

Post House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206254
Inspection date	21 November 2007
Inspector	Joanne Baranek
Setting Address	Post House Nursery, 15 High Street, Brimington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S43 1DE
Telephone number	01246 559990
E-mail	posthousenursery@fsbdial.co.uk
Registered person	Michael Ian Fowler
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 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?

Post House Nursery opened in 1998. It is privately owned and operates from a Grade II listed building in the centre of Brimington, a Derbyshire village close to Chesterfield. Children attend from the local community and wider geographical area.

There are currently 63 children aged between three months and five years on roll. This includes 22 funded three-year-olds and four funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and has suitable systems in place to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting is open every weekday, except Bank Holidays, from 08:00 to 18:00.

A total of thirteen staff work with the children. All have early years qualifications. The staff group is supported by the owner and a cook.

The nursery receives support from an advisory teacher from the Derbyshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The owner and manager are actively involved with the EYDCP and the National Day Nursery Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning the importance of good personal hygiene through carefully planned discussions and consistent routines. They understand the importance of washing their hands before meals, after going to the toilet, playing outside and stroking the pets, knowing that it "stops germs spreading". The staff use good procedures, such as consistently wearing disposable gloves and aprons whilst changing nappies and washing their own hands after wiping children's noses or taking children to the toilet. This ensures good levels of hygiene are sustained and to help the spread of infection remain controlled.

The children within the setting benefit from a healthy diet prepared by the nursery cook. She ensures the meals are nutritionally balanced and comply with the children's dietary or religious requirements. The children are able to make healthy choices because the setting provides fresh fruit and vegetables with each meal. However the lack of available drinking water in between meals results in the possibility of the children becoming de-hydrated.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage to plan a robust range of physical activities for all the children within the setting. They provide a good opportunity for the children to develop their small muscles, for example, by using spoons to accurately transfer dried pasta into containers, or their large muscles, for example, by riding bicycles or using the climbing frame in the garden. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and have plenty of opportunities to play both inside and outside the nursery promoting their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe and secure in a setting with robust security procedures such as closed circuit television outside the premises, an intercom system and strict procedures with regards to the collection of the children. The nursery has good safety features, for example, fire safety equipment which is checked regularly, socket covers and stair gates. Sound risk assessments and daily checks limit accidents and prevent incidents. All these procedures and equipment ensure the children remain safe from harm and danger.

Toys and resources are stored safely and many are at the children's level with furniture suitable for children's use. This means they can access them freely and develop their independence. Staff expertly explain to the children the necessity for safety, for example, with regards to running inside or throwing toys, explaining how they or another child may get hurt. This helps the children to start taking responsibility for keeping themselves safe and understanding the results of their actions.

Children are safeguarded because the staff have a good knowledge of child protection and their responsibilities, co-ordinated by the manager who has received the appropriate training. The nursery has a comprehensive policy that lays down the procedure the staff will follow in the case of suspected abuse allowing parents, staff and students to understand what will occur in the event of a suspicion. This ensures that the welfare of the children is fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All-round development is fostered as the staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan for the individual child's needs. They carefully plan sessions by seeking information from the parents and conducting regular observations to enable them to pitch the activities at the correct level for each child. The staff know all children's individual preferences and the level they are at and use this information effectively to support or challenge them where appropriate. The younger children have individual routines and the setting supports these and ensures all staff are confident of each individual requirement.

Children's independence is encouraged through a setting that supports all children to be able to do things for themselves, for example, by allowing the children to access the toilet area independently, pouring their own drinks and putting their own coats on. Confidence and self-esteem are well developed in the setting because of the positive approach the staff use to applaud achievements and good behaviour, for example, they use handwritten stickers to praise a child for remaining calm whilst her mum left, the stickers being personal to each child.

The children are developing good communication skills from an early age because the staff talk to them and encourage responses. Planning is reflective of the children's interests and attainment levels both supporting and challenging all levels within the group. Activities are available to provide spirited play and relaxation opportunities. The staff recognise the importance for the children to be able to spend time in quiet reflection and provide a comfortable area for them to sit and think.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children have a positive attitude to learning because the staff make activities fun and engaging. They include all children and plan for each individual through observations on their abilities and a good understanding of where to take the children next. They adapt activities to support or challenge each individual child and because of this approach children are making good progress towards their early learning goals. The children's interests are included in the planning and because of the flexible approach the staff use they can adapt their activities if a child wants to take a session in a different direction. They continually evaluate their practice ensuring all areas of the curriculum have equal concern enabling the children to learn in an inclusive setting. The staff are starting to use the Early Years Foundation Stage framework to plan for a balance between child-initiated learning and adult-led activities and this helps the children to have ownership over their learning. The staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan for a balance of adult-led and child-initiated play ensuring the children have ownership over their learning making them active in their approach.

The children in the setting are learning to take care of each other because of the good role models the staff provide. The newer children in the room are supported and befriended by the other children, for example, they help a young child when singing "heads, shoulders, knees and toes" find their knees and toes enabling the younger child to join in with the activity. The children are learning a sense of community by taking regular trips to the church and library. They take unwanted toys and books to the church for the vicar to distribute and go to services such as harvest festival where they learn about giving help to the underprivileged in the community.

The staff spend time with the children talking about their interests and encouraging the children to extend their vocabulary. They take time to sit with the children and read books then talk about the content or associated topics. The children show great enjoyment whilst reading and show respect for the books by taking care of them, this is reflected with all the resources in the nursery. The children are given opportunities to visit the library and pick out books for themselves allowing them to take ownership over their reading. Within writing they are beginning to form letters with confidence and most four-year-old children are able to attempt their name independently because the staff use appropriate techniques to encourage them to start writing.

