

Blossoms Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226963
Inspection date	18 December 2007
Inspector	Judith Chinnery
Setting Address	3-5 Stoneygate Road, Stoneygate, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE2 2AB
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Registered person	Blossoms Limited
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?

Blossom Day Nurseries have been operating since 1994, in the area of Stoneygate in the City of Leicester. It occupies two large detached houses with a joining enclosed garden.

There are 118 children on roll. There are 22 funded children. The registration also includes out of school care for children between the age of three years to 12 years. Children attend for variety of sessions. At present the setting supports two children with learning difficulties and and/or disabilities and 70 children who speak English as an additional language.

The provision opens five days a week all year around with exception of Bank holidays. Children can attend all day from 08:15 to 17:45 or for a morning session from 08:15 to 13:00 or an afternoon session from 13:15 to 17:45.

There are 25 staff working with the children. Two members of staff work part time and 15 members of staff are qualified in childcare.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, bright and comfortable premises, so helping to maintain their health. The staff follow appropriate hygiene procedures, such as, cleaning nappy changing areas after each use, so helping to minimise the risk of cross-infection. Children develop awareness of their own health and good practice because the staff encourage and support them through every day routines. For example, verbal reminders and visual images prompt children to wash their hands after using the toilet.

Effective procedures are in place to ensure staff are able to manage children's individual health, care and dietary needs appropriately. For example, clear and methodical records are kept of children's needs, such as allergies, so ensuring these can be met. Staff are able to respond positively to children should they become ill or have an accident. This is because there are staff who hold a current paediatric first aid qualification, first aid boxes are situated throughout the setting and information on any accidents is shared with parents.

The setting promotes healthy eating and children enjoy a balance of freshly prepared meals and snacks throughout the day. For example, fresh and dried fruit in the morning, lentil curry or lasagne for lunch and soup for tea. Drinks are available throughout the day therefore ensuring children remain sufficiently hydrated. Staff ensure they have knowledge of children's dietary needs and individual routines at the time the child is placed at the setting. Particular regard is made to the needs of young children and babies as individual feeding regimes are followed. Subsequently, children remain well nourished and hydrated throughout the day. Children develop physical skills and enjoy fresh air on a regular basis through daily use of the outdoor play area. Children have access to large equipment and other resources to enable them to climb, slide and balance. However, this area is not always as well planned for older children. This means that, while older children enjoy being active outside, they are less challenged to make progress with their large body skills to reach their full potential.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are welcomed into the setting, which is comfortable and well-maintained. Children's art work, attractive posters and information boards are displayed throughout the nursery providing a bright and stimulating environment. Children's safety and comfort is supported by an appropriate range of child-sized furniture, equipment for babies, such as cots and play equipment. Clear procedures and established routines are followed by staff ensuring both the environment and resources are in a sound condition, so enabling children to play safely. Children have some access to a selection of toys and resources which are generally suited to their needs. Children have sufficient space to move freely and with confidence within their allocated rooms and are grouped appropriately dependent on their age and stage of development.

A secure key pad system and door bell ensures that unknown persons are unable to gain unauthorised access, therefore protecting children's safety. The staff understand how to implement clear written policies to enable them to act in children's best interests in the event of an emergency, such as a fire. Risk assessments help staff in identifying potential hazards therefore minimising the risk to children's safety.

The setting has a written child protection policy, procedures and contact details for relevant local agencies. However, the policy lacks some essential details therefore not all staff are confident in the procedures. Some staff have attended additional child protection training to develop their skills and awareness and they generally have a sound understanding of child protection issues and commitment to protect children. Therefore, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children across the age range are settled and relaxed at the nursery. Staff work well together as a team which helps to create a welcoming and secure environment for children. Staff provide supportive contact and develop caring relationships with children to support their play, learning and development and the implementation of a key worker system helps to ensure children receive consistent care whilst at the nursery. New children settle well as the setting has good arrangements for them to make visits with their parents prior to their full placement.

