

The Old School House Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221571
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Inspector	Caroline Wright

Setting Address	The Old School House, 69 High Street, Stetchworth, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 9TH
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Registered person	Care To Learn 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 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 Old School House Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by Care To Learn Ltd. It opened in 2004 and operates from the old Victorian school building in the village of Stetchworth, close to Newmarket in Suffolk. A maximum of 80 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:15 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a variety of secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 109 children aged from two months to under five-years on roll. Of these 39 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff to work with the children: most of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications; six members of staff are working towards further early years qualifications.

The nursery uses the High Scope educational approach, integrated with the early learning goals, to help children learn.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children successfully learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences. They are able to run around and exert themselves outdoors in the various nursery gardens each day, so that they learn the importance of regular fresh air and exercise. Babies develop new physical skills such as crawling and sitting when key workers strategically place toys so that they are encouraged to stretch and explore. Toddlers enjoy climbing on developmentally appropriate climbing frames or slides and access a superb range of small tools and equipment to acquire new manipulative skills. The nursery have clearly detailed plans in place to enable them to continue to improve the provision for outdoor play in the future: children will be able to flow freely between the indoor and outdoor areas so that they can develop new skills in an environment that suits their personal learning style. Although older children are being temporarily cared for in a nearby premises, well planned activities such as 'doctor' role-play will effectively help them to learn about how their bodies work and visits by the dental hygienist or health visitor will help children to consolidate their learning through first hand experiences.

Children's nutritional needs are extremely well met. The dedicated chef plans a varied and well balanced range of meals for all children. Food is freshly prepared each day in the nursery's temporary premises and brought into the main building. Menus take account of children's allergies and special diets: babies follow their own routines for bottle feeding and clear instructions what they like to eat are followed by the cook when she prepares their meals. Staff working with babies have a superb system for making sure that babies receive their own bottle feed and the fridges are checked regularly to make sure the bottles are maintained at the correct temperature. Older children are given fresh fruit, crackers or other healthy options and three and four year old children will be able to help themselves from the snack bar when they are hungry. Children are given regular drinks of water or milk throughout the day so that they remain well hydrated and older children will be able to help themselves to drinks when they want one. In addition, children learn about healthy eating in meaningful ways. They prepare sandwiches for tea; grow cress; and enjoy a wide range of cooking activities that create opportunities to talk with adults about 'healthy food'.

Children show an excellent understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene, which they learn through regular routines such as washing their hands before eating and sensitive reminders from their key workers when necessary. Staff working with babies are particularly good role models, wiping down surfaces and making sure the room is well ventilated and warm enough, to help children to stay healthy. They record the temperature of the play rooms every two hours and adjust the ventilation as necessary. Effective procedures, such as wiping down changing mats between nappy changes, wearing of gloves and aprons to reduce the risk of cross infections and thorough cleaning of bathrooms and kitchens, are carried out routinely by staff each day. The highly effective rota system for cleaning in all of the rooms informs staff of the standard of cleaning expected of them. Rigorous daily checks performed by the manager result in all areas of the nursery being scrupulously clean.

The needs of children under three-years-old are particularly well met by adults who have a very good understanding of their developmental needs. Babies have a sleep in a cot when they need it and toddlers can rest on comfortable snooze mats after lunch if they want to. Excellent hygiene procedures, specifically planned to take account of the vulnerability of the younger

children, promote their ongoing good health effectively. A very good range of large and small equipment inside and out enables babies and toddlers to develop new physical skills according to their stage of development. For example, babies explore the carefully selected items that staff provide in the 'treasure baskets' and enjoy playing in the sensory area or the 'nest.' They examine and experiment with familiar items such as spoons or cooking pans; they investigate the taste and texture of toys with their tongue and mouth, developing co-ordination and manipulative dexterity.

If the children become unwell or have an accident whilst they are in the care of the nursery, excellent records are in place to make sure that very good care is given. An ongoing programme for first aid training ensures that all staff are aware of how to provide appropriate care in the event of an emergency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children effectively learn about staying safe outside the setting through valuable activities. Key workers talk to children about holding hands if they go for a walk and use harnesses in buggies to keep children safe at all times. The outdoor play area is especially designed with an array of road traffic signs and miniature zebra crossings to help children to learn about road safety through their play. Children are encouraged to learn how to keep themselves safe by key worker's gentle reminders and their sensitive style of teaching. Babies and young children learn to patiently wait for their turn to come down the slide so that they do not bump into each other. Staff remind children to 'be careful' with scissors or to 'hold on tight' when they climb up and down stairs to the mezzanine level. Key workers arrange for the local Fire Officer to visit the nursery to help older children to learn about how to deal with emergency situations and to talk to children about how to evacuate the premises in the event of a fire. These visits are skilfully extended by staff who follow up with interesting, well planned activities such as, 'emergency' role play and small world play scenarios, for children to consolidate their learning through imaginary situations.

