

Treetops Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206329
Inspection date	30 January 2008
Inspector	Sharon Dickinson
Setting Address	13 Derby Road, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 1BE
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Registered person	Treetops Nurseries Limited
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?

Treetops Day Nursery (Ashbourne) is one of 18 of nurseries run by Treetops Nurseries Limited. It opened in 1998 and operates from the ground and first floor of a converted Grade Two listed building in the town of Ashbourne, Derbyshire. The day nursery and out of school club serve the local area and surrounding villages. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. A further 20 children may attend the out of school club. The setting is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year, except bank holidays. There are currently 56 children aged from six weeks to under eight years on roll. Of these 14 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There were no babies present on the day of inspection.

The nursery employs eight staff. Five of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Derbyshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and are members of

the National Day Nursery Association. They have recently obtained the Quality Counts accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted in the setting as there are effective hygiene procedures. Staff complete food hygiene as part of a rolling training programme. They wear disposable aprons and gloves when serving meals or changing nappies. A cleaner is employed to help staff maintain the overall cleanliness of the premises and an 'indoor shoes' policy is operated throughout the setting. Children learn about good hygiene through consistent daily routines. Older children independently access low-level tissue dispensers and dispose of used tissues in the bins provided. They brush their teeth after lunch, and bright photographic displays and notices in the toilet area reminded them to wash their hands. The risk of infection is minimised and the good health of children maintained. They are provided with individual linen and flannels which are clearly labelled and regularly washed. A comprehensive sick child policy is in place including procedures to report communicable diseases. Children receive appropriate care when they have an accident or become ill to maintain their good health. Staff attend first aid training and refresh this training on a regular basis. Robust procedures are in place for the administration of medication and the handling of accidents. Relevant written parental consents are obtained prior to medicines being administered and for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment. Records relating to accidents and medication are maintained and shared with parents and carers, however, some accident records do not contain sufficient detail relating to the description and location of the injury which may potentially compromise children's health and safety. Children rest and sleep according to their needs. Quiet areas are provided to enable individual sleep patterns to be facilitated. A separate cot room is provided for babies with wooden cots, mobiles and calming music. Sleeping babies are frequently checked by staff. Older children and toddlers requiring a sleep are provided with sleep mats and individual bedding and sheets. A staff member directly observes the children staying in the room for the duration of their rest period.

Children are well nourished and their health and dietary needs are met because staff work well with parents. Information relating to individual dietary requirements are recorded within children's personal details and staff discuss food allergies and preferences with parents. This information is effectively cascaded to all staff, including the nursery cook, who strictly adhere to children's personal dietary needs. Summer and winter menu's are devised by the nurseries head office and used throughout the day care chain. These contain a varied selection of healthy and nutritious meal options and snacks which are presented attractively to children and provided in ample quantities. Suitable equipment is provided to enable staff to puree fresh food for weaning babies. Fresh drinking water is readily available to children at all times and drinks are also offered to children on a regular basis such as mealtimes. Babies are bottle fed in line with their individual routine. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions where children sit together with staff and chat about their day. Older children access a self-serve snack table, pouring their own drinks and helping themselves to the snack provided. They remind peers that only four children are allowed at the table and inform them when they have finished and a space becomes available.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to be active and have physical exercise both indoors and outdoors which promotes development of their physical skills. All children access fresh air and

exercise on a daily basis. They enjoy playing in the garden area with a variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment. A play

pen and mats are provided to enable babies to play outdoors also. Frequent local outings are undertaken. For example, toddlers walk to the local library for story time and attend a trip to the shops to find and buy different fruits and vegetables. Larger outings are also planned, for example, children attending out of school visited Chatsworth House and Derby Museum. Staff also accompany children to weekly swimming sessions at the local leisure centre, which is an optional service for parents. Physical play is provided indoors including weekly professionally run gym sessions for children aged two to five. Children are very motivated and enthusiastic about joining in the gym session and delight as they march, stretch, hop and jump to music following the lead of the coach. They move their bodies in different ways and negotiate apparatus as they travel under arches and through tunnels in the obstacle course. Large play equipment such as climbing frames and soft play shapes are set up in a designated 'physical area' within the main hall and are also accessed regularly by children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which helps them to feel secure and comfortable. Walls are covered in displays, children's art work and information for parents, including photographic displays of children at play, helping to create a sense of belonging. Staff have carefully considered best use of time and space and as a result resources are organised effectively to maximise children's enjoyment whilst attending the nursery. Base rooms are suitably equipped and provide a secure and familiar area for children. Furniture is organised to help create an accessible and stimulating environment. A strong emphasis is placed upon supporting children's independence. Many play materials are stored at child-height and children are encouraged to freely access them as they choose. Children use a wide range of toys and equipment which are age-appropriate, safe and suitable. Effective systems are in place to check and maintain toys and equipment.

