

The Cottage Private Day Nursery (Uttoxeter Road)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY100960
Inspection date	18 October 2007
Inspector	Sharon Dickinson
Setting Address	Uttoxeter Road, Mickleover, Derby, Derbyshire, DE3 9AD
Telephone number	01332 515100
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Registered person	The Cottage Day Nurseries Ltd.
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?

The Cottage Private Day Nursery (Uttoxeter Road) is one of three nurseries run by The Cottage Day Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2001 and operates from a large detached house in Mickleover, a suburb of Derby. The premises consist of a baby and toddler unit on the ground floor and a pre-school unit on the upstairs level. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 105 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 30 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 17 staff, 11 of which, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Six staff are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the local authority. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and has the Investors in People Award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health benefits from the good hygiene strategies in place. An effective 'no shoe' policy for the younger age rooms means that children who can crawl are less likely to be subject to germs. Thorough procedures for changing nappies are in place, such as the use of aprons and latex gloves to help prevent cross-infection. Children demonstrate a good awareness of appropriate personal hygiene routines, washing their hands before meals and independently accessing tissue dispensers conveniently located around the setting. Tooth brushing forms part of the daily routine. Freshly laundered sheets and bedding are provided for babies, however, these effective hygiene procedures are not consistently applied to older age groups, potentially compromising children's health. Staff are fully aware of good hygiene practices regarding the care of animals and written parental consent is obtained allowing children to handle the nursery pets. Staff attend further training such as first aid and food hygiene to ensure children's health is maintained. Clear procedures and detailed records are in place in relation to accidents and the administration of medication. Although 'blanket' consent for the administration of 'Calpol' does not include sufficient detail.

The nursery employs a full-time cook who provides a varied range of freshly prepared, healthy and nutritious meals. Fresh fruit and vegetables are regularly served with meals and as snacks. Children's understanding and enthusiasm for healthy eating is encouraged through topics and discussion with staff. Drinks are provided with meals and drinking water is readily available for children to independently access at all times. Staff working with babies are alert to children's individual needs and promptly act upon signs that children require a drink. Excellent procedures are in place to ensure children's individual dietary requirements are fully met. An 'allergy alert' list is clearly displayed in all areas for staff perusal. Children with specific dietary needs wear a wrist band, easily identifying them to all staff. Red plates, bowls and cups are provided for these children to minimise cross-contamination of foods. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions. Food is served in ample quantities and children eagerly request and enjoy a second helping. The provision of additional staff to complete domestic chores within the baby and toddler rooms over the busy lunchtime period ensures key workers are free to fully support children at mealtimes. Good regard is given to babies individual feeding routines so that they remain content.

Children have plenty of opportunities to be physically active. The spacious garden provides a well-organised area for children to carry out a range of activities. For example, climbing and balancing on large apparatus, running off excess energy and using the wide variety of wheeled toys, developing their physical skills and levels of fitness whilst having fun. The provision of a pergola maximises the use of the outdoor area as other areas of learning are brought outside, for example, books and stories. During the morning toddlers benefit from a 'free-flow' system where they can choose to play indoors or outside. Mats and suitable play equipment such as ride-on toys are provided for babies, ensuring they also have daily access to fresh air. Trips and outings are organised, for example, children attend nature walks and visit the library and the farm, helping to develop their awareness and understanding of the wider community.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The well-maintained, vibrant setting is welcoming to children and parents. High priority is given to the security of the premises with key pads, intercom and camera systems fitted protecting children's safety. Coat pegs and key worker groups are easily identifiable with photographs of the children and artwork attractively displayed throughout the setting, helping to promote a sense of belonging. Rooms are well-organised to ensure maximum use of play space. Children are grouped in base rooms according to age and ability, providing familiar surroundings. They also have opportunities to access other areas such as the jungle room and sensory room where they enjoy heuristic play activities such as exploring treasure baskets. Depth has been added to the outdoor play area using mobiles, wind chimes and lights whilst the rubberised safety surface protects children's safety during active play. Children have easy access to a good range of developmentally appropriate resources, many of which are stored at child-height, or at floor level for younger children, to promote independence and choice. Resource trolleys are clearly labelled and photographs of their content helps children quickly locate their chosen play materials. Toys and equipment are of good quality and are regularly checked to ensure that they continue to be safe for children's use. Equipment is appropriate for the age and range of children, for example, toddlers are provided with beakers or cups with one or two handles dependant on their individual capabilities. Older children are encouraged to contribute to the care for the environment and play materials in a fun way by helping to tidy away toys to the song 'Whistle While You Work'.