Children move around in complete safety under the vigilant supervision of the nursery staff. Children use a superb range interesting and attractive resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, and these are checked and thoroughly cleaned or sterilised on a regular basis by dedicated cleaning staff to ensure they are in good condition, hygienic and are safe. High handles and stair gates prevent children from accessing areas that are not safe, such as the staff room or the entrance area without adult supervision. An effective risk assessment of the premises is carried out by managers each day and addresses any potential hazard to children's safety. In addition, procedures such as checking sleeping children every ten minutes and detailed risk assessments of places that children visit on outings are highly successful in maintaining children's overall safety. Despite extensive construction work being carried out in the nursery, superb procedures have been implemented to ensure that there are no hazards to children and all areas are maintained in an extremely safe condition at all times.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a very good understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All staff receive child protection training during their induction at the nursery so that they are able to act in children's best interests. They are very well informed about procedures for safeguarding children and diligently record any existing injuries or concerns that they have for children's welfare. Staff at all levels are confident to seek advice from the

designated person in the nursery and also from other child protection professionals if they need to.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies are encouraged to become independent and pursue their own interests. They are immensely involved in the highly stimulating activities and resources that are freely available in 'treasure baskets' and low level shelving both indoors and out. They spend long periods of time concentrating and exploring self chosen activities and learning about different textures and materials at their own pace. For example, they spend a long period of time playing in the sand, using funnels and scoops or manipulating paint with their fingers, examining its texture and watching what happens when they mix the colours.

Children develop their language and communication skills when they share stories and talk animatedly with adults or play together in the role play area. They talk on the phone to 'mummy' and put on hats to 'go shopping.' Adults enthusiastically respond and join in with children's conversations with smiles and encouraging comments, asking open-ended questions, to urge children to communicate and to extend their thinking. Young children understand and confidently use the language of mathematics; for example, they ask for 'more' paint or comment that they have 'too much' scone mix in the bowl. They eagerly experiment with paints, pencils, scissors and glue to make their own pictures and develop their creativity.

However, some children are expected to pack away self initiated activities, when they are engaged in independent learning, in favour of activities that are highly adult led, such as threading reels or making scones. These activities have inappropriate challenge and children spend long periods of time waiting for them to begin, which impacts upon their motivation to take part. This hinders learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children currently receive funded early education in a different premises due to the ongoing building works in the main nursery. When the provision returns to the main building children will have opportunities to use their imagination making up their own stories in small world and role play situations so that they can develop good communication skills. They will be able to explore imaginary situations in the outdoor play area and will be able to use the resources available to extend their learning and to develop their story telling techniques further. Children will be encouraged to talk with understanding about what they do at home so that they can learn to use a wide vocabulary to talk about what they know.

Children will have opportunities to enjoy painting and drawing and to talk to adults about what their pictures mean. Children will have consistent access to mark making equipment and staff will encourage them to write for a purpose in role play situations, such as the 'shoe shop'. Children will be able to enjoy counting and recording the price of shoes that they buy in the shop or using the calculator to 'count how many altogether.' Adults will skilfully extend children's knowledge of mathematics when they encourage children to count down from five to zero in songs and finger rhymes at group activity times.

Children will be able to look at books so that they learn to turn pages from front to back carefully. They will be able to listen to stories and join in with their favourite songs and repeated

refrains. They will be encouraged to make their own books about 'tadpoles', drawing and 'writing' captions to describe the life cycle of a frog. Children will be able to enjoy taking part in music and movement activities and will have regular opportunities to use musical instruments freely to enable them to experiment with sounds and rhythm. Children will be able to learn about the world they live in and explore the natural world when they look at bugs or pick wild flowers in the garden or on walks around the village. They will be able to show a developing awareness of their senses when they tell adults what the sand feels like when they pour it through their fingers at the sand tray.

All of the staff working with funded children have a very good knowledge of how children learn. They will skilfully extend children's thinking through sensitive questioning and their enthusiastic approach to activities will encourage children to be motivated and to learn. For example, adults will captivate children's interest when they gather them together for 'Plan, Do and Review'; they will provide children with excellent opportunities to talk about their favourite activities. Adults will listen to children's comments and take their suggestions seriously; they will use interesting words, such as 'texture', in their conversations with children, to help children to develop a wide and varied vocabulary.

Key workers will carry out daily observations of children at play and use children's interests to plan future activities that build on what children enjoy. However, although they will maintain a record of children's achievements using High/Scope 'key experiences', documents and discussions indicate that they do not use the stepping stones to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals. As a result, some opportunities to extend children's progress in communication language and literacy and in mathematics, through every day routines, will be missed. This will affect children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show positive self-esteem and work together amicably to solve problems. Children play together in large and small groups and they assist each other to find the toys that they want to use. They are able to initiate their own activities for most of the session and are largely independent. Children generally behave well and understand what is expected of them. However, some key worker activities do not encourage positive behaviour. For example, young children wait for a long period of time without purposeful engagement for a cooking activity to begin and become bored whilst they wait. This affects learning and impacts on children's motivation.

