

UNITOTS - University of Worcester

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205116
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Inspector	Saida Cummings
Setting Address	Henwick Grove, St Johns, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR2 6AJ
Telephone number	01905 855000
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Registered person	University of Worcester
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?

Unitots is a full daycare nursery and is part of the facilities offered by the University of Worcester. Childcare is offered to teaching staff and students, as well as, users from the local community. The setting opened in 1984 and operates from a specifically adapted nursery unit based within the University Campus. Children are cared for in several ground floor rooms depending on their ages and stages of development. The outdoor play facilities consist of three fully enclosed paved and grassed areas situated to the rear of the nursery. Children also use the newly-developed 'Forest School' area. A maximum of 36 children may attend at any one time. Children from the age of three months to under five years of age attend the setting. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year.

There are currently 56 children aged from four months to four years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early education. The setting offers support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning to gain control of their bodies and move confidently around the setting. They take part in planned and spontaneous indoor physical activities to help use different parts of their bodies, such as taking part in planned gymnastics sessions. They use the university's sporting facilities and are led by trained coaches and tutors to take part in specifically planned sessions. For example, children enjoy taking part in exercise sessions which are linked to favourite stories, such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They learn to move imaginatively in response to the story, for instance walking, hopping, skipping and jumping when acting out Jack's role and to crawl on all fours when acting out the cow's role. The older children and toddlers benefit from the many opportunities for daily fresh air and exercise. They are able to develop their physical skills on a regular basis as outdoor play is timetabled into each session. They readily join in with planned and spontaneous physical activities, such as using balls, hula-hoops and animal beanbags in different ways. They are starting to develop their throwing, catching, aiming and kicking skills. Babies and younger children have many opportunities for creative physical experiences and development. Staff support this age group and provide suitable equipment so they can develop their mobility skills. For example, they use the soft play equipment to develop their crawling and climbing skills and are able to pull themselves up onto the low-level furniture. They are well supported by staff when first trying to stand and walk. However, although the babies and younger children benefit from indoor physical activities their ability to spontaneously play out in the fresh air is inhibited by the lack of easy outdoor access. Staff are only able to plan outdoor play activities for this age group when extra staff are available to transport children to the outdoor facilities as there is no immediate access available from the area used by the babies and younger children.

Children are very well nourished and enjoy a varied and interesting diet. They are provided with nutritious and healthy freshly cooked meals and snacks. The menus are devised by the manager and the university's catering company who supply the cooked lunches. Children's individual dietary needs are well met as the staff, kitchen assistant and catering company are made fully aware of any specific diets to ensure these are catered for at all times. Children enjoy well-organised snack and mealtimes where they sit in small groups within their own designated areas and use these opportunities to build on their socialising skills. Younger children's independence is fostered during these times as they are encouraged to feed themselves. Children learn about healthy eating through discussions and topical work which include using the vegetable patch to grow their own vegetables. They help to plant and look after vegetables, such as tomatoes, runner beans and carrots which are used in meals and snacks. Children have access to drinking water throughout the day. The older children's independence is also encouraged as they are able to pour out their own drinks and all children are encouraged to drink plenty of fluids.

Children's health is protected because staff recognise and reduce any possible risks and help children to develop an understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They are beginning to develop self-care skills during daily hygiene routines which include independently washing their hands after outdoor play, toileting and before meals. There are appropriate procedures in place for dealing with any accidents, administering medication if requested and initially gathering information from parents and carers concerning individual children's health needs. The risk of infection to children is reduced as parents and carers are made aware of the guidelines followed and children are not cared for if they have an infectious illness. Children are building

up their independence through daily routines, such as putting on and taking off their own coats and Wellington boots. They are also encouraged to assist with the tidying up after activities, for instance shaking the sand from the toys and helping to sweep up the spilt sand. Younger children's routines are adhered to whenever possible. Staff are very aware of individual children's health needs, such as when they show signs of tiredness they are given the opportunity to sleep or take part in quieter activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely both indoors and outdoors due to staff's rigorous safety procedures. Detailed risk assessments ensure that all potential risks to children have been carefully considered and effective procedures and practices are put in place to minimise these. Children are able to develop their confidence in a very safe environment as the indoor furniture and equipment are set out to enable them to move freely and safely. They are also kept safe when using the outdoor play areas as these are fully enclosed and staff are able to form a secondary enclosure when the large gates are linked together to ensure children are able to cross the small road safely.