Children are cared for in a secure and generally safe indoor environment. Keypad and intercom systems ensure the premises are secure. Robust internal and external health and safety audits are conducted on a regular basis and staff complete daily safety checks of areas used by children. Safety equipment is fitted where necessary such as safety gates restricting unsupervised access to stairs. However, these measures are not always fully effective in minimising risks to children. In particular, locks fitted to low-level cupboards containing cleaning materials were not in use at the time of inspection and radiator guards are not secure and in places leave hot radiators exposed posing a risk to children's safety. Children's safety is well promoted in the event of an emergency. Written evacuation procedures are prominently displayed throughout the building and drills are practised on a regular basis with staff and children. A thorough evaluation is made of each evacuation and action taken to improve procedures to further protect children. For example, staff have devised a chain system to pass babies down the stairs in an emergency to reduce the risk of tripping and evacuate the premises more promptly. Children are kept safe on outings as suitable equipment is provided such as pushchairs and car seats. Florescent tabards are worn by children and adults displaying the nursery logo. Comprehensive policies are in place for the safe conduct of outings and the transportation of children.

Children are safeguarded because staff clearly understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Staff complete child protection training as part of a rolling training programme and are fully aware of types and indicators of

abuse. Policies have been updated in line with current safeguarding children guidelines and include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled because staff are attentive to their needs. Individual settling-in procedures, done through close consultation with parents, ensures children are comfortable within their surroundings and form secure relationships with key workers both on entry to the setting and as they move between age groups. Children relate well to others and positively respond to adults who are interested in what they do and say. The friendly staff engage in children's play and discussions valuing their ideas and suggestions. Children's views are actively sought, for example, through a 'Children's Board' which is chaired by older children who feedback their views on a range of issues affecting the setting such as suggestions for resources, activity and trip ideas. Children are confident to explore and investigate their surroundings as they independently select from the broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and learning. Children of all ages enjoy accessing a wide range of craft and malleable play such as collage and painting. They feel the texture of shaving foam and baby lotion as they manipulate it using their hands and everyday objects. Sensory areas and displays encourage even the youngest children to explore different sounds and textures. Language skills are promoted through daily activities such as reading stories and singing familiar songs like 'Wind the Bobbin' and 'Bob the Builder'. French and baby signing classes are held weekly which further develop communication skills. All base rooms include a comfortable area for children to relax and enjoy a wide selection of age-appropriate books. Staff working with younger children effectively use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide their practice and plan for children's progress. They regularly observe and assess children's progress and use this information to inform their planning helping children take the next steps in their development. Planning and information relating to 'Birth to three matters' is clearly displayed for parents. Staff working with babies have suitable training and experience. Continuity of care is provided through consistent staffing arrangements and by consulting with parents about children's individual routines.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are knowledgeable of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. They use appropriate teaching methods and questioning to provide sufficient challenge and help support children to achieve as much as they can. Learning aims are achieved through practical activities such as tracing letters in salt and counting how many wheels their model car has. Staff successfully differentiate and adapt activities to meet individual children's needs. For example, they offer suggestions of rhyming words such as spoon and moon to children playing a rhyming lotto game. Subsequently, children enjoy the activities and show interest in what they do. Space, time and resources are creatively used by staff to promote children's learning and there is a good balance of free choice and planned activities.

