

Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221622
Inspection date	30 October 2007
Inspector	Heidi Falconer
Setting Address	Kingfisher Way, Hinchingsbrooke Business Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 6FN
Telephone number	01480 457995
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Registered person	Just Learning 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?

Just Learning Day Nursery is one of many settings run by Just Learning Ltd. It opened in 1999 and operates from a purpose built building which is situated on the edge of Hinchbrook Business Park close to the centre of Huntingdon. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:30 for 52 weeks of the year, excluding bank holidays. All children share access to secure, enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 151 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 37 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 30 members of staff. Of these, 25 of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification and several members of staff are on courses to extend their qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is extremely well supported and they thrive because practitioners meticulously implement the nursery's exemplary hygiene policies and procedures. For example, those working with children under the age of two are extremely knowledgeable about why they sterilise toys and feeding equipment each day. In addition, all practitioners follow strict procedures when they enter the kitchen or serve food to the children. Most staff hold a food hygiene certificate. As a result children are protected from the risk of cross-infection as they are cared for in a very clean, healthy and hygienic environment.

Children's health is significantly enhanced because practitioners keep detailed records of information from parents about their child's personal health needs. Excellent procedures are in place to ensure that all practitioners are aware of, and respect these needs. For example, colour coded reminders are placed at strategic points in each room detailing allergies, parental preferences and babies' preferred sleep and feeding routines. In addition, food prepared for children who have allergies is clearly labelled and served in red dishes on red placemats.

Children thrive because practitioners follow highly effective procedures and practices to meet their nutritional needs. Each day children are provided with freshly prepared meals which are cooked on the premises. Meticulous detail is given to ensuring that children are provided with a balanced and nutritious diet. For example, menus are planned using computer programme 'CHOMP'. This allows practitioners to compare and analyse their menus with established nutritional guidelines. As a result only cereals with no added salt or sugar are provided and any cakes are made with a reduced amount of sugar. Menus are displayed clearly for parents and an addition weaning menu is in place. This menu gives parents clear information about the food their young babies will be provided with.

Children gain an excellent understanding of good personal hygiene routines and how to keep themselves healthy. Posters are displayed in the bathroom areas to show the children how to wash their hands effectively. Practitioners ask children questions to develop their awareness of why they follow these routines. For example, when children say that they wash their hands to 'get rid of the germs', they ask them what happens if they don't wash away the germs. Children know that they 'may get poorly'. Through discussions and stories children know that exercise keeps them healthy.

Children of all ages explore, test and develop physical control through stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences. Practitioners use the 'Birth to three matters' framework very well to provide an excellent range of physical play experiences indoor and out for babies and children to age three. For example, outside children ride bikes and scooters whilst inside they use climb and slide-down soft play resources. Older children enjoy vigorous physical play as they climb cargo nets and climb challenging apparatus.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely welcoming and child-centred environment. Practitioners place a great emphasis on making sure that the environment is stimulating to children of all ages. For example, 'Activity Lines' with low hanging objects such as musical instruments and

filled balloons capture and hold the interest of babies and toddlers. Room bases are brightly decorated with the children's own work and posters. The space in each room is organised extremely well to meet children's needs and provide them with an excellent variety of learning opportunities. Children use high quality equipment which is organised extremely well to promote choice and independence. For example, practitioners use photographs of resources to help younger children make free choices.

Great attention to detail has been given to the layout and organisation of the individual outdoor areas. For example, one area is themed to represent the story 'Going on a bear hunt' and decking in the older children's garden is used by staff to create themed role play areas. Recent themes include a builder's workshop and a barbeque area. All children over the age of a one have access to activities such as painting, mark-making, role play, reading books and water play on a daily basis. Signage, posters and the decoration of the different areas make the outdoor area extremely inviting to children.

Children play in an extremely safe environment as practitioners consistently give utmost priority to keeping them safe. For example, twice a day throughout the year practitioners check the UV Index to measure the sun's strength. In response to this they make decisions as to whether the children should be wearing sunscreen when they play outside. There are rigorous fire evacuations procedures in place to ensure that all staff are fully aware of all exit routes out of the building. Each day staff carry out detailed checks of each room and the garden areas to ensure that any potential hazards are identified and quickly rectified. The manager is fully aware of current safety legislation and ensures that appropriate procedures are in place and followed by staff. The premises are extremely secure and individual room bases can be locked in the event of an emergency. Practitioners are particularly vigilant about checking the ID of visitors and only letting in those who they know. Sleeping children are monitored very well to ensure they are safe at all times and a 'cot occupancy chart' makes it extremely easy for staff to locate sleeping children in the event of an emergency.

Through discussions and activities children learn about personal safety. They learn simple road safety as they bring their bikes into the nursery as part of a 'Beep, beep day'. Staff also use spontaneous events to talk to the children about safety. For example, when looking at a child's cycle helmet, practitioners ask the children why it is important that they wear cycle helmets. They reply 'so that we don't bonk our heads'.

Children's welfare is safeguarded exceptionally well as practitioners have a very good understanding of child protection issues. All practitioners receive training in this area as part of their induction and a high number have attended additional training courses. Guidance to help staff take appropriate action if concerns arise are available to them in each room base.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where they develop warm and affectionate relationships with the practitioners. This contributes significantly to their enjoyment and feelings of security. To ensure that all activities meet individual needs practitioners use 'Birth to three matters' to plan a wide variety of experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. There is a smooth transition as children progress and change room bases as they are moved up according to their stage of development and not necessarily their age.

