



Treetops Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	322395
Inspection date	06 July 2005
Inspector	Michele Anne Villiers
Setting Address	96 Stonebridge Lane, Croxteth, Liverpool, Merseyside, L11 9AZ
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Registered person	Margaret Walters
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 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?

Tree Tops Nursery opened in 1997 and operates from four rooms in a converted two-storey building. It is situated in Croxteth, Merseyside. A maximum of 65 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 62 children aged from 0 to under 8 years on roll. Of these 16

children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special educational needs, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the Local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about basic hygiene through the daily routine. They help themselves to tissues to wipe their noses and have paper napkins at meal times. Generally, children are reminded to wash their hands after the toilet and before meals. They learn about dental care during planned activities that include a visit from the dental nurse. Staff consistently wear disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing, and maintain the cleanliness of toys and resources to a satisfactory standard, helping to prevent the spread of infection. Children's health is further protected by an effective sickness and exclusion policy, and there is appropriate documentation in place for the recording of accidents and medication. Over half of the staff hold a first aid certificate and first aid boxes are kept well stocked and available in each playroom.

Children benefit from regular outdoor activities and older children have a positive attitude to exercise, which contributes to their good health. They move confidently outside, with good control as they play on wheeled toys and balance on boxes. More vigorous play is promoted on the larger equipment, helping to develop their strength as they use the slide and climbing frame. Small resources, such as threading beads and lego encourages their manipulative skills. Children aged 2 years and over have weekly exercise sessions with a trained gymnast, 'Wavy Dave', which helps them learn good co-ordination and movement to music. During nice weather staff provide quiet shaded areas outside with construction, puzzles and story-time.

Babies' growth and development are focused on physical well-being as they crawl around with plenty of space for movement and climb on large soft play-blocks. During nice weather they play outside on mats and in the ball-pool, benefiting from the fresh air.

Children's health is promoted through the nutritional food provided. The qualified cook ensures that meals are home cooked and well-balanced using fresh vegetables and ingredients. Children have a choice of fruit each day and older children self-help to fresh drinking water. Staff have accessed training in food hygiene, and food is prepared and stored safely and daily checks made on the fridge temperature and any hot food being served.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a secure environment that is appropriately organised to minimise risk of accidental injury. Staff conduct daily risk assessments on the premises, toys and resources and more stringent checks are conducted annually that include appliances and the alarm system. Children's safety is further promoted as they are supervised in small groups, and staff have interconnecting phones in each room for contact and communication. The entrance is always kept locked and camera surveillance, plus vision panels, assist protection from unknown visitors. Children move freely and safely from one activity to another, accessing a range of suitable indoor resources. All furniture meets safety standards. Outside, children learn good spatial awareness and young children move around competently on bikes, learning control to avoid collision.

Children learn about keeping safe through well-planned activity topics such as 'people who help us'. They enjoy visits from the police, fire-fighters and the local lollipop lady. During outings staff explain to children simple rules, like holding hands and following the 'green cross code'. Staff recognise the need to support younger children closely. They sit with children during collage and cutting out activities and remove the scissors when leaving children to get more paper. During the summer months children learn to understand the importance of applying sun-cream and sit under a Gazebo for shade. Children learn to be safe in the event of a fire and practise the fire evacuation procedure. However, staff do not evaluate and monitor the procedure in order to highlight any possible problems or concerns that may arise. Children are protected from harm as staff have a good awareness of child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing well through the wide range of stimulating activities provided. Toddlers and older children are confident in their relationship with staff, initiating interaction and conversation. Staff work with children in small groups, providing good support and motivating their learning. Young children have fun painting the outside wall, exploring different colours and textures, and using their imagination in the home corner, making drinks and dressing dolls. Children learn about numbers, shapes and matching when building a tower with the lego blocks and putting puzzles together, helping to improve their mathematical skills.

Babies have a wide range of stimulating resources and multi-sensory mats and baby gyms to help them develop. Mobile babies have freedom to crawl around the room, exploring their environment, making choices and interacting with each other. Painting activities help to develop their creative skills and they enjoy songs and rhymes, fostering their language development. Babies' emotional well-being and stability are sometimes compromised due to frequent staff changes and inconsistency and a lack of clear planning results in babies not always having a link person to oversee their development. Staff have introduced the Birth to three matters framework, but this has not yet been effectively implemented to fully promote good practice and outcomes for babies.

Older children who join the setting after school settle well and make choices about their play. They have access to a range of games and art and craft activities, promoting their creative skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and the children are making adequate progress towards the early learning goals. Staff use daily observation to identify the children's level of achievement, and activities are planned to help children develop in all areas of learning. However, specific activities are not fully evaluated in order to ensure that the learning objective has been met. Therefore, staff are unable to recognise if children are being sufficiently challenged and to identify any aspects for improvement that may be used in future plans. The play room is appropriately divided into specific areas of play. However, some areas, such as the Travel Agent Shop, are insufficiently resourced, lack stimulation and as a result children show little interest in participating.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they play together and form good relationships with staff and other children. Children happily share and take turns and they show sensitivity towards others. Children demonstrate excitement and joy. During a 'gloop' activity children laugh and squeal commenting on its texture and the patterns they make. They jump for joy when going outside to play.