Planning generally covers a broad and balanced curriculum and clearly indicates what children are intended to learn. Continuous learning plans are displayed for staff and parents to indicate how daily activities and routines link to and extend all areas of learning. Monthly topics are planned in line with children's interests and seasonal events. However, staff do not consistently monitor that long term planning effectively covers the full curriculum and provides opportunities for children to revisit and consolidate their skills. Weekly plans indicate different activities and

resources linked to the areas of learning and highlight intended learning objectives which are generally in line with children's capabilities. Children are consulted about themes, displays and activities and any suggested changes are successfully incorporated into the planning. For example, children chose this month's colour theme. Staff know about children's general capabilities on entry, for example, using information from parents or previous carers about their child's development. However, a more formal and consistent method is due to be introduced which will clarify children's attainment and help staff identify their starting points. Staff regularly observe and assess children's progress towards the early learning goals but at present do not identify individual 'next steps' for their learning and development.

Children's independence is strongly encouraged throughout the daily routine. For example they self-serve snack, select resources and visit the toilet unsupervised. They are provided with opportunities to work alone and in groups. Staff engage with the children taking the time to explain rules such as taking turns during a pairs game. Children are familiar with the daily routine and play an active part in the life of the setting, responding promptly to staff requests to help at tidy up time. They are familiar with boundaries and expectations but need gentle reminders about safety rules on occasion. For example, not to run inside and to access the stage area using the steps. Children develop a strong sense of themselves and the community through topics, visitors to the setting and outings. Children enthusiastically recall special events such as when their family came to watch them perform in the Christmas concert. Children are confident to speak in a familiar group and clearly express their thoughts and ideas. The welcoming book area promotes a love of books and children enjoy 'reading' with their friends. They recognise familiar words such as their name and use this in daily routines, for example, for self registration and when hanging their coats. Children link sounds to letters through meaningful activities such as letter of the week. They bring in objects from home and find items within the nursery beginning with a chosen letter. Staff also develop children's awareness of letter sounds through activities such as a rhyming lotto and sounding out initial sounds of their names. However, adults working with the older children do not consistently use alphabet or phonic sounds which proves confusing for children. Children develop early writing skills as they freely access well equipped mark-making and craft areas. They use a variety of media and materials such as stencils, chalks, pencils and scissors to create as well as practise and refine these skills. Plans indicate children have opportunities to use writing in meaningful situations such as making appointments in diaries during role play. They develop an understanding of different uses of writing such as writing a letter. A letter from the Queen's Lady in Waiting is proudly displayed in the main entrance thanking the children for their letters and photographs for her 80th birthday celebrations.

Children are confident with numbers and count readily to 10 and beyond. They spontaneously discuss that they have two chunks of cheese and two pieces of apple for snack and successfully conclude that they have four pieces all together. Mathematical concepts are introduced and consolidated through practical, fun activities such as making patterns and sequencing using peg boards and threading beads. They use positional language during gym sessions as they travel under arches, through tunnels and stand beside the mat. They develop basic calculation skills as they sing number rhymes such as 'Five Currant Buns' using props to demonstrate one less or one more. Staff skilfully extend children's play in the construction area by questioning 'how many wheels does your car have?' 'who's car has the most wheels?' and 'which car is the longest?'. Children have good opportunities to design and make using a wide variety of construction toys. They freely create and also design with a purpose in mind when making models out of recycled materials. They explore and investigate using magnets, look at symmetry using mirrors and collect and observe worms as well as regularly accessing malleable play such as sand, water and clay. Children confidently use a computer enjoying a variety of educational

software. They develop an awareness of everyday technology as they use the tape recorder to play music and 'Sound lotto'. They care for living things as they handle and tend to the nursery gerbils and observe changes over time when they grow carrots, tomatoes and lavender in the garden. Children develop an understanding of the wider community as they take 'Roarie the Lion' on holiday and bring back photographs, pictures and postcards of his travels. They develop an awareness of other cultures and beliefs as they take part in festivals such as Diwali and try foods from other countries at 'international breakfast' day every Friday.

