

Dollymixtures Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY104370
Inspection date	12 November 2007
Inspector	Linda Tomkins
Setting Address	The New Lodge, Corporation Street, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST16 3AG
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Registered person	Debra Jones
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?

Dollymixtures Nursery opened in 1989, and has been on the current site since 2002. It operates from a purpose-built building on the site of St George's Hospital, Stafford, Staffordshire. A maximum of 74 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 06:45 to 18:00 all year round. The nursery offers an out of school club during school terms times and school holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 130 children aged from four months to 11 years on roll. Of these, 33 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel into the hospital to work. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 members of staff. Of these, 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

All children have regular opportunities for physical play during the day. Currently the children use the large wooden climbing and activity equipment in each room as the outside area is affected by some building work on the hospital site. The children use wheeled toys, slides and balancing equipment which ensures the development of their physical skills.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through planned routines and procedures. Older children know, for example, that they have to wash their hands before food and after using the toilet. They said 'we wash our hands because of germs, they hurt the food'. However, younger children do not always have their hands cleansed after nappy changing and before food. This exposes the children to cross-infection. Staff follow effective procedures such as routinely cleaning the tables with antibacterial spray before food, and practising the clear procedures for managing sick and infectious children to prevent the spread of infection.

Children benefit from a healthy diet, they have a variety of balanced meals prepared from fresh ingredients by the hospital kitchen. Fresh drinking water is available to most of the children during the day. Children enjoy snacks of fresh fruit together with a choice of water or milk. Staff ensure children under 12 months follow their individual feeding routines as discussed with parents. All dietary and health requirements are recorded on children's individual record forms. This helps to ensure children remain healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The outside play area is secure and provides children with an exciting safe space to run, use wheeled toys and climb. The area is accessed from each playroom and children have a choice of equipment and activities. Premises checks are undertaken regularly to maintain the safety and security of the nursery. The main entrance door is locked and monitored by staff. Children are collected by identified nominated people and there are clear policies and procedures for lost or uncollected children.

Staff ensure they maintain a record of visitors' attendance. Children are cared for in an organised environment where risks are limited through effective procedures and risk assessments. Firefighting equipment is well maintained and checked. Children practise fire drills and emergency evacuation every four to six weeks. This means that children will be safe in an emergency situation. Parents provide written permissions for children to be taken outside the nursery on walks or outings.

Children use a range of high quality, safe, developmentally appropriate resources. These are well maintained and presented by staff to enable children to choose from the varied range stored at low level. Staff consistently explain safe practices to the children, such as lining up to go to the toilet and ensuring babies and toddlers are securely strapped into chairs.

Children are well protected by staff who have an exemplary understanding of child protection issues and follow the correct procedures to record existing injuries and report concerns to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and relaxed in the nursery's welcoming, caring environment. They have positive relationships with staff. Children play happily together using resources such as sensory toys, books, musical toys, play figures and art materials suitable to their age and stage of development. All children enjoy exploration with glue, paint, water and sand, which helps them represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Staff are actively involved with the children, for example, they sit on the floor and join in the children's play. Infants are frequently cuddled and stimulated with close eye contact and gentle encouragement to explore. Children show great pleasure when looking at photographs of themselves and friends. Staff have fixed these onto low-level boards which are at children's eye level.

The nursery makes effective use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and provide a range of stimulating and appropriate activities for children under three years. The children's development of communication and language is particularly well promoted by staff through constant conversation, questions and individual attention. Staff sit with children to talk about their toys and books and prompt them to make expressive sounds, such as squish, squish for mud as they listen and interact to their story 'We're going on a bear hunt'. Children and staff sing and dance together to recorded music and rhymes. They enthusiastically use gestures and movement to illustrate the words. Children smile and laugh as they congratulate each other's singing with applause. Consequently, children are developing their communication skills very well and are able to express their needs.

