

Echoes Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	500076
Inspection date	12 October 2007
Inspector	Jeanne Lesley Walsh
Setting Address	Echo Street, Off Granby Row, UMIST Campus, Manchester, M60 1QD
Telephone number	0161 200 4979
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Registered person	Network Nurseries Limited
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?

Echoes Day Nursery is owned by Network Nurseries Ltd and is situated within the campus of Manchester University. It opened in 1992 and caters primarily for the children of staff and students at the University. The children attending come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.30 until 17.30 for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery offers full day care to children aged from birth to five years.

There are currently 54 children on roll; 10 of these receive funding for nursery education. The nursery caters for children who speak English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and disability. The nursery employs 15 staff; 11 of these are qualified and one is working towards a suitable childcare qualification. Three staff remain unqualified. Staff receive support from Manchester Sure Start.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained setting where they are learning the importance of good personal care. They are encouraged to wash their hands regularly before meals, after visiting the toilet and at other appropriate times of the day. Pictures displayed above the low level sinks remind them to wash their hands and then they use individual towels or paper towels for drying, to prevent the risk of cross-infection. Cleaning routines also ensure that the possibility of cross-infection is minimised. All the children take part in healthy exercise at some point each day.

Children's health is protected because the staff obtain information from parents about their individual health needs and they provide care accordingly. They also obtain written consent to obtain any medical advice or treatment required for children in an emergency. Appropriate procedures are in place for administering any required medication and several members of staff hold a current first aid certificate. This ensures children's well-being in the event of any accident or emergency situation arising. Accident records are kept well and are consistently signed by staff and parents. These also include any injuries a child may have on arrival at the nursery.

Children's individual dietary needs are discussed with parents and food is provided accordingly. Children have free access to fresh drinking water each day. They are starting to learn about healthy eating through healthy menus, which are displayed. However, activities do not help to further promote children's awareness of healthy foods and healthy eating. At dinner time the children sit in small groups at tables to eat their meal and they are learning to develop appropriate social skills. The children are developing independence skills because they are encouraged to serve themselves. However, this is a very slow process and some children are waiting lengthy periods for their meal during which time they become bored and the food gets cold.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a warm, friendly setting. It is well organised into different activity areas so that children can move around freely and safely. Their work is displayed around the room, creating a bright, cheerful and interesting environment. Low level storage and low level tables and chairs ensure that children can independently access a wide range of equipment and activities. However, the computer is set up so high that it is not easy or comfortable for children to see the screen without tilting their head right back.

Children's safety is a priority both in the setting and when out on trips. Staff carry out regular risk assessments to ensure the general safety of all play areas both inside and outside in the garden. When planning outings staff complete risk assessments ahead of the journey. On a recent teddy bears picnic to the town centre gardens, records show they made arrangements with the local community police to keep cameras focused on them for the protection of the children. The children are learning about fire safety through regular fire drills, which are recorded. Security is good and safety protectors are fitted on doors to prevent trapped fingers. Children are reminded not to run in the setting because they might slip. They cannot leave the premises unattended and key pads and buzzers are fitted on doors for entry. There is also a monitor so

that staff can see who is at the door before they open it. All visitors sign the visitors' book for the protection of the children.

Children are protected because staff are well aware of signs and symptoms of abuse. Discussion with staff confirms that they are aware of procedures to follow if they have any concerns about children or if allegations are made against them. The written policy is shared with parents and there is a designated member of staff responsible for liaison with other agencies and Ofsted. She has completed appropriate Local Safeguarding Children Board training and information is shared with all staff. Child protection is discussed with parents during their initial admission procedure.

The children are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe through their monthly visits from the local community police officers and the road safety officers. They are learning how to cross the road safely and how to use high visibility vests and luminous stickers on their bags and clothing, to ensure that they can be seen in the dark. They are beginning to understand about stranger danger and they are also reminded not to talk to anybody who is passing the outdoor play area and to keep away from the fencing.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children follow a consistent routine in the setting, which helps them feel secure in the environment. They each have their own key worker, whose role is to develop strong links with the child and the family. Discussion with parents helps the staff to ensure that children's individual care needs are met. Children develop confidence and feel secure because staff communicate well with them giving them time, listening and talking to them. Each child helps to make its own 'family book' with pictures of parents, different members of the family and friends. The children look at their book whenever they want to and it provides a positive link between home and nursery. The children are clearly happy and settled in the setting.

