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local residential area and extended commuter areas of Carlisle and surrounding regions. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

The nursery manager employs ten permanent members of staff and three relief workers. The manager and seven staff work directly with the children, of these, seven hold appropriate early

years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to understand simple good health and hygiene practices because they are promoted well by staff. They regularly follow routines, such as hand washing after toileting and cleaning teeth after meals. They benefit from the freshly prepared hot meal provided at lunchtimes, such as fish pie or Polish sausage casserole. A vegetarian option is also offered. Mealtimes are a social occasion where children sit with staff, learn to use cutlery and appropriate table manners. Fresh drinking water is available to have with the meal. Snacks usually consist of toast or fresh fruit which is prepared in front of children. Staff ask a few questions which encourage observation skills and test

children's knowledge of colours, for example. Their knowledge and understanding of a healthy diet is increased through topical activities which invite them to look at, discuss and separate healthy and less nutritious foods. Children are involved in helping to grow and eat a range of fruit and vegetables which include cabbages, pears, apples, figs and olives.

When children require medication, staff follow the appropriate procedures. Most staff hold a first aid certificate and good tracking ensures that staff are prompted to renew their training. Children's independence is encouraged well from the moment they enter the nursery. Staff ensure children have enough time get their own outdoor clothes and dress themselves. They show good levels of concentration and perseverance as they dress and fasten shoes and buttons. Children enjoy the freedom they have to run around in the enclosed courtyard. They choose from the range of small equipment and dressing up clothes and are encouraged to share and take turns. They devise games with friends and use their skills as they practise controlling the hoops and balls. Some show how well they can change direction, alter their speed and avoid obstacles. The older children manage the indoor space well and show good use of initiative. For example, they created a space and moved chairs together to make their sleigh for Santa and his reindeer. However, plans do not ensure that older children use large equipment and materials or put movement to different types of music and rhythm often enough.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well at the nursery which provides a welcome atmosphere. They are secure and relate well to the friendly staff. They develop good levels of independence and confidence because staff provide an appropriate balance between giving children freedom to move and supervision to protect them. They keenly choose from the range of suitable activities available. Staff are always close by and give support, encouragement and reassurance. The environment is generally well-maintained and resources and equipment are of a satisfactory standard. However, the organisation, provision and storage of resources does not always ensure that areas are clearly defined, appropriately resourced or provide sufficient space for planned activities. Although children can access the prepared activities, at times they have limited manoeuvrability around the furniture and resources. The toilet facilities provide a degree of privacy. However, nappy changing arrangements do not always ensure young children's dignity is respected when the toilet area is being used by older children.

Outside, children play in an enclosed hard surfaced area. They are watched by staff as they move around the open space. They have room to roll and kick the hoops and balls. Others enjoy chasing games and there is much laughter as they run after each other. They show good spatial awareness as they negotiate their way around the central planted area. Children enjoy outings both local and beyond the city. Staff monitor the safety of children well and have clear procedures in place to account for them off site. Outings are well planned to ensure appropriate levels of supervision. For example, a number of parents accompanied children and staff on the coach to the Tithe Barn for the Christmas carol concert and to Trotters Farm in the Lake District. Staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. They know how to act quickly in the child's best interest to safeguard their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a range of activities each session. They are encouraged to take part in planned activities, such as making Christmas decorations. Older children take more responsibility for drawing and cutting out shapes. The satisfactory selection of resources on offer enables children to choose what they would like to do. Some spend time playing with and lining up the cars while others choose to sit quietly on the cushions. Media, such as pasta in the sand tray and dough with cutters, are available for children to explore. As part of the routine, staff play music and encourage children to rest and calm down before they take their snack. Children are given responsibility. For example, they take turns to hand out and collect the plates and cups. They are polite and well mannered as they take their food and drink. This is also a time for children to sing their 'Hello' song which helps them to remember each other's name and makes sure everyone is included.

Children are encouraged to observe the changes in weather and answer simple questions. Picture clues help them to recognise their own coat pegs. They eagerly get their shoe bags and dress themselves for outdoor play. Staff ensure they have plenty of time to complete this activity. Diaries kept of young children inform parents of how well they settle into the nursery routines. Observations made by staff contribute to development records which highlight the progress children make. However, the information gained about the progress young children make is not always used effectively by staff to inform their next steps when they move on to the Foundation Stage group.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. Personal, social and emotional development is very good because of the effective relationships children build with staff. Children have a positive approach to learning and are keen to engage in the range of planned and continuous activities offered. They show developing confidence because their independence is encouraged well. Behaviour is very good overall and those who present inappropriate behaviour are managed sensitively by staff. Children show an interest in looking at books independently and listening to adults read stories. Staff hold their attention well and encourage them to think what might happen next. Many are developing an interest in writing. Some write their name and correctly link sounds to letters. The wide range of ability in literacy skills is not reflected in planning. As a result, some children do not always receive enough challenge or make the progress they are capable of. Children learn to recognise and name shapes. Walks in the vicinity help them to use and reinforce their knowledge as they make observations about the buildings. Children show an interest in counting.

