

# Seesaws Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	229057
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Sheila Dawn Flounders
<b>Setting Address</b>	635 Chester Road, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5HY
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 384 5494
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Jayne Ackers
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Seesaws Day Nursery is one of five nurseries run by Seesaws Day Nursery Ltd. It opened in 1994 and operates from two floors of a detached house situated in a residential area of Sutton Coldfield. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 all year round, except for Christmas Day and Boxing Day. All children share access to a one of two secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 85 children aged from 6 weeks to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 18 members of staff. Of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications and 6 are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises is sufficiently clean and currently undergoing refurbishment in several areas. Positive steps are taken with the younger children to ensure that their hands are frequently cleaned and the robust nappy changing procedure also helps to prevent the spread of infection. The older children are also aware of the need to wash their hands and in some areas of the nursery are encouraged to do so independently, however they do not always do so before having their mid-session snack, which could compromise their health. Children's health needs are met because the group works with parents to obtain all relevant information to enable staff to meet their needs, including consent to emergency medical treatment. Appropriate measures are in place when children are taken ill, including sending them home as soon as possible when necessary and many staff hold current first-aid certificates. Documentation is in place to record the administration of medication, although the policy and practise lack clarity and as a result in some instances staff are uncertain as to what the procedures should be. In addition first-aid boxes are not checked thoroughly enough to ensure they do not contain out of date or unusable items, which could compromise children's health when staff access them quickly in an emergency.

Most of the children have food provided by the nursery which is prepared to cater for their individual dietary needs, so that often two options are served. Details of dietary requirements are readily available to staff to ensure these are complied with. Food is mainly freshly prepared and cooked on site and provides the children with a variety of tastes to encourage the eating of a full range of foods. The cook and several of the staff have completed training to ensure that food storage, preparation and serving takes place in accordance with suitable food hygiene standards. Parents of the younger babies are able to provide their own food and bottles if they wish which are appropriately stored, but the baby room staff also freshly prepare bottles for each feed using which ever type of milk the baby uses and nursery meals are pureed. All of the children have good access to drinks, with even some of the younger children able to access their cups independently and staff ensuring they are frequently offered. Snack and mealtimes are social occasions with the children sitting down together in their rooms to encourage them to become independent eaters. The younger babies are fed in accordance with their own routines.

Children have good access to outdoor play when the weather is suitable, where they are able to access a range of wheeled toys and climbing opportunities to aid their large muscle development in the fresh air. Inside the space is more limited in some of the areas children use, but staff do plan physical sessions for when the weather is not suitable to go out, with the younger children often having a whole week of activities based around physical play. The older children have their understanding of a healthy lifestyle promoted through appropriate discussion around what they are eating and food tasting activities. They also consider the effect activities have on their bodies, for example, why they should have a drink before going out to keep hydrated.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in premises that are generally safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. Each group has adequate space within their room, with some age groups having the use of several rooms for differing purposes, for example, the pre-school, have separate messy play

and quiet rooms. Many of the rooms have large windows providing natural daylight and they are all decorated with recent examples of the children work to make them welcoming to children and their parents or carers. Each child has their own base room, according to their age, where they spend most of their time. Some also use different areas to meet their individual needs, for example, 'tweenies' who do not sleep go down into the toddler room for suitable activities, with a procedure in place to ensure their safety when using the stairs. Suitable toileting and nappy changing facilities are available close to all the base rooms.

Children have access to a wide range of furniture, equipment and toys which are appropriate for their varying age groups and chosen to provide an accessible and stimulating environment. New resources are purchased carefully taking children's ages and stage of development into account, checked before children's use with systems in place to report any damage or repairs needed to existing items. Children have access to two outdoor areas, each for different groups which enables the children to play with age-appropriate resources. Each area is fully enclosed with safety surfaces under the equipment used for climbing. Children are cared for in safety because most measures are in place to protect them, for example, stair gates, finger guards on the doors, thermostats on radiators and safety glass in doors. Ratios are maintained throughout the day to ensure adequate levels of supervision. Risk assessments are in place on the premises and they are reviewed periodically using a check list format, although this is not clearly linked to what the potential hazards might be or used after all significant events, for example, to ensure suitable measures are in place after accidents. As a result the same incident could re-occur.

Children learn how to protect themselves because there is clear evacuation procedure, known to staff, and they have regular opportunities to practise the evacuation procedures. A record is maintained of these drills. On outings older children are reminded about the dangers of talking to strangers or approaching animals and they demonstrate an understanding of this during role-play when telling each other 'you can't speak to strangers'. Children are also kept safe because the group has appropriate arrival and collection procedures that include keeping photographs on file of all authorised collectors for children. Staff do not let unknown visitors in, but can release the outside door from the buzzer inside when the visitor is known to them. Children are protected because staff understand their role in safeguarding children, with the recent alteration of the nursery policy making this clearer. They have a suitable knowledge of the symptoms of child abuse and they know what action to take if they have concerns about a child. Staff are particularly vigilant about ensuring new staff who are not yet fully vetted do not change nappies unsupervised.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Younger children are provided with activities and play opportunities which develop their emotional, social, physical and intellectual capacity because staff plan a broad range of range of themes using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They concentrate mainly on creative, tactile or physical experiences which incorporate opportunities to develop language and all children are able to acquire new skills and knowledge. Babies engage in many messy play activities such as hand painting, gloop or custard play. They are often surrounded by toys on the floor so that the less mobile are still able to reach a variety of items. They are encouraged to become competent learners as they explore their environment with space provided for the practising of emergent physical skills such as sitting, crawling or walking. They show interest in new toys and activities, although staff who are not as familiar with the children do not always encourage this interest. In 'tweenies' planned activities start to be more diverse, for example,