Children's safety is paramount and overall staff implement effective procedures to ensure safety is a priority. However, children's safety is compromised by the use of the microwave to heat babies' bottles. Thorough risk assessments are conducted and appropriate safety equipment and procedures are in place to help minimise hazards. Although, procedures for keeping records of checks made on sleeping babies are not consistently implemented. Accident forms are assessed to identify any recurring incidents, and action is taken to minimise future hazards. Robust procedures are implemented for the safe conduct of outings, and emergency evacuation procedures are regularly practised to ensure children's safety is maintained. Children are reminded of safety rules when using the stairs and when accessing outdoor play. They respond well to boundaries and staff instruction to walk in pairs and keep one hand on the wall when walking through the car park to access the play area at the rear of the building.

Staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the protection of children. Staff have a good knowledge of the types and indicators of abuse and of procedures to refer concerns about a child's welfare. There is a comprehensive child protection statement in place which is in line with current guidelines. A designated staff member has been identified to handle child protection issues and all staff have attended child protection training; ensuring children's safety is further safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They relate very well to staff who provide good support to all children attending; sensitively engaging in their play and conversations. Staff are skilled at supporting children's play without over-direction. Babies are content and secure. They happily explore the good range of play materials including treasure baskets with sensory materials and various everyday objects such as wooden spoons, brushes and textured balls. Babies and toddlers respond to the warm interaction from their carers allowing themselves to be fed, settled to

sleep or engaged in play. Young children's early communication is supported by adults who talk to them and use facial gestures. Toddlers enjoy sharing stories with staff, singing and dancing to 'Bob the Builder'. They learn new vocabulary when identifying and talking about body parts. Staff successfully extend this activity by asking 'can you blink and wink your eyes?'. A wide range of practical play experiences are provided for children to help them develop their senses such as listening skills which are promoted when older children play the 'smelly socks' game. All children access a varied range of malleable play such as using play dough, sand and water. However, lack of sufficient protection for younger children's clothing when playing with water results in staff stripping toddlers to vests and bare chests which potentially impacts upon children's dignity and self-esteem. Staff have appropriate regard to children's individual developmental needs as they regularly assess their progress and use this information to inform play plans to support their next developmental steps. Planning is successfully underpinned by the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. The daily routine for all children provides them with a suitably balanced day with time to be active, to rest or play quietly. Staff provide an exciting range of fun activities both indoors and outside in line with children's interests and capabilities. Planning is flexible to allow for children's choice and spontaneous play activities and events. Daily opportunities are provided for all children, including babies, to participate in outdoor play and creative activities such as painting and sticking.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and implement this effectively by providing a range of activities to cover the six areas of learning. Systems for planning and assessment are user friendly and staff are given time to undertake observations and record keeping. They understand that all aspects of learning for children is interrelated. For example, children enjoy mark-making activities during outdoor play. Children benefit from the questioning techniques used by staff, who provide regular opportunities for them to express their ideas and thoughts. However, questions posed are not consistently built upon to fully extend and challenge more able children.