Children use a variety of small and large equipment with increasing skill. They confidently climb and balance on large indoor and outdoor apparatus and manipulate smaller tools such as scissors, brushes and pencils well. Children develop an understanding of body awareness as they feel their racing heartbeats during a gym session. They remove cardigans and have a drink of water after a rigorous warm up session and stretch their muscles before bending and crawling through equipment. All areas of learning are extended outdoors, particularly in warmer weather. For example, children make marks using chalk and pots of water with paint brushes. Children have daily opportunities to be creative both through planned activities and by independently accessing the craft trolley. They are given time to complete activities to their own satisfaction and their representations are valued by staff. Children's imagination is promoted through 'Small world' toys and a well equipped role play area. They enjoy dressing up and recreating roles and experiences with their friends. Role play is sometimes linked to current themes helping children to make sense of the world. For example, plans indicate it has previously been set up as a hospital, a post office and hair dressers. Children enjoy weekly music sessions and access instruments within their play. A small group of children initiated a bout of 'The Grand Old Duke of York' whilst playing instruments and marching around a table and later joined in with 'The Hokey Cokey' showing delight as they sing the chorus. They also have regular opportunities to move to music, for example, using ribbons and scarves.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met by adults who work in close partnership with parents and carers. As a result children receive consistent and appropriate care. Children's records contain relevant information to enable staff to provide appropriate care. Key workers discuss children's changing routines with parents and ensure their individual needs are met during their time at nursery. All children are helped to feel valued and included. They benefit from activities and resources which help them value diversity. Posters and displays depicting positive images and notices in various scripts are displayed throughout the setting. Children take part in craft activities relating to Diwali celebrations. They try African, French and Greek breakfast during 'international breakfast' day. External classes such as French and baby signing help develop an awareness of different cultures and disabilities. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are appropriately cared for and are given good levels of support whilst at the setting. Key staff work closely with children, parents and other agencies to ensure children's individual needs are fully met and 'next steps' are identified and used effectively to inform planning. All staff are aware of children's individual capabilities and provide support as needed to allow all children to fully participate within activities and routines whilst effectively promoting independence. Careful consideration is given to the layout of activities and furniture to enable children with mobility difficulties to freely and independently access all areas.

Children are cared for in a positive environment which effectively promotes their self-esteem. Staff provide lots of praise and encouragement to children and recognise achievements using rewards such as stickers. Children are well-behaved. They respond to appropriate expectations

for their behaviour helping them to work harmoniously with others. Challenging behaviour is appropriately managed in order to support their well-being. Staff talk to the child, respecting their level of understanding and maturity, and clearly explain the consequences of the behaviour helping them to begin to distinguish between right and wrong. Prompt action is taken for instances of re-occurring behaviour issues and staff work closely with parent to identify and resolve possible triggers for the behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Effective systems are in place to exchange information between parents and members of staff. Key workers exchange information verbally with parents upon collection and this is supported by daily log sheets and communication books which outline the child's daily routine and progress. A wealth of information is available for parents through informative displays, regular newsletters and a useful website. Policies and procedures are effectively shared with parents including information about how to make a complaint. A complaints log is maintained, however, it does not currently contain relevant summary information of complaints, relating to the national standards, received in writing by parents directly to the nursery.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive good quality information about the provision including the educational programme. Planning and information about the Foundation Stage is displayed for parents' perusal. Staff inform parents about themes and activities both verbally and through daily diaries. Parents are informed about children's progress and achievements. Parents are reminded they can access their child's assessment file at any time. They are invited to annual parent events where they can talk to their child's key worker about their child's progress and achievements and see, first hand, activities their children experience. Parent's views are sought on their child's assessment and they are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways such as sending in objects for letter of the week and taking 'Roarie the Lion' on his travels.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff recently employed and currently undergoing relevant vetting procedures are not left unsupervised with children. New staff are provided with job descriptions and complete a thorough induction ensuring they know what is expected of them. The staff team work collaboratively and show a commitment to continual professional development which supports the care and learning of all children. Regular appraisals allow staff to reflect on their practice and consider future career development. A rolling training programme ensures all staff receive a basic awareness of 'core' skills such as child protection and behaviour management. Additional training is also provided including nationally recognised childcare qualifications to Level 2 and 3. Staffing levels positively support children's care, learning and play. Suitable contingency arrangements are in place to ensure ratios are maintained. Separate staff are employed for domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning and maintenance. There is a designated deputy manager who supervises the work of staff caring for children under three. Children's, staff and visitors attendance is accurately recorded. Policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement. They are regularly updated to bring them in line with changing practice or legislation. Record systems are used well to meet children's needs and are securely stored to protect confidentiality. Staff are aware of relevant Data Protection issues and any information stored electronically is fully protected. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. Management have a clear vision for the nursery education with a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children. Staff monitor and evaluate the curriculum to identify strengths and areas for improvement. They work closely with their local authority mentor to review and improve practice. For example, pre-school staff tried and tested a number of planning methods until they found a format that they felt is both practical and manageable. Regular management and staff meetings ensure good communication links and enable staff to contribute ideas for future themes and activities. Management oversee the effectiveness of the curriculum via a hands-on approach enabling them to directly observe teaching and learning and to provide a positive role model to staff and students.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was requested to ensure all policies and procedures consistently contain reference to current national standards, guidance and legislation. Policies are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure they are in line with current practice and legislation. They were also asked to ensure all members of staff consistently implement the comprehensive policies and procedures in the operational plan. New policies are cascaded to the nursery via head office and discussed with all staff during team meetings and training events. This ensures staff are kept fully up-to-date with good practice issues safeguarding children's welfare. They were also required to ensure all accident and incident records contain worthwhile information and all documents regarding their child are signed by parents. Accident records are maintained and shared with parents but they do not consistently include sufficient detail, particularly in relation to the type and location of the injury potentially compromising children's health and safety.