the introduction of more specific fine movements to make marks and symbols with chalk, crayons and pens; the children join in more actively with action rhymes and more co-operative play opportunities are used to encourage them to share toys and develop relationships. First words are acknowledged and given appropriate responses which builds up children's confidence and self-esteem.

By the time children move into the toddler room they are starting to be more independent, so staff encourage them to make more choices about how the planned activities develop, for example, each choosing which animal they want to be in a game or they help to set up the table for snack. They listen and respond well to stories, and songs and use their imagination in role-play situations. Staff in all the rooms interact well with the children, joining in at activities with them and encourage children to take part with their enthusiasm. They do regular observations on the children, which are shared with parents, although they do not keep an overview of each child's progress in their main areas of development. As a result the planning process does not always focus on the next steps for individual children or provide less experienced staff with guidance to build on what children can already do.

### Nursery Education

The teaching and learning of the children in receipt of funded early education is good. The staff working with this group are all qualified, experienced and have knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is demonstrated by their positive rapport with the children and the quality of the activities and learning opportunities that are provided, particularly when they are separated into smaller groups. The planning is detailed, shared with all the staff and covers all areas of learning. It includes differentiation for the ages and varying ability within the group, providing a good level of challenge for the older or more able children. A particularly positive aspect is the inclusion of the children's own choice of activities, which through detailed observation, interaction and evaluation by the staff often result in additional planned activities to support or extend an area of learning.

Staff use varied teaching methods to support children's different leaning styles, ensuring that a balance is provided of adult and child initiated activities in each session. They are particularly skilled at explaining to children what they need to do and spending time discussing the activities with them in small groups. However when children are in a larger group situation they do not always use effective techniques to manage children's behaviour and as a result those activities are often dominated by the older, more confident children. The learning environment is generally well planned, with designated areas for many activities. Resources are often easily accessible to the children to encourage self-selection and independence. Children's records contain a variety of evidence, including a minimum of three observations each week, which are linked to the areas of learning with the information used to inform the next plans and show children make progress.

Children benefit from an interesting range of planned activities that cover all aspects of learning and relate to appropriate aspects of the stepping stones, for example, in the current activities around spirals the older children practise their cutting skills around curves and discuss the shapes. They consider which different creative materials they are going to use, discussing why they choose them. Books are used to look at spirals in fossils and when a child brings in some items from his holiday they examine the spiral on the shell. Each child labels their own work and they take turns to be involved in the activity. They progress well because staff interact with them and make good use of questioning and spontaneous learning opportunities. They

are confident in their actions, show interest in the activities and the older children are able to concentrate for extended periods.

Most use a broad vocabulary during interaction with each other and adults within the setting. They have opportunities to discuss their feelings and express their opinions. Children demonstrate very good imagination during role-play situations, which they often develop through other activities, for example, construction with 'Mobilo' involves a group of children starting to make a boat. They then decide that the boat is being chased by a monster. They discuss how they might be safe and get the monster to sink before going off briefly to a planned activity with staff. On their return they take up the scenario again, now adding additional roles of emergency services for other children who have joined in. Children are also provided with very good opportunities to write for a purpose, with several recent activities relating to Christmas, for example, they wrote about their favourite presents. The older children write recognisable letters with staff spelling out some of the words for them and they also easily read their name cards and other simple words.

Frequent activities such as number games or rhymes, which they act out, ensure the children are confident with numbers, the older children to 10. In addition, this confidence is reinforced through their topics. Recent work on houses involved looking at numbers on doors then other uses of number around the house, as well as exploring how houses are made. They also looked at the story of 'The three little pigs', made their own houses in different formats and engaged in activities to sequence a series of pictures to retell the story and in connection with the houses of various animals. Additional activities such as the weekly visit of 'The music man' provide reinforcement of learning, with particular emphasis on the musical aspects. Their general creative skills are also evident from the many examples of their work displayed.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met well, including any additional needs, because staff are fully aware of their individual routines and strive to meet these, for example, babies sleep when they are tired and in accordance with parental wishes with meals being held till later if necessary. Staff strike a good balance between activities and providing for their necessary care needs. Most of the older children are aware of their own needs and communicate these to staff or care for them independently. The nursery has a positive equal opportunities policy which concentrates on strategies to ensure inclusion and diversity is addressed, for example, children's dietary choices are respected. There are effective procedures in place for the identification and support of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children are encouraged to become aware of wider society as they play with a range of resources which promote diversity and they learn about different cultures and religions through planned activities. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children have a sense of belonging and develop their self-esteem as they know where to put their personal items and they are familiar with the setting and the routines. They see their recent creative work prominently displayed and witness the relationship between their key workers and their parents develop daily. They all have opportunities throughout the day to make choices and decisions for themselves. They generally behave very well and get along together, but any incidents are usually dealt with consistently by staff, using age-appropriate techniques such as distraction or removal of a toy with the younger children or discussion and calm down time with those older. The structure of the day and the staff's implementation of effective strategies, for example, acting as role models and encouraging the children to sit