Children enjoy a range of play opportunities and access to some toys and resources appropriate to their ages and stage of development. However, as yet these do not create a consistently stimulating environment to extend on children's natural curiosity and imagination. Staff undertake some planning, however this is not yet fully effective. Consequently, children do not consistently take part in a balance of purposeful activities which hinders their learning and development. Group rooms follow a daily routine. However, this is rigid in its design therefore, children are unable to initiate their own play, develop activities or extend their own ideas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning for nursery education is satisfactory. Until recently, there have been significant changes to personnel caring for the older children. This has meant that children's progress across the areas of learning has deteriorated. However, new staff have begun to make considerable changes to the provision for the children and things are starting to improve. Staff are fostering good relationships with the children. Consequently they are happy and well settled and forming sound friendships with each other and the staff. Children behave well and are keen to take part in activities. Although, while they are enjoying managing and helping themselves to their snack, other opportunities to foster and develop children's independence are missed.

The staff are increasing their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and its stepping stones to make improvements to all areas of learning. However, they do not always use this knowledge to ensure they question children appropriately and challenge them sufficiently. Systems for recording observations of what children are doing, charting their development through the early learning goals and identifying the next steps are beginning to develop. Activity planning across all six areas of learning is also improving but is not yet always based on what children are interested in and what they need to do next. The staff are also starting to improve their methods of teaching the children to introduce more opportunities for children to access resources, make choices and initiate their own play and learning. Staff manage children's behaviour appropriately in giving clear explanations and supporting children in sharing and turn taking but are less proactive in promoting positive behaviour amongst the children. Most children continue to make adequate progress through the early goals but the weaknesses described above impact on this and mean that children are not learning to their full potential.

Most children speak confidently and are keen to join in conversations during circle time about what they have been doing. Children who speak English as an additional language are starting to make some progress in English because they are now being supported by staff more appropriately. For example, the staff are now more aware of children's needs and model new words and sentences for children. Children are developing some mark-making skills as they draw using lines and circles while some older children attempt to write recognisable letters, such as, those in their names. However, staff miss opportunities to extend children's language and thinking skills or encourage children to use books other than at story time.

In mathematics children count confidently up to 10 and some are beginning to notice when they have the same number such as in name cards and children. Most children can recognise and name common shapes such as the round baubles on the Christmas tree. However, again staff miss opportunities to encourage children to calculate and solve problems particularly in everyday routines such as meal times. Children's access to a range of different experiences in 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' is starting to improve. They are all keen to use the computer and most can use the mouse to make the programmes work. They are beginning to make more use of the outdoor area so that children's understanding of the natural world is growing. They are also starting to explore and develop an understanding of and respect for themselves and others as they learn about different cultures and beliefs. Children's physical skills are developing. They are starting to improve their fine hand skills as they access and use scissors and attempt to thread. Children enjoy a range of activities such as art and craft, music and role-play which promote their creative development. An emphasis on adult-led activities impedes children's ability to create freely for themselves. However, staff are beginning to provide more opportunities for children to explore and investigate and try things out for themselves.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are welcoming and friendly and they provide a relaxed environment for children and parents. Children are respected and valued as individuals and are appropriately supported by staff. For example, by developing children's knowledge of other cultures and abilities. Including recognising different festivals or use of Makaton sign language. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are valued, supported and integrated fully in the nurseries activities. A written policy with regard to Special Educational Needs is in place, however, this is not yet fully robust and lacks some essential detail.

Younger children's behaviour is generally well managed and they are beginning to understand what is expected of them. Staff talk with children and use visual prompts to illustrate suitable behaviour. However, this is not always followed up by providing children with opportunities to put it into practise. A written behaviour management policy is in place and this is shared with staff and parents. However, this is lacking in some essential detail. Staff acknowledge positive behaviour and praise children for their efforts, therefore promoting their self-esteem and confidence.

