

Railway Children Day Care

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 11 July 2007
Inspector Angela Howard

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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?

Railway Children Day Care opened in 2006. It is a privately owned facility. It operates from the Elsecar Heritage Centre in Barnsley. Children attend for a variety of sessions from the local and surrounding areas. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 62 children on roll, of which one three-year-old and seven four-year-old children receive nursery education funding. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.45 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year.

The nursery employs 16 staff including the cook and manager. All the staff, including the manager are working towards or hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to understand the importance of a healthy diet. They enjoy a very wide range of nutritious snacks and meals, which develops their awareness of healthy eating. For example, breakfast includes cereals and toast. Snacks include a wide variety of fruits including pears, apple and plums which all go down extremely well. Meals are made from fresh produce daily and include toad in the hole, fish cakes or veggie fingers which are served with a selection of vegetables. However, children do not have free access to fresh drinking water. Snack and meal times are an opportunity for children to enjoy their food, and are a social occasion where children sit with their peers and staff, joining in conversations. Children's needs are met as staff find out from parents about children's individual care, such as dietary needs and sleeping routines. They use the information to make sure children eat, rest and play according to their needs.

Children are appropriately protected from illness and infection. They follow appropriate hygiene procedures and are cared for in clean and well maintained premises. Children learn simple hygiene practice, such as the washing of hands after using the toilet and before eating. Staff use effective cleaning methods, for example, they use anti-bacterial spray on food preparation and eating areas which limits cross infection and helps to maintain children's good health.

Staff promote a healthy lifestyle by encouraging children to take part in some form of exercise each day. Children regularly enjoy daily opportunities to play in the fresh air. They use appropriate resources and equipment with growing confidence and ease.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in secure premises and benefit from the use of an appropriate range of safety equipment. Staff regularly check for hazards, therefore, children are able to move around freely and safely. Staff are vigilant as they support children in their play. For example, children are closely supervised as they explore outdoors and the thorough and effective procedures in place to gain access to the building ensure children remain safe. Children are actively encouraged to be aware of their own safety and learn how to avoid accidents. For example, the clear explanations given to children about walking while carrying scissors give them opportunities to practise what they can do in safe surroundings. Fire safety is adequately addressed as exits are kept clear of obstructions and the fire drill is practised on a regular basis.

All equipment is carefully monitored to ensure it is safe and appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Low-level storage ensures children can freely access equipment safely. Therefore, children have access to a variety of age-appropriate play equipment.

Children are appropriately protected as staff have a sound understanding of their role and responsibilities with regards to child protection matters. Staff are confident to report any concerns in order to safeguard children. They are aware of the indicators of abuse and the action required to safeguard children. This results in children being safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play happily together and have trusting and caring relationships with each other and staff. The warm and caring relationships result in children being happy and settled in the nursery. Children arrive happy and eager to participate. New children are helped to settle by staff that are sensitive to their needs and their distress is kept to a minimum. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them to develop a strong sense of self.

Staff plan a wide range of purposeful and interesting activities according to children's ages and stages of development. This is fostered appropriately by the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. For example, the role play area is suitably equipped to allow children to act out everyday experiences and they provide a variety of treasure baskets and heuristic play equipment. This encourages babies to use their senses and explore man-made and natural objects. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of staff interaction with the children. For example, some staff miss opportunities to interact with the children positively and fail to extend their learning appropriately. They often take on a domestic or supervisory role, therefore, do not make the best use of time to support children and maximise learning opportunities.

Children thoroughly enjoy painting, collage and craft activities and have opportunities to explore materials, such as paint, play dough, sand and water. This allows them to experiment with different media and freely explore their own ideas. Free play is carefully balanced with focused activities, for example, children use finger paints exploring the texture as they spread it around their hands and on to paper. Babies show wonder as they explore the treasure basket of shells and pebbles. They listen to sounds of a large shell as it is held to their ear and take it from staff and shout into it. Their excitement becomes infectious as they do it again and again. This encourages children to make independent choices and decisions.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and use this to provide a broad and balanced curriculum across the six areas of learning. This ensures children progress appropriately along the stepping stones. Activities are stimulating and are linked to children's individual development needs. Assessments of progress and focused individual learning plans are clearly linked to the stepping stones and show children are making appropriate progress. This information is used to plan the next steps in learning. Therefore, activities are pitched at the right level and provide sufficient challenge for the children. Staff encourage children to participate, explore, problem solve and have fun whilst learning. They interact effectively with children to stimulate their curiosity, reinforcing and consolidating their learning. Various teaching methods are used which include a balance of focused and freely chosen activities. Staff use open ended questions to effectively challenge children's thinking and develop their language skills.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is generally good. They are interested, confident and able to work on their own or as part of a small group. Children greet each other on arrival and are happy to participate in the activities on offer. They enter the nursery confidently and complete some self-care tasks well, such as putting on aprons for messy activities.

Children enjoy an environment that is rich in print, listen attentively to stories and write for a real purpose as they attempt to make marks to represent their names or pictures. They are

beginning to be aware that print has meaning as they use self-registration name cards at group time. Children choose independently from activities and show curiosity as they question 'why do the fish float in the water' and say 'watch they pop back up if you push them under the water'. They are engrossed in watching what happens when they whisk the eggs, sugar and butter together when baking. Children are involved in a good range of mathematical activities. For example, they count the number of plastic linking elephants used to make a circle, the number of steps on the slide and how many pieces of fruit they have at snack time. Children show awareness of shape, compare size and position using bricks and linking elephants, and when in the queue to go outdoors say 'I am behind you'.