Children in this setting have plenty of opportunities to use mathematical language and numbers in their play, for example, they are encouraged to talk about size of containers whilst filling them with rice, and the staff ask them to predict how many spoonfuls it will take to fill a bottle. The children estimate then test to see if they are correct, they are learning the different uses of maths in their activities through careful support and questioning from the staff.

Knowledgeable staff provide opportunities for the children to explore and investigate using natural resources they find around the nursery, for example, the children are able to collect frog spawn and watch it grow into firstly tadpoles then frogs, which they then release back into the garden. The children are learning about the life cycle of the frog first-hand and this is supported further by resources within the nursery. They are able to make models out of everyday materials using skills such as cutting, sticking and painting. The staff allow time for the children to finish their projects and play with enjoyment knowing they have made this, for example, the children made a large play mat for their farm animals incorporating problem solving and working together.

Children are learning about different types of movement and physical skills through a well-planned curriculum. They are learning to balance, throw, catch, ride bikes and manage their personal space confidently, as well as learning about healthy choices and having access to fresh air daily. They are developing good accuracy skills through small construction toys such as tacks, corkboards and wooden shapes. The children use precision to hammer the tacks through the holes in the shape into the cork to make pictures and shapes.

Staff provide opportunities for the children to be creative on many levels. They ensure the children access an art activity on a daily basis and are starting to teach the children how to make their own colours using powder paint. They talk to the children about adding white or black to make the colours lighter or darker and allow the children to experiment with making their own shades of colours. The children are engaged in this activity and are sharing their results with each other. The staff provide opportunities for them to experiment with music through regular singing sessions and playing musical instruments. The children are able to express themselves through these different methods of creativity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern in a setting that actively promotes inclusion and supports the individual child's needs. They work closely with the parents to ensure their needs are met through dietary requirements, care needs and additional educational support. They show a positive view on the wider community by introducing the children to a variety of multicultural resources and activities. They are able to learn about different cultures and beliefs in a setting that embraces different ethnicities and supports children with English as an additional language.

The staff work closely with parents and outside agencies to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The nursery has a designated staff member who liaises between all support agencies, parents and the setting to provide the support the children require. This is reinforced by a comprehensive policy that outlines the procedure for obtaining further assistance for children with additional needs.

Children are learning to manage their own behaviour in an environment that uses consistent approaches and positive methods to help them understand the difference between right and wrong. The staff use positive reinforcement for good behaviour and take time to explain to the children why it is wrong to run inside and how they may hurt themselves or others if they persist.

Parents are able to share the information they know about their children and find out about what they have been doing during the day. The setting uses a variety of different approaches and the parents are able to use whichever method they feel works best for them. For example, they use routine books to log down what the babies have been doing during the day and the parents can use this to relay messages back to the nursery, providing the babies with continuity of care. The nursery hosts social events for the parents to be able to talk to each other and share ideas or thoughts about their children. This offers support for the parents outside the nursery environment and gives them an opportunity to talk socially with each other.

Partnership with Parents for nursery education.

Partnership with parents for children in early education is good.

The parents are provided with quality information about the Foundation Stage and how the staff will implement the curriculum into the children's play. The plans are displayed for the parents to refer to on a daily basis so they can see what activities their children have been doing. They are able to access their children's files at all times and have regular meetings with the staff in the room to discuss in more depth. However the setting does not provide opportunities for them to continue their children's learning at home. This hinders the progress the children are able to make towards their early learning goals whilst they are not in nursery.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

They have high self-esteem from a setting that uses positive language and support. They are learning the difference between right and wrong from the staff that tell them the need for the boundaries and are learning to control their own behaviour as a result. The older children take care of their younger peers ensuring they feel part of the group. They are broadening their experiences through carefully planned activities that include different cultures and beliefs and all children are included because the staff are sensitive to their individual needs. The children play together happily and harmoniously.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are safeguarded due to the robust recruitment and checks the setting conducts and all staff are qualified and vetted to ensure the quality of care provided is of a high standard. Induction processes ensure all staff and students are familiar with the comprehensive policies and

procedures that govern how the children are cared for, and regular staff appraisals ensure the continuity of quality care and education.

Staff are deployed with a high level of effectiveness ensuring the children receive support where needed and are cared for by staff who visibly enjoy working with children. They are trained in areas such as health and safety, child protection and food hygiene enabling them to protect the children in their care and ensure they progress safely in their learning. The children are all highly involved and motivated in all activities and relish their time in the setting.

Leadership and Management for nursery education

The quality of leadership and management is good.

There is a clear vision for the quality of both care and education and this steers the setting towards consistent evaluative practice. Staff understand their roles through comprehensive job descriptions and work together well as a team. They regularly evaluate their activities to improve their methods sharing good practice with each other. Feedback from parents or visitors is acted upon and the manager assesses and works on the setting's weaker areas, for example, she is working to improve the continuity between the nursery and the school by inviting the teachers into the setting, hence improving the outcomes for the children within her care. The setting demonstrates a high level of expectation from its staff and children encouraging good attainment levels for both.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to review the nappy changing facilities in the ground floor bathroom to improve safety, hygiene and privacy. The setting has improved the standards in the ground floor bathroom to complete this recommendation, and there are procedures in place, for example non-slip mats, to ensure the safety of the children using the facility.

The provider was also asked to provide further opportunity for the children to operate modern technology and programmable toys. This has been addressed and the children are now able to access a computer as well as a variety of electronic toys within their daily play, ensuring a balanced curriculum.

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 to 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):

- consistently ensure fresh drinking water is freely available for children at all times

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):

- further develop the partnership with parents with particular reference to continuation of learning in the home environment.

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