The staff sensitively help children to respect each other's needs and to share toys and equipment. For example, encouraging them to take turns to take some dried fruit to put in the scones they make or helping them to share the hats when they play in the 'home corner'. Staff working with babies show a great deal of respect for children's wishes: they follow their individual learning styles and interests extremely well, using parents' observations of what their children enjoy playing with at home to prepare activities for the future and they follow their individual routines for sleeping and feeding. As a result, babies form excellent relationships and feel valued and secure.

Although no children receiving early education are currently attending this provision, evidence suggests that Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They will have very good opportunities to learn about the world they live in and all members of society. They will play with small world figures, look at books and take part in a wide range of cultural and religious celebrations. Meaningful activities, such as making books about 'my home' and

including photographs of the homes of children in Malawi, will help the children to learn positive attitudes towards diversity and to learn about each others home life.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Evidence suggests that it contributes effectively to the progress of children who receive early education. Children benefit from the positive relationships between their parents and key workers. Parents of children with English as an additional language will be able to share 'key words' with staff to help their children to build on their existing language and become confident communicators. In addition, parents' observations about what children receiving early education achieve at home will be added to children's progress records and used to plan the next steps in their learning.

The Parental Partner Programme contributes to the progress and well-being of all children. Parents and key workers discuss children's individual needs before they start at the nursery and record children's likes and dislikes. Staff use this information to make sure that children's individual needs are well met. Parents receive clear information about the nursery and activities children take part in through news letters, a prospectus and a notice-board display. A very good system is in place to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities with staff working closely with parents and other professionals. Daily discussions with key workers helps all parents to know about their children's progress; daily records are shared with parents of younger children and babies and a regular questionnaire helps parents to raise any areas where they feel the nursery could improve.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The registered provider uses successful recruitment procedures, which ensure that the staff are well experienced and hold the necessary qualifications to carry out their role effectively. All staff are rigorously vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The excellent induction procedure and comprehensive operational plan, with up to date information for staff, makes sure that all members of the team are secure in their knowledge of procedures for child protection and maintaining children's overall welfare. The ongoing professional development of staff in the nursery is considered to be a high priority by the whole of the staff team. All individuals engage in regular training courses in a wide variety of early years' subjects. As a result, all staff have a very good understanding of how children learn and are up to date with current agreed 'best practice'. All of the legally required documents, which contribute to children's health, safety and well-being, including a procedure to record complaints or concerns, are in place and regularly reviewed.

All areas of the nursery environment are well organised, attractive and provide plenty of space for children to move around safely and independently. Children and their families are warmly welcomed personally into the setting each day by a member of staff who greets them with smiles and encouraging comments. As a result, children enter the nursery confidently and leave their parents easily.

The nursery staff are well supported by regular one-to-one meetings with their line managers and an ongoing appraisal system makes sure that areas for development are identified. However, although there is a system in place for monitoring practice across the nursery, it is not yet effective in making sure that all of the play rooms operate to the same high standard and that all staff implement the nursery's philosophies in a consistent manner. This affects younger children's learning.

Although nursery education is not currently provided in this setting, evidence suggests that leadership and management of early education will be good. Regular meetings will enable staff to work effectively as a team. Ongoing training and development is identified by a good system of supervision and appraisal for all members of the team. However, evidence indicates that some opportunities for children to extend their learning through everyday routines, both indoors and out will be missed because assessments are not linked to the stepping stones. This will impact upon children's learning.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to update the complaints procedure to include Ofsted's contact details and make the revised information available to parents. The complaints procedure has been updated and contains all of the relevant information to enable parents to raise concerns to the regulator if they should wish. The procedure is available to parents in the information booklets they receive about the nursery.

Although there were no recommendations from the previous inspection of nursery education, one point for consideration was raised. The provider was asked to consider whether information provided for parents about the topics and activities might be made available in the general displays. Evidence suggests that the nursery will provide clear notices to parents and carers about the topics and activities on the notice boards and displays so that they can support their children's learning at home and help children to make a smooth transition between home and the nursery.

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 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):

- improve the organisation of key worker activities and large group sessions to provide younger children with increased opportunities to make decisions and pursue their own

interests; make sure they do not wait for long periods of time waiting for activities to start and enable them to spend time at self chosen activities to extend their learning independently

- develop the existing system for monitoring practice throughout the setting and ensure a consistent approach to the nursery policies and overall vision for children's care and learning are always maintained.

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):

- develop the system for assessing children's progress; make sure assessment records are clearly linked to the stepping stones and show progress towards the early learning goals.

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