down to eat, help the children be aware of the setting boundaries and what behaviour is expected of them. Any significant incidents are reported to parents in the daily exchange of information at the end of the session. This is in a written format for babies and younger children which ensures parents are aware of what children have eaten, their sleep, toileting and the main activities they have engaged in. Parents are all able to access the main nursery policies and have regular opportunities to meet with the provider and other senior staff.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. They receive additional information on the curriculum, have the chance to attend an open evening to discuss this and also are encouraged to look at the displays and other activities the children are doing when on the premises. They are able to have daily discussions with staff about their child's achievement and progress, with more detailed conversations taking place during the regular parents evenings. At this time staff prepare details of what they want to discuss, which parental comments are added to and actions agreed together to move the children forward, thus also giving parents opportunities to share what they know about their child. Parents are also aware that they can look at their child's records whenever they wish. Information about each topic is sent home in advance so that parents are able to be involved in their child's learning. Children also take some activities home, for example, words to learn together leading onto books from the reading scheme to share when the child is ready.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider has regard for the well-being of the children attending. Their welfare is safeguarded because all staff have undergone suitability checks and receive suitable induction as soon as they join the nursery. All staff have a training plan and they are encouraged to continue attending various courses both to renew existing skills, such as first-aid, and gain further knowledge. The required ratios of staff to children are maintained across staff breaks and often exceeded at other times. There are effective arrangements in respect of planned and unplanned staff absences and a keyworker system is in place. A complex operational plan is in place which includes all required documentation, but several of the policies and procedures are in need of updating to bring them in line with the current practices within the nursery and to reflect external changes. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the funded early education is good. The pre-school co-ordinator spends time in there each week, working alongside the staff to ensure they understand and effectively implement the planning. She is able to monitor and evaluate the funded provision and also does her own observations on the children to help her ensure the planning is appropriate to the children learning needs. The nursery manager also spends some time in the pre-school to oversee the provision. The senior staff are aware of most of the groups strengths and weaknesses, and have already begun to address some of these, although the documentation being used to record children's progress is too recent to provide a full picture. The nursery demonstrates a strong commitment to improve in the refurbishments to the premises and resources, the support for staff in planning via the pre-school co-ordinator and the encouragement to access training.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the time of the last inspection and during a subsequent complaint the provider was asked to address several safety issues and the qualifications of staff working with the babies. There are frequent reminders given to parents about the security procedure for the front door and

staff more closely monitor the situation, with an additional signing in sheet used for office staff. Staff awareness of reporting hazards has been improved and a more detailed check list is maintained and the bath has been removed from the first floor changing area making all children using it safer. Staff usually caring for the babies are either qualified or working towards their qualification and where possible relief staff who are brought in are also qualified.

For those in receipt of early education the provider was asked to consider the group size and the effective use of the space available. There are now three separate groups of children within this age group at times, to ensure numbers in each base room are appropriate and the activities offered can be varied according to the ages of the children.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there has been a complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take action in order to meet the National Standards. In September 2005 concerns were raised regarding staffing ratios and security of the premises. These concerns relate to National Standard 2: Organisation and National Standard 6: Safety. Ofsted investigated by unannounced visit and actions were raised to ensure all records of children's daily attendance are available for inspection and detail all required information; to ensure all visitors are requested to sign in and out; to increase parent's awareness of security issues when arriving and departing the provision; to review weekly checks completed, in particular to include the stairs and landings and the equipment used in these areas, improve staff awareness of reporting hazards. The registered provider reported afterwards that all staff have been reminded of the procedures regarding accurate recording in registers, ensuring visitors sign the visitors book, increased parent's awareness of the importance of security issues when arriving and departing from the nursery and reviewing risk assessments of the nursery and equipment. Ofsted is satisfied that the registered provider has taken the appropriate action and remains qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure that all children wash their hands before accessing food or drinks to prevent the risk of cross-infection
- conduct a review of the policies and procedures forming the operational plan



- review the contents of the first-aid boxes regularly and replace as necessary
- enable staff to more effectively plan activities, play opportunities and first-hand experience for young children by developing a system for monitoring their all round development
- ensure that there is a clear policy, understood by all staff and discussed with parents, regarding the administration of medication.

### **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 that effective strategies are used to manage children's behaviour, especially when they are together in a large group.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)