Children's independence skills are well promoted. They confidently choose from activities and play materials available initiating their own play and begin to be self-sufficient when accessing the 'free-flow' snack table. Children are animated in play, squealing with delight at being discovered during a game of hide and seek in the garden. They form strong relationships with staff and their peers and close friendships are forged. Cooperative play naturally occurs as children's activity choices interweave and resources such as a tandem tricycle also promote children's social skills. Very good opportunities are provided to develop mark-making skills. Children are encouraged to self-register on arrival sticking their photograph upon the wall, and are also invited to attempt to 'register' their name if they choose to do so. Children make good use of the emergent writing table confidently using the wide variety of media available. They spontaneously use pads and pencils to make notes, appointments and lists during imaginative play, helping them to understand that writing has a purpose. A comfortable, welcoming book area promotes children's love of books and stories and is used for group activities such as singing and 'talk time'. Many children recognise familiar words such as their name and older children know initial sounds of their own name and of other children within the group. However, some children struggle as staff switch between using letter names and phonic sounds when completing an alphabet puzzle with a small group of younger children.

Good opportunities are provided to develop children's awareness of number and mathematical concepts. Children confidently count to 10 and beyond during a game of hide and seek, and

an older child recognises number '5' whilst measuring himself against a number chart when waiting to go outside. Practical problem solving is promoted as children count how many are present and compare this to how many have registered their arrival. Through play activities children develop concepts such as sorting and sequencing using a variety of resources including compare bears and threading. They begin to develop an understanding of basic calculation when joining in number rhymes and grouping animal figures depending on similarities and differences. Children construct using a variety of construction sets and create models using recycled materials. A group of older children play cooperatively with the soft building blocks making a 'dinosaur house'. One child takes the lead whilst the others find various shaped blocks to add to the construction becoming excited and suggesting 'lets make it really big'. They went on to play imaginatively with the 'house' and the dinosaurs. The children persevered with this activity for a lengthy period and some returned to the same game the following day. Children develop an understanding of everyday technology when accessing the IT table. They utilise old keyboards, cameras and telephones during imaginative play. Children also benefit from regular access to the nursery computer and independently use the stereo system swapping music to their preferred choice. They develop an understanding of nature and the wider world through well thought out topics, a visit from the local fire brigade and resources such as the windy day box.

Children have well-developed large and small movement skills. They confidently negotiate space when using wheeled toys outdoors and use a variety of tools and equipment with increasing skill. The 'free-flow' session allows children time to practise and consolidate these skills without the pressure of a demanding routine. Children learn about body awareness through discussions with staff. For example, they talk about the pace of their heart beat following active play, and the best types of clothes to wear in hot or cold weather. Ample provision is made to encourage children's creativity. Free access is provided to creative opportunities, both planned and spontaneous, as children access the art resource trolley. Children's own ideas and representations are valued by staff. A variety of malleable activities such as sand, oats, snow and ice are provided which allow children to explore textures and discover concepts relating to all areas of learning. For example, they develop knowledge and understanding of the world as snow and ice melts when being handled by their warm hands. Excellent opportunities are available for children to engage in role play situations. Children's imagination is enriched by easy access to a wealth of props and dressing up clothes to help transform them into character. Children enthusiastically join in with familiar songs and have regular opportunities to use musical instruments. Calming background music provides a soothing atmosphere, helping to maintain a relaxed environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are very knowledgeable about children's individual needs. Key workers liaise closely with parents to ensure daily routines are continued, thus helping children settle in well. Staff speak to children respectfully and in a manner appropriate for their age. Children's opinions are valued as they direct their own play by making choices about which resources they want to use. As a result they are able to feel acknowledged. Children have varied opportunities to learn about the wider world. For example, through toys, books, foods and posters that depict diversity. Staff regularly access a toy library, borrowing specialist equipment, and children recently enjoyed tasting Samosas and Indian sweets brought in by a parent who attended the nursery to talk to about the festival of Eid. Positive steps are taken to be inclusive. Excellent procedures are implemented to support children and parents with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and

those who speak English as an additional language to ensure they are fully included with the life of the setting. A designated staff member provides a strong link between parents, key workers and outside agencies to promote consistency ensuring every child reaches their full potential. Additional resources are provided as necessary, for example, interpreters, a communication book, an introduction evening to baby signing for parents and utilising text and Minicom systems to ensure effective communication systems are in place for both children and parents.