There were not key issues identified at the last nursery education inspection but the setting was asked to consider the consistent promotion within the routines of sharing, showing respect for property, good health and an awareness of changes to the body when active. Children now take an active part in the life of the setting. They are encouraged to share and take turns within their play, for example, as they wait patiently for their turn on the computer. They negotiate four places at the snack table and ensure they leave enough cheese and fruit for the rest of the group. They develop respect for property as they help to tidy away toys and equipment at the end of the session and are gently reminded of safety rules such as not climbing on the stage area.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been three complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The first complaint related to National Standards 1: suitable person; 2: organisation; 6: safety and 7: hygiene. Concerns were raised that staff to child ratios had not been maintained; that unvetted staff had been left alone with children; that staff were not suitably qualified for their roles and that the outside play area was unsafe and that accidents to children had occurred as a result. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to investigate. There was evidence to suggest a breach of each of the standards investigated and a Compliance Notice was issued. Ofsted later carried out a monitoring visit and concluded that actions in the Compliance Notice had been met. No further action has been taken and the provider remains qualified for registration.

The second complaint related to National Standards 2: organisation; 6: safety; 7: health; 8: food and drink and 14: documentation. Concerns were raised regarding staff deployment and the health and safety of the children. Ofsted carried out an announced visit to the nursery.

During the visit the inspector interviewed the nursery manager and area manager, made observations and reviewed policies and procedures. As a result of the enquiries made and evidence gathered Ofsted were satisfied appropriate policies and procedures are in place and that the majority of National Standards are being met. The only breach of National Standard is that of Standard 14; failing to inform Ofsted of a significant event. An action has been set regarding this and the provider remains qualified for registration.

The third complaint related to National Standard 1: suitable person and 2: organisation. Concerns were raised regarding un-vetted staff left alone with children, staff ratios and staff deployment. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit. As a result of the visit one action and one recommendation was set in relation to National Standard 2: organisation. A satisfactory response has been received to the action set and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- review and improve the effectiveness of safety measures in relation to the storage of cleaning materials and restricting children's access to radiators
- ensure accident records contain sufficient information, particularly in relation to the type and location of any injury
- maintain a written record of complaints made to you in writing by parents including any action taken, the outcome of any investigation and provide a summary on request to any parent of a child for whom you provide day care and Ofsted.

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):

- regularly review and update planning to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is provided allowing sufficient opportunities for children to revisit and consolidate skills
- continue to devise and implement systems to identify children's starting points and assess 'next steps' in their learning and development and use this information to inform planning
- ensure adults are consistent in the use of phonic sounds and alphabet names.

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