Children in the 'Allsorts' out of school club have their own room and have a strong sense of ownership. They have their own colourful collage of a well-known fictional children's wizard and displays of various realistic junk models. Children play well together as they make a complicated train track or play chess and drafts with a member of staff. In addition, children have access to a wide range of resources suitable for their age group such as a computer, television and outside equipment. Staff involve children in planning and choosing venues for Summer outings. For example, a sea aquarium centre and a country park. Children say 'I like drawing and the computer best'.

The daily timetables are flexible and allow some periods of time outside in the play area where they play and climb on specialised large fixed equipment, such as a slide and two-storey activity climbing frame. Infants are occasionally taken out in their pushchairs either in the outside play area or on walks. Children do not go outside each day during cold wet weather but staff are developing a method to ensure that children have protective warm clothing during cold weather.

Early Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff team have developed and increased their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan and provide a varied range of activities under each area of learning. The learning intention is recorded and relates to the stepping stones and early learning goals so that all aspects are covered. Staff have developed the practice of recording their observations on the children's progress in their 'Individual educational plans', which clearly show children's attitude to learning and provide a complete picture of achievements. Continuous monitoring procedures ensure staff maintain high standards of teaching and enables staff to make accurate progress reports to parents.

Staff record the next steps for each child's level of future development, and evaluation of activities and teaching methods clearly show the impact of planned activities and daily routines on the children and are used to inform future planning.

Staff use effective methods to maintain children's interest by asking understandable questions and encouraging children to choose their activities. Plans are flexible and allow staff to spend the majority of their time working directly with the children. The children are often split between two rooms and have key workers which ensures they have opportunities for one to one attention and conversations.

Children are clear about the purpose of planned activities and frequently join in with their own ideas and home experiences. Development is good in all six areas of learning but particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy, and mathematics because the children are in small groups and staff allow time for children to engage with each other and staff in individual conversations. Staff are particularly skilled in introducing numbers in familiar contexts.

Behaviour is well managed by consistent methods. For example, children are encouraged to understand the behaviour boundaries and respond to staff with 'please' and 'thank you' and praise each other's achievements. Children are also encouraged to help each other and staff to tidy resources away. This results in an ordered caring environment for children.

Children show a sense of belonging and are motivated to learn. They are friendly and confident to try new activities and speak in a familiar group. Children behave well, respond positively and volunteer to be chosen as a monitor to undertake special tasks such as giving out the cups. They are developing their personal independence by managing their own clothes in the bathroom but there are no opportunities to choose and serve their own food at meal times.

Older children make recognisable letters on paper and confidently identify labels of their own and each other's names and resources. They make marks on paper to write notes for their parents due to visit for open night and explain, 'this says Mummy you sit here'. Children have very well-developed skills to speak clearly and express their opinions. They select books for pleasure during free play and tell each other stories and discuss their favourite books. They join in with rhymes and songs, and use descriptive language and gestures to express themselves. For example, children discussing a feather said 'feathers float' another replied 'leaves float from the trees'.

Children discover the natural world as they use materials such as fir cones and leaves to model and create collages. Children use computers to interact with games and programmes and play with 'real' keyboards in their role play. Children learn about other cultures and customs such as Chinese New Year and Diwali as they dress up to celebrate other cultures' wedding ceremonies. They widen their understanding of the wider world and community as they have visits from parents who are doctors, nurses and 'the animal man'.

Children are developing a sound understanding and using numbers in familiar contexts. They are progressing with problem solving using addition and comparisons with mathematical language, whilst counting the number of children up to twelve, using their fingers to represent numbers. They confidently drive the numbered cars to the corresponding numbered house during a floor game. Children experience weighing and measuring with jugs and containers as they play in the water tray. They demonstrate that they have a good understanding of shape and size as they identify shapes such as triangle, square and rectangle.

Children develop their knowledge of health and body awareness as they make collages linked to activities of growing fruit and vegetables to eat. Children use small tools such as scissors, rollers, paint brushes and spatulas with increasing control. They occasionally go out for walks and use large physical equipment both inside and outside to travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment to develop their physical skills.