Children are learning to recognise their names as they self-register on arrival, and story time is fun and interesting as staff and children interact when reading the Three Little Pigs. However, insufficient displays of written words and labelling, such as on toy storage boxes, do not enhance the children's reading skills and their understanding that print carries meaning. Children are beginning to count and staff incorporate maths during play as children count the imaginary pieces of pizza they have during role-play and recognise numbers on the teddy bear line. Children's mathematical learning is not always consolidated through everyday activities, such as during snack time and counting the cups, chairs and children, or at registration time.

Children develop a good sense of time as they talk about past and present events in their lives. They discuss holidays, weddings and celebrations with their families and enjoy topics such as 'new life' and 'who am I' to reinforce their sense of belonging. Their understanding of technology is developed through daily access to a computer. Children use their imagination in play and enjoy music, stories and art and design.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Older children are confident to contribute to the life of the nursery. They develop good levels of self-esteem, form good relationships with staff and , benefit from the key-worker system. Children's individual needs are met as staff are knowledgeable about each child and use a satisfactory assessment system to monitor their development. Children are well behaved and good behaviour is reinforced through consistent praise and encouragement. Children learn to share and take turns and to be sensitive to the needs of others.

Children learn about diversity and the world they live in through planned activities, and participate in the 'Diwali' and 'Chinese New Year' festivals. Parents from different cultural backgrounds are invited to talk to children about their experiences, and their home life and share photographs of their family. Along with positive images of race and culture displayed in the nursery, this further contributes to their learning and means that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory and promotes children's welfare and sense of belonging. Parents receive regular newsletters keeping them up-to-date with latest issues and information is shared through daily discussion. Parents are welcomed into the nursery at any time and may have access to their child's development sheets and activity plans. Parents of children in receipt of nursery education funding receive information about the foundation stage and the early learning goals. However, there is not a formalised procedure for these parents to meet with key-workers and to share and contribute their own thoughts and ideas about their child's development and progress, further ensuring the children's welfare is fully promoted.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy and benefit from qualified staff who use their knowledge and skills to provide interesting and stimulating activities. There are effective procedures in place for the appointment of staff and the induction process ensures staff are fully aware of the regulatory policies. Staff appraisal and staff meetings identify staff training needs and they have recently introduced the Birth to three matters framework, but this is not fully implemented to further help develop the babies' and toddlers' progress. Some policies, such as the child protection policy, are being up-dated to meet legislation, and the manager has recently accessed a training course to further her knowledge and understanding of child protection issues.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager is keen to improve the outcomes for children and is receptive to new ideas and identifying strengths and weaknesses. There is an effective staff team who work well together to promote the children's development. However, the organisation of play and specific activities is not always monitored to ensure that the environment is appropriately stimulating and challenging for children and enhancing their progress.

Ofsted are kept informed of new staff and appropriate vetting procedures are in place, but not always correctly notified when staff leave. Staff information and certificates are displayed throughout the nursery. These are not always removed and updated when staff leave. Regulatory paperwork is in place to protect children's welfare. The operational plan does not show how the setting runs or how resources are used to meet the needs of children. It is currently being updated in accordance with the national standards.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection set actions that the nursery meet fire safety officer recommendations with regard to the new extension on the building, the manager to further her knowledge on child protection and to ensure records are available for inspection. All records are now available and kept securely in the office. The manager has accessed a training course on child protection and the fire safety officer's report is on file, helping to further protect children and ensure their safety.

The previous care inspection recommended that the nursery: update the operation plan, the medication policy and special needs policy; provide comfortable chairs for staff in the baby room; conduct risk assessment on the premises and resources; ensure the cook has a food handling certificate, and provides more nutritional food for children.

The operation plan is still being up-dated and revised to evidence how the children's needs are being met. This recommendation is being carried over. The medication and special needs policy have been up-dated to help safeguard children. Staff in the baby room now have two chairs to sit in comfort whilst bottle feeding young babies. Staff conduct a basic daily risk assessment on toys, premises and resources and an annual risk assessment is conducted in more depth, to ensure children's safety. Children benefit from home cooked, nutritional meals provided by the new qualified cook. She holds a food hygiene certificate and prepares and stores food safely.

The previous nursery education inspection recommended: the nursery improve planning for children to extend their vocabulary and compare numbers; ensure plans provide a balance of activities and areas for improvement are identified; develop a system for assessing children's learning; increase staff knowledge in the Foundation Stage; adapt groupings of children, and improve the partnership with parents. Activity plans are now based around the six areas of learning and include story time, discussion and number activities. Plans identify a balance of activities, although these are not fully evaluated to identify areas for improvement. This is still an outstanding issue. Staff use on-going assessment of children's learning and record information on development sheets. Staff have support from a teacher to increase their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and training is planned. Children are grouped in small numbers to ensure that learning is maximised. Parents are kept informed about activity plans through a regular newsletter and daily discussion. There is not a formalised system for sharing information with key-workers.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that activities are planned in the baby room and understood by all staff, for example by effectively using a framework such as the Birth to three matters
- provide continuity of care for babies with an effective key-worker system and consistent staff deployment
- continue to monitor the fire evacuation practice and identify any areas of concern or weakness
- continue to develop the operation plan and use as a working document, sharing with parents. Update all displayed staff information and ensure Ofsted are kept informed of staff changes.

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):

- organise resources and activity areas so they are stimulating and interesting for children and they may participate fully
- create an environment that reflects an interest in print to enhance children's language and literacy skills
- evaluate activities to identify the success of the learning objectives and to use for future planning
- further develop opportunities for parents to share information about their child's progress and be able to contribute their own comments, thoughts and ideas.

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