The children choose what they wish to play with from a range of activities and opportunities that are varied throughout the session. Planning for the younger children is linked to all aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, although the planning for all children includes outdoor activities there is no real freedom for children to choose outside play. They all stop their activities and go outside to play at the same time, which impacts on the continuity of activities and children's independence and choice.

The younger children explore the treasure baskets and are fascinated by the shiny tins, spoons and gadgets. One child curiously investigates the coffee jug lid and is determined to fit it together. Another group of children are excited as the skittles fall over. A member of staff reminds them to roll the ball low and wants to know how many skittles they can knock down. At story time the children listen intently. The story is read enthusiastically and it feeds the children's imagination. They try to join in with actions and help to finish the end of the sentence. The member of staff helps to extend the children's learning by asking questions, counting the butterflies in the picture and talking about the colours.

The baby rooms are bright and stimulating with displays and mobiles that capture their attention. The babies explore their treasure baskets, they splash in the water play and they investigate the pans, brushes and bowls in the home corner. They proudly pull themselves up on low level furniture and they laugh and smile as the staff sing finger rhymes with them. They are responsive to the staff who constantly encourage and praise them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children benefit from choosing from a range of resources that are freely available in dedicated learning areas. Staff demonstrate an awareness of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Funded children follow a range of activities that link into all areas of learning. Observations help the staff to plan for children's individual needs. However, there is no clear evidence of how often these take place, although the records suggest quite infrequently. Neither do the plans indicate what the next steps are, which means that children may not be developing at their optimum rate. This is also apparent in the planning and observations that apply to the younger children, whose planning is linked into the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

In the writing area the children explore the range of pencils, felt tip pens, crayons, books and paper. They see examples of the letters of the alphabet around the room. They each have a name card and they practise copying it, they also use it at other times of the day, such as to find their place at the dinner table and on arrival. The children have opportunities to learn that print carries meaning as they look at books and listen to stories with staff. They are also free to choose from the books available. However, the range of books is limited and they are not used to their best advantage to support children's awareness and understanding in all areas of their learning. The opportunities for children to become involved in imaginative play and role play are also not fully explored. The home corner area for older children is not well utilised. It is sparsely resourced and activities are not created in this area to promote children's interest, exploration or imagination.

The children are learning about the world around them. In the investigation area they explore with magnifying glasses looking at shells and cones and sandpaper. They use the computer and the CD player freely. Some children are becoming quite expert at manipulating the mouse and completing tasks as they follow educational games on the screen. Children are introduced to numbers through counting, singing number rhymes and action songs. They explore colours, shape and size through posters, and they make mobiles of squares, triangles and diamonds. In the water play the member of staff wants to know 'how many boats are there in the water, shall we count them. Shall we put this one in, how many boats will we have then?'. The children are learning from the number flash cards. They recognise the numbers and copy them on their paper. When they have finished they proudly put their number on the 'door'. They are becoming aware of time as they make clocks out of paper plates. One child shows determined concentration to complete the jigsaw puzzle that shows a child's height being measured. On the wall the giraffe with the long neck asks 'are you as tall as me?'.

Children are given the opportunity to work in groups or alone. Staff are observed to be very supportive of the children. They are aware of the children as individuals and they provide the support and encouragement they need. The environment is calm and well supervised and the children are busy, interested in their play and they are learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and parents are welcomed into the setting. All the children are included in all the activities and their individual care needs are well provided for. They are becoming aware of diversity as they access some resources and activities that promote positive images. Posters display different religions, world festivals and welcome visitors in many languages. Play resources include dolls, books, jigsaw puzzles and small world play. The children have made a 'Homes

and Community' display of the world that shows photographs of all the children and links them to their home country. Activities help them to celebrate different festivals, such as Chinese New Year, Christmas and birthdays. The setting also caters well for several children who speak English as an additional language and have various religious needs. The staff work closely with parents to find out simple words that they can use to help the children. For example, when a child is feeling a little upset a member of staff is able to tell the child in its own language, that 'mummy will come back soon, she always does doesn't she?'. The child smiles and nods and is reassured. The staff try very hard to cater for all children and families. Parents are encouraged to become involved and bring in any items of interest that they can share with the children to help explain their diversity. Staff complete training to support their own knowledge and understanding, such as a recent course about religions of the world. All these things are helping children to learn about difference and have respect for each other.