Children show interest in simple information and communication technology. They confidently use cash registers, telephones, calculators, compact disc players and are adept in using the mouse to complete basic computer programs. Children are good communicators and have plenty of opportunities to talk to their friends and staff, particularly at register time, where they recall what has happened, where they have been and what they have done. They take part enthusiastically in discussions about the days of the week and explain to friends how to draw a circle to make a mask like theirs. Children's creative development and imagination is promoted well. They freely access a craft workshop to make collage pictures, design and devise their own face masks and use their past experiences to inform their play. For example, they make breakfast, answer the telephone and put their babies to bed in the domestic role play area. Children spontaneously sing and dance and show pleasure as they clap and nod their head in rhythm to songs and action rhymes. They thoroughly enjoy the use of musical instruments tapping, banging and shaking them sometimes in rhythm.

Children benefit from regular access to fresh air and physical activities. They run around, climb small steps and propel ride-on toys skilfully with their feet. However, this is not sufficiently challenging for the more able or older children. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. This is recorded in photographs, children's work and written observations which are clearly linked to the stepping stones.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued as individuals and receive appropriate praise and encouragement. They are happy and content and are showing a strong sense of belonging. Displays of artwork allow children to experience high levels of self-esteem through pride of seeing their artwork valued. Children are familiar with daily routines and have formed good relationships with staff and their peers. Children's awareness of equal opportunities is fostered appropriately. Staff ensure that the resources and activities positively reflect diversity. Posters around the room reflect positive images and diversity and children can see examples of the written word in different languages, such as on the Chinese calendar. This enables children to learn about cultures, religions and the local community and helps them to develop a positive attitude towards others. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children work together harmoniously most of the time and are gently reminded by staff about politeness and good behaviour. They learn to think about their own needs and the needs of others. For example, children have played an active part in establishing the setting's rules. A positive approach from most staff towards managing children's behaviour encourages children to behave appropriately. However, children's behaviour is disruptive at times because some staff are not always consistent in their approach. As a result, children's behaviour deteriorates as they are not sure what is expected of them.

Partnership with parents and carers are satisfactory. Parents receive a wide range of information about the day-to-day organisation of the nursery session and how the stepping stones are implemented. They receive appropriate information in a variety of ways to keep them informed of their child's care and progress. Policies and procedures and the curriculum are clearly displayed throughout the setting. Parents feel staff are friendly and approachable and say they can ask about their child's individual progress at any time. Most parents are aware that children's development records are accessible at all times but feel the verbal feed back is sufficient for their needs. Children benefit from the two way sharing of information between parents and practitioners. This enables parents to be involved in their child's learning both at the nursery and at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

A wide range of well written policies and procedures which contribute to children's health and safety, are in place and are regularly reviewed. Policy documents are shared with parents to keep them appropriately informed about the childcare and education. Staff are appropriately vetted and have suitable skills and experience to work with children. The grouping of children, according to their age and stage of development, enables staff to provide a suitable range of activities and experiences that children enjoy. This contributes to their overall well-being and means they can initiate their own play and learning.

The premises are relatively well organised and space is used appropriately to maximise play opportunities for children with clearly defined areas for play. Children move around confidently and freely and are clearly happy in the settled environment. However, while the children are happy and confident in their environment, the lack of preparation by staff impacts on the amount of time children wait for activities to begin. For example, children sit waiting with aprons on and hands washed before the baking ingredients and utensils are ready for them to use and younger children wander off while the finger paints are being prepared. Therefore, the environment is not always prepared or organised effectively to maximise opportunities for children's play, care and learning.

Leadership and management of the education provision are satisfactory. A great deal has been achieved in a short period of time since the nursery opened. The manager has defined roles and clear ideas for the nursery in the future. The management of the setting is effective and operates appropriately offering children that attend satisfactory care and education. The manager and very supportive deputy play an active role in day to day operations. They work alongside staff offering guidance and support for the whole staff team. Clear aims for children's care and education are shared with staff and parents. Staff continue to access relevant training and work cooperatively with other professionals. Observations and basic self-evaluation procedures are just being implemented to help the manager to identify areas for improvement and monitor how children are progressing. 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 quality and standards of care was judged as inadequate. There were five actions raised. These all related to the review of documentation, some procedures and the first aid training of staff.

The manager now has an induction programme in place which includes child protection and the emergency evacuation procedures for all staff. She has procedures to ensure that rigorous vetting and recruitment processes are in place to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. A suitable policy is in place in the event of a child being lost and written permission is obtained from parents before administering medication to children. Staff have completed first aid training to ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate is on the premises or on outings at any one time. Therefore, children's health, welfare and safety is promoted.

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.

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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):

- provide children with access to fresh drinking water
- ensure staff make the best use of time to support children and maximise learning opportunities
- develop behaviour management methods to ensure they are applied consistently
- ensure activities are prepared and organised effectively to maximise opportunities for children's play, care and learning.

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):

- ensure physical activities are challenging for older and more able children.

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