Parents receive daily verbal and written feedback about their child's daily routine at the nursery. Newsletters provide details on current events and matters and notice boards throughout the nursery provide further useful information. Staff work well with parents and regularly discuss and maintain relevant records with detail about their child's individual care and needs. Therefore, children receive consistent and appropriate care. Partnership with parents for nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive appropriate information regarding the Foundation Stage and

its curriculum and are kept well informed about their child's progress through the early goals, such as, through reports and regular parent's evenings. However, the new staff have not yet developed opportunities for parents to be able to share what they know about their child or to become involved in their own child's learning in meaningful ways.

Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered. This is seen in the way in which children behave well, are learning about other cultures and beliefs and are starting to develop their independence.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation of the setting adequately supports most outcomes for children. The needs of the children for whom the setting provides are met. The setting is owned and managed by a close knit family team who oversee a friendly and caring team of staff.

Staff are deployed appropriately and adult:child ratios maintained to ensure children receive satisfactory support and supervision at all times. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that adults working with children are suitable to do so. A sufficient proportion of staff hold a relevant child care qualification, helping to ensure they are aware of appropriate child care practice. Required records, such as children's details and contact numbers are maintained and readily accessible to underpin children's care. Procedures and policies are accessible to staff and parents. However, not all contain the required essential details, therefore not all staff are confident in the correct procedures and as a result children's well-being is compromised.

Leadership and management for nursery education is satisfactory. The setting's manager, with responsibility for overseeing provision for funded children, has recently returned and is steadily increasing her knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage in order to support and lead the staff in delivering an improving curriculum for children. Managers have recognised that there are weaknesses in educational provision and have sought external help with this. Managers reliably identify individual strengths and weaknesses and training needs but currently have few mechanisms for evaluating and monitoring the quality and effectiveness of their educational provision for themselves. They are currently relying on the inspection process and local authority mentor teacher to guide them and consequently lack direction in continuing to make further improvements.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection in September 2003 the setting was asked to make a number of improvements to record keeping. Since then the setting has ensured that written permission is obtained from parents for seeking emergency medical treatment and advice; the setting also records accident and medication effectively. Consequently children's health needs are met, particularly in an emergency. Staff now keep records of any significant incidents to do with children's behaviour and have included a statement on bullying in the behaviour management policy. This supports staff appropriately in managing children's behaviour. Procedures are also in place to support staff in the event of children being lost or not collected which contributes to their safety.

At the last nursery education inspection in September 2003 the setting was asked to consider improving the use of targets or next steps in planning activities for children and improving the time available for activities. At the time the setting made some improvements but records

regarding this are unavailable. Since then the setting has experienced considerable changes to staffing and any progress made has stalled.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received one complaint which required the setting to take any action. Allegations were received regarding staffing ratios, security and partnership with parents. An Ofsted inspector visited the setting and investigated this under National Standards 2 Organisation, 6 Safety and 12 Partnership with Parents. The setting maintains appropriate ratios of staff to children and has improved security. However an action was imposed requiring the setting to keep a record of any complaints received regarding the National Standards and any action taken. The setting has since complied with this action and remains qualified for registration at the time of the inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of any 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

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- develop play opportunities, activities and first hand experiences which enable children to build on their natural curiosity as learners, ensuring that children can access a range of resources which support their learning and play
- ensure that observations and assessments of children's progress are used to plan the next steps for children's play and learning so that activities are built on children's interests and what they need to do next (this also applies to Nursery Education)
- develop policies and procedures particularly with regard to learning difficulties and or disabilities, behaviour and child protection to ensure that they contain all the necessary detail.

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):

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to ensure that children are questioned appropriately and are sufficiently challenged
- develop ways of sharing information about children's progress with parents and involving them in their child's learning in meaningful ways

- develop systems for evaluating and monitoring the educational provision.

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