The children are learning about the local community and the wider world through activities, visitors and trips out. They look forward to regular visits from the local community police officers and they visit the library and the nearby museum. The children take Tagal the teddy bear home with them. They take him on holiday and photographic evidence shows him having lunch in a café, visiting the local museum and enjoying a day out at the seaside. The children and parents fill in Tagal's diary so they can share his activities with all the other children when he comes back to nursery. This activity is helping to establish good links between home and nursery and helps the children to become more aware of the wider world.

Children behave well in the setting because they receive meaningful praise and encouragement. The staff have high expectations of their behaviour and the children know what is expected of them. They are becoming aware of the boundaries that keep them safe as staff promote a consistent approach to their care. Staff use positive techniques to distract, explain and encourage children. Children respond to a simple change in tone of voice and their good behaviour is rewarded with praise and stickers, which they love to receive. The children respond to the good examples set by staff. Discussion and explanation helps children to understand their feelings and they are learning to manage their own behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Information is available to share with parents and daily discussions keep them informed. They work together to apply a consistent approach to children's care. A gradual admission procedure helps both the parent and the child settle confidently into the setting. Parents receive information about activities, topics and children's observations. They are invited to comment on any issue and they can extend children's learning at home if they wish. They are also invited to comment and make suggestions through parent questionnaires and the suggestion box. Discussion with parents confirms that they receive good information, particularly for babies, on a daily basis. As the children get older some feel they need to ask for information, although activity information is well displayed. Some parents would appreciate more information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation stage curriculum. Generally comments from parents are very positive.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff who have completed all the necessary checks. Recruitment and vetting procedures are thorough and staff records include details of the application process, necessary references, the induction procedures and ongoing staff appraisal records. The manager leads an enthusiastic staff team who demonstrate

commitment to their personal development through attending appropriate training. This keeps them up to date with new initiatives and brings new ideas for teaching and learning into the nursery. Children are cared for in a positive and supportive environment. Clearly defined areas separate the different activities and all staff work directly with the children. The staff are enthusiastic and the children are responsive and interested in what they do.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The staff work well together as a team and have awareness of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They operate a key worker system to support the individual needs of the children and all the staff are involved in activity planning. However, the observations and planning are not fully effective, as detailed previously in this report. The manager expects a high standard, both from the staff and the children and she ensures that the staff are very clear about their role in the setting. Regular staff meetings are minuted and weekly and daily discussion meetings ensure that staff are kept up to date with any changes. Equal opportunities are promoted in the setting and partnership with parents is developing well. The children's individual needs are being met. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection they were asked to: ensure that all children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice; ensure the individual needs of babies are consistently met throughout the daily routines; improve the organisation of resources and activities for children in Rainbow room to ensure a wide variety of play and learning activities are accessible and that children's individual learning needs are met. They were also asked to provide domestic style furniture and opportunities for children to explore natural materials within the range of activities and resources available.

The staff now adapt activities so that all children can take part. Staff use various methods of communication to help children who speak English as an additional language, such as body language, a mentor system, which matches children with the same language and their picture exchange system to help children understand. Posters and pictures promote awareness of equal opportunities. They have also introduced some cultural dressing up clothes, they organise 'family books' and celebrate festivals. Additional activities, such as treasure baskets, the investigation area and the sensory corner help children to explore natural materials. The introduction of room information sheets about individual children, also the introduction of the key worker system and daily diaries ensure the individual needs of babies are consistently met. They have also provided comfortable adult and child-size seating in all rooms. All these initiatives provide improvement for children's care and development in the areas highlighted at the last 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- further develop the arrangements at meal time so that children do not have to wait too long to be served and introduce activities that help to promote children's awareness of healthy foods and healthy eating
- ensure that the computer is properly set up in accordance with health and safety guidelines
- provide more opportunities for children to develop their imagination and experiment with role play (this also applies to nursery education)

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to choose from a wide range of planned and free play outside activities (this also applies to care)
- further develop the range of books and use them to support children's awareness and understanding in all areas of their learning
- maintain regular observations of children that show their developmental stage and use them to inform the planning so that all children are developing and learning at their optimum rate and their individual needs are being met (this also applies to care)

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