Children behave well due to the positive strategies used by staff which help them understand acceptable behaviour. Children know daily routines, boundaries and expectations, and consequently feel secure within the setting. Good behaviour is celebrated and recognised through the use of praise and a 'kindness box' where older children are rewarded with an achievement certificate or sticker for positive behaviour. Staff are fully supported to promptly resolve instances of repetitive and unwanted behaviour. External advice is sought and practice is reviewed where necessary to ensure strategies are effective for individual children. For example, children are organised in smaller family groups or additional staff provided. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Effective systems are in place to ensure there is a two-way flow of information and knowledge which has a positive impact on children's care and learning. For example, the identification of key workers strongly supports continuity between home and nursery. A wealth of written information via notice boards, daily logs and regular newsletters ensures parents are kept fully informed about forthcoming events and topics. A photographic display of children at play enables them to see the wide range of activities and play experiences undertaken. The comprehensive policy file is discussed and shared with parents on entry and is available for their perusal at all times. Parents are regularly asked to complete 'interest sheets' and mini observations of their child at home, providing staff with a useful snapshot of children's current preferences and interests. These are used to inform assessment and enable staff to suitably tailor activities within the setting. During discussion parents provided a very positive feedback regarding care received by their children and in particular felt well informed about children's progress and achievements. Children's developmental assessments are shared with parents during bi-annual open evenings, where they have opportunities to discuss their child's learning with staff. Parents are actively encouraged to participate in children's learning, for example, by sending in resources linked to themes. Ideas and suggestions of how to further extend their child's learning at home are shared through regular newsletters.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust procedures are in place to ensure that people working with the children have the appropriate skills and are suitable for their post. Thorough induction and annual appraisal systems ensure staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. This helps them work effectively as a team to promote children's welfare. Staff are proactive in improving their skills and knowledge. They regularly attend short course training as well as completing further professional qualifications, helping to keep them up to date in current childcare practices.

Advanced planning and contingency arrangements ensure that there are sufficient staff to care for children at all times of the day so that they are safe and their needs are met, particularly at busy periods, such as lunchtime. All required records are in place and used effectively to underpin the day to day management of the setting. The information held about children and

their families is regularly reviewed to ensure that their care remains appropriate. Records are stored securely and staff are aware of data protection issues ensuring confidentiality is respected. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. The service is frequently reviewed through self-evaluation and regular questionnaires to parents. This promotes continual improvement of practice which benefits all children who attend. Assessment of the nursery education by the manager helps staff review and enhance their practice, sometimes with the support of their local authority mentor. Regular team and supervisory meetings ensures good communication at all levels enabling the manager to play an active role in supporting and overseeing the provision for nursery education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was required to review medication records to ensure the information is clearly recorded. Medication records are now clearly and accurately completed and information is effectively shared with parents. There were two points for consideration raised at the last nursery education inspection. These were to review planning of sessions and to ensure children are consistently given time to finish tasks and activities to enable them to fully consolidate their learning. Pre-school children now enjoy free-flow between activities. Planned activities are completed over a week to allow all children to access them to extend and consolidate their skills. Children are also encouraged to choose their own resources and direction of their play and the provision of a self-help snack ensures their play is not unduly interrupted. They were also asked to ensure methods used to teach children particularly the four-year-olds are appropriate and offer sufficient challenge especially with regard to their mathematical development. Children are now split according to ability during group sessions enabling activities to be pitched at an appropriate level, providing sufficient challenge for all children.

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):

- risk assess the practice of heating babies' bottles using the microwave oven and implement procedures to ensure this does not pose a risk to children's safety
- review 'blanket' parental consents to identify health reasons for the administration of specified non-prescription medications
- provide appropriate protection of children's clothing when accessing messy play, particularly in relation to toddlers
- ensure records of checks made on sleeping babies are accurate.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure staff consistently use appropriate questioning skills to provide sufficient challenge for more able children
- ensure staff consistently use letter names and/or phonic sounds.

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