Children express themselves through creative activities and role play. They make their own musical instruments and sing songs. Children know and identify colours as they compare the colours of paint and shapes. They use various materials to make and display large collages of their current topics. Children use actions and expressive gestures during regular music and movement sessions with staff. They become absorbed in their imaginative play as they dress up and become a favourite story character and animals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy close relationships with the staff and each other. They are valued and respected as individuals, their confidence and self-esteem is developed by staff with use of praise and encouragement on arrival and during their play throughout the day. Staff ensure that resources positively represent the children who attend, as well as individuals from the wider community. Children celebrate their own and other nations' festivals and customs as they make Hanukah candles and draw chalk bonfire night pictures. They have various visitors from the surrounding community to increase their knowledge of the wider world and to help raise their awareness of diversity in their community and develop a positive attitude to others. Children are aware of various feelings and are developing a sense of humour. They make each other laugh in their role play as they make animal noises. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well, they take turns and share. Staff encourage the children to help tidy the toys away, they teach the children how to return toys to the correct container. Children are enthusiastic and take a pride in helping and staff reward them with verbal praise, clapping, stickers and being a special helper. Children's good behaviour and achievements are displayed on the 'Star achiever's board'.

The nursery has good access and operates on ground floor level. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and specific language requirements are fully included and supported because senior staff have formulated a system to offer appropriate support and ensure the policies and procedures promote inclusion for all children. Staff work closely with fellow professionals and parents.

All children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents and carers. The individual routines and preferences are discussed and recorded which means that staff are aware of all the children's care needs. Parents of children under two years are provided with a written daily diary detailing food and physical care throughout the day. However, the complaints procedure does not have the correct details of the regulator for parents to contact in the event of a complaint.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. They are made aware of how the setting operates in a detailed prospectus. They are informed of topics and operational changes verbally, in regular newsletters and at the parents' forum meetings. In addition, parents and carers are invited to open nights to look at their children's

records and are provided with activity details to continue at home. This ensures parents are involved in their children's education. Children's health and dietary needs are discussed and recorded. Verbal exchange of progress every day keeps parents informed of their child's well-being and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children in the nursery are provided with resources and furniture from high quality specialist nursery equipment suppliers. The management and staff team work hard to welcome children and families to the nursery and are dedicated to provide good quality care for the children.

The nursery has robust recruitment methods to ensure staff are appropriately checked, vetted and qualified. The proprietor and senior staff have developed procedures to ensure there is an efficient system in place to ensure the continued suitability of staff to care for children.

All children's records and staff details are stored securely and are available for inspection. Staff attend training on a rolling programme and are continually increasing their understanding of children's development and knowledge of appropriate activities. Staff are experienced and knowledgeable and ensure most children's individual needs are met.

The leadership and management of early education is good. The staff team have attended training on the Foundation Stage to increase their knowledge of the stepping stones and the early learning goals. They are confident and have established their own methods of recording and evaluating children's progress. Staff have regular meetings to share and discuss good practice and further develop their knowledge and understanding of planning and how children learn. Children in receipt of funding for early education are steadily achieving and progressing because the teaching methods are effective.

The staff team work well together and are continually striving to perfect appropriate policies, procedures and practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. There are clear systems in place for recording accidents and medication. Staff and children's attendance records clearly show the actual arrival and departure times and the rooms which staff work in.

Most documentation is meticulously maintained, up to date and regularly reviewed to reflect the progressive improvement of the operational practice. The staff team work well together to plan and provide children with exciting innovative experiences to enhance their development and progress. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to devise an action plan to show how the electric fans in the rooms will be made safe.

The provider ensures that whenever the electric fans are in use they are out of children's reach and operate in a safe manner. This ensures children are protected from hazards.

At the last early education inspection the provider was asked to increase children's knowledge of calculation in spontaneous situations.

The staff team in the pre-school room consistently ask children to count the number of children, calculate how many more, and add and subtract during rhymes and songs such as 'Ten green

bottles'. This ensures children are competent and have developed their skills in meaningfully using number and calculation.

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.

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 implement practice to ensure all children's hands are washed after nappy changing and before food
- ensure the complaints procedure has the correct contact details of the regulator.

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):

- review the organisation of meal times to allow children to organise the serving of food to progress their development of personal independence.

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