Although numbers are displayed and some resources are available, too little is done to ensure that they use their counting skills to work out simple calculation problems. Children follow instructions well and show good levels of concentration as they prepare and make articles. They carefully decorate and cut out shapes as they make Christmas decorations, for example.

Most can complete simple tasks on the computer and know how to print out their work. The range of programmable toys provide further opportunities for children to operate simple equipment. Children show curiosity as they explore media and enjoy making things using a range of materials. They show good levels of concentration and skill as they use scissors, stick pieces together and experiment with dry sand. However, they are not always challenged enough to find out why things happen and how things work. They use their imagination well. The adaptability of the role play area encourages play ideas. They play together well, share and take turns and this prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Plans cover all six areas of the curriculum but not all aspects sufficiently. Children with LDD and EAL are supported well. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and staff monitor achievements. Staff make observations of what children can do. However, the system for recording individual progress does not give a clear picture of how well children are doing over time. As such, information is not always used to inform next steps in learning to full effect.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The warm and welcoming atmosphere helps children to settle and gives parents confidence that their children are looked after well. Children are confident and happy and staff clearly value their individuality. Children take part in a range of experiences within and beyond their immediate community which help them to value diversity. They look forward to the regular visit from the mobile library while visitors, such as the vicar, hairdresser and fire officer, complement the programme of activities. Children help to raise money for a variety of local and national charities and enjoy visits to the city, such as the museum. They have also been learning about aspects of the different cultures reflected within the nursery. Staff consistently look at ways of supporting children with EAL. Words displayed in different languages help to develop vocabulary, involve parents and pursue aspects of life from the home countries of children. This ensures that they can participate in activities. As such, cultural diversity is celebrated well. Support for children with LDD is generally good. With support from outside agencies, appropriate strategies are developed for each child and staff are working together to put these into practice. When this happens children are enabled to develop skills of independence, such as choosing activities for themselves. Children are well behaved and learn to sit quietly at appropriate times and listen to instructions. Staff set clear boundaries for behaviour and set good role models. This helps children to learn right from wrong. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

Staff have a good rapport with parents and carers. They provide regular verbal feedback to parents during daily discourse and are very approachable. Regular newsletters and information displayed also helps to keep them informed about what is happening at the nursery. The partnership with parents and carers is good. They receive information about the nursery which informs them about the areas of learning. Regular verbal exchange along with parents evenings helps to keep them informed about how well their child is doing. Staff make efforts to involve parents in the life of the nursery. As such, parents provide help on outings, contribute ideas to topics and support the various charity events. Parents speak positively about the nursery and appreciate the efforts made by all staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The manager is committed to providing a happy and safe environment where children can do well. She serves the needs of children and families well by offering flexibility of provision to parents. The well-being of children is given high regard by staff who are knowledgeable and implement the detailed policies and procedures. The inclusion of all children, including those with LDD and EAL, is central to the nursery's mission statement. The manager pursues this and helps staff and families overcome barriers so that children can engage in the life of the nursery. She ensures that children have a broad range of activities and a stimulating environment in which to learn. She is well supported by a dedicated team of staff, most of whom are new to the nursery since the last inspection. A thorough induction procedure is followed for new staff and the professional development of all staff is promoted well. The nursery is managed well with senior staff having responsibility for different age groups. The skill, good team work and effective deployment of staff ensures that the nursery runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Monitoring of the quality of the provision is, by and large, on an informal basis through regular verbal exchange and at staff meetings. As such, areas for improvement are not always formally identified and addressed.

Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. Plans are reviewed regularly by the manager. They make links to areas of learning and provide an interesting range of activities and excursions. However, all aspects of the provision for nursery education are not evaluated in a way that ensures that areas for improvement are identified and acted upon. Plans do not set clear learning intentions for the wide range of abilities to make sure that all children consistently receive the necessary challenge required to ensure good progress is made. The current format for recording progress has recently changed and staff have yet to embed a system which gives a clear picture of the rate of progress being made. The nursery has correctly identified the need to develop the outdoor area and plans are in place to enhance the outdoor curriculum. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to ensure that registers are kept for the minimum period required and the complaints procedure includes details on how to contact Ofsted. Policies and procedures have been reviewed and amended to comply with these requirements. The nursery was also asked to develop provision for information technology and use evaluation of activities to inform future plans. A computer and printer have been purchased along with other programmable toys. Children have regular access to the computer and electronic toys and show developing skills as they complete simple programmes. Staff evaluate activities and know what works well. However, information is not consistently used to best effect to ensure that future plans build on what children already know and can do.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 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 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):

- develop the monitoring of provision and outcomes for children to ensure that strengths are highlighted and areas for improvement are identified and addressed
- improve the organisation, provision and storage of resources so that areas are clearly defined, appropriately resourced and provide sufficient space for planned activities
- improve nappy changing facilities

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):

- encourage children to solve problems, find out why things happen and how things work by improving questioning techniques and utilising opportunities when they arise
- ensure plans focus on all aspects of learning sufficiently over time, learning intentions are clear and provide sufficient challenge for all children
- ensure that records of what children can do are used effectively as a tool to monitor the rate of progress they make over time, highlight strengths and weaknesses and used to inform next steps in learning.

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