Babies receive lots of cuddles and have a strong bond with the practitioners who work with them. They benefit from routines for sleeps and feeds which are consistent with their experiences at home till approximately the age of one. Babies' particularly enjoy playing with the nursery's 'Treasure Basket'. This basket gathers together and provides a focus for a rich variety of everyday objects chosen specifically to stimulate their senses.

Children between the ages of one and three take part in a wide variety of creative activities. On a daily basis they have opportunities to explore and investigate different materials such as mud, dried rice, gloop and crazy foam. As they play in foam they squash it between their hands and hide their hands underneath it. Children of this age also enjoy dressing up and taking part in imaginative play. For example, as part of a recent topic children enjoyed dressing up as witches and using plastic spiders and worms to make spells in their cauldrons. Younger children enjoy sitting on large plastic animals such as sheep, pigs and frogs and laugh and giggle as they ride them across the room. As children play staff engage in conversations with them. However, at times they do not fully use everyday activities as opportunities to extend children's learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Practitioners have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and they use this knowledge to plan a broad range of activities which the children are keen to take part in. Regular observations and assessments are used to inform planning so that children's individual needs are planned for. Practitioners use group activities well to ask children questions which make them think. However, at times more able children do not always receive sufficient challenge to extend their skills and to build on what they already know and can do.

Children play with resources that support their counting and ability to match and sort shapes. For example, as a group activity the children count and sort coloured bricks; practitioners introduce the concept of calculation as they ask the children how many more they will need to reach their number. As children take part in music and movement activities they learn to listen to sounds and respond to what they hear.

Children show an understanding that print carries meaning. As they sit at the writing table they look for their own name cards and those of their friends saying 'here you go this is your name'. Children are beginning to distinguish one sound from another. As they help to complete the daily weather board children are keen to suggest words that also begin with the same letter as the day of the week. Children say 'that's a 't' my name begins with a 't''. Some of children's own attempts at writing are used on displays.

Children show good levels of independence. They are able to become increasingly self-sufficient in choosing activities and selecting resources for themselves. For example, for most of the session children are able to choose if they play indoors or outdoors and they serve themselves at snack time. Most children come in confidently and practitioners are quick to give children who need it additional support as they leave their parents.

Children have very good opportunities to find out about and identify features of the natural world. Each year they incubate eggs until chicks hatch and they watch the changes as caterpillars change into butterflies. Children are learning how to use everyday technology. They use the

computer with increasing skill and have opportunities to use programmable and remote controlled equipment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to develop an appreciation their own and other cultures and beliefs by taking parts in activities to celebrate festivals from around the world. For example, they celebrate Chinese moon festival, Hanukah, Christmas and Diwali. Regular visitors to the setting such as fire fighters and police officers help the children to learn about their local community. Children are very well behaved, and take turns and co-operate with each other well in games. For example, as children take part in a game to hang monkeys and bananas on a tree, they confidently remark 'it's your turn now'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are warmly welcomed in the nursery. Practitioners work extremely hard to ensure that all children are able to take part in activities at a suitable level. For example, they work well with other professionals to ensure that they have suitable seating which allows them to join in with all activities. Children settle well as practitioners take time to discuss and record very detailed information about their individual care needs.

A strong emphasis is placed on welcoming the parents into the nursery and staff work extremely hard to build good working relationships with them. This ensures that there are regular exchanges of verbal and written information about children's achievements and changing care needs. For example, each day all parents receive a written feedback sheet about their child's day. As a result practitioners are fully informed to develop and support the children's individual needs. Detailed information about the setting's policies, procedures and events are displayed attractively in the entrance area.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents have opportunities to view and contribute to their child's development records, sharing what they know about their child's learning. However, there are no formal systems in place for practitioners to find out about children's educational starting points when they start at the nursery. Parents receive information about the themes of planning and helpful suggestions of activities that they could do at home to reinforce their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the dedication and teamwork of the practitioners who care for them. There is a strong commitment to training and development which means that children benefit from practitioners who continually strive to improve the setting. Careful consideration and time is given to ensuring that the premises are extremely inviting and welcoming to the children. All the legally required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in place, regularly reviewed and very well organised. All records are stored securely to ensure that they remain confidential.

Robust employment procedures are in place and implemented to ensure that all practitioners working with children are suitable to do so. For example, in addition to seeking references and police checks all staff are required to complete a health declaration. Induction processes for

new staff are thorough. This ensures that they have a clear understanding of their role, responsibilities and the nursery's policies and procedures which support their care and well-being. The nursery has good arrangements in place to provide extra staff when needed, such as to cover holidays or sickness. They have a team of regular cover staff which ensures that children benefit from consistency of care. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The team is guided by a confident and skilled manager who has a clear vision to provide high quality childcare and education for all children. There are several systems in place to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the provision. The management team are aware of most of the nursery's strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate action to make improvements.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection the registered person agreed to ensure that the nursery's child protection policy was implemented by ensuring that staff do not work in isolation. Children are now fully safeguarded as this procedure has been implemented.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection they were asked to implement plans to improve the range of play resources as a means of encouraging children to explore cultures. Since the last inspection practitioners have developed their resources and are now able to provide opportunities for children to learn about diversity and the wider world through their play.

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):

- improve the use of everyday routines and activities to enable children to extend their learning, building on what they already know and can do (also applies to nursery education).

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 a system to gather information about children's starting points from parents.

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