Children have access to safe, clean and age-appropriate play equipment and resources. Staff follow very good procedures to ensure all equipment is regularly cleaned and checked for safety. Children are made aware of the safety rules through appropriate discussions and during everyday routines. They are taught not to run indoors, not to climb onto chairs and how to safely use the outdoor play equipment. Children take part in regular emergency evacuation drills which helps to develop their understanding of the action they should take in the event of a fire. Babies and the younger children are kept safe whilst sleeping as staff follow rigorous checking procedures which include physically checking them on a regular basis.

Children are safeguarded as there are very good collection procedures in place which are shared with all the parents and carers. Children's welfare is very well promoted by a team of staff who have a good understanding of the issues surrounding child protection and recognise that this is their first priority. Staff are vigilant, aware of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and are aware of the appropriate procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child. All the staff are aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines and the key staff have also completed appropriate training. The child protection policy is shared with the parents and carers to ensure they are made aware of the staff's responsibility as child carers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a stimulating and exciting care and learning environment where they make very good developmental progress. They are confident and are building up their self-esteem. Staff in all areas of the nursery are attentive to children's individual needs and interact well with them. Children are happy, socialise well, are busy and engage in purposeful and meaningful activities throughout the sessions. Babies enjoy exploring the variety of textures when using the treasure basket or taking part in heuristic play. For example, they enjoy joining in with messy play activities, such as feeling the different textures of compost, cereals and pasta. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is well established for the younger children and ensures a variety of activities are offered to support their development. Children use the well-resourced environment to learn new skills and are very well supported by friendly and

knowledgeable staff. Planned activities are adapted accordingly depending on children's abilities and stages of development. Staff know the children very well and use their observations to plan stimulating activities for individual children to ensure they are able to join in at their own level and to move on to the next stage in their development.

The toddlers enjoy taking part in exploratory play where they are given time to experiment and extend their imagination. They investigate the properties of paint with a variety of different printing materials and also enjoy feeling the texture and mixing it with their hands. Staff encourage children's language development through appropriate stories and favourite songs. For example, children readily join in with 'Old McDonald had a Farm' and enjoy making the different animal sounds. They also enjoy listening to age-appropriate stories where large books are used on the floor so that children can join in with pointing out the different items and characters.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Qualified and experienced staff effectively promote children's learning and development through a broad range of activities and experiences. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and progress. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good. They form positive relationships with staff and each other. They develop increasing independence in many areas and manage tasks for themselves. However, their ability to make free choices and engage in more spontaneous play is inhibited due to the constraints of the building. They use small rooms for different types of play and are only able to access the available resources during the time they spend in each room.

The staff consistently and positively interact with the children to encourage their interest, involvement and learning. Their behaviour is managed very well as staff hold appropriate discussions to encourage them to play safely, think about their actions and to be kind to one another. As a result, children are generally well behaved which enables them to progress as there is a positive learning environment. Children are motivated, enthusiastic and keen to learn. Staff plan interesting activities and make very good use of the available resources to motivate children and to help them try new and different experiences. There are effective systems in place for initially establishing children's developmental starting points. Staff involve the parents and carers in this process and there is also a smooth transition from one age group to another. There are good systems in place for observing, monitoring and recording children's achievements. Staff set achievable targets for each child to progress or to challenge them in specific skills. The planned activities are effectively evaluated to ensure children's learning objectives are met and staff skilfully use this information to adapt or extend further planned activities.

Overall children make good progress in all areas of learning. Children are enthusiastic and enjoy an interesting range of well-resourced creative activities. They are able to create their own paintings and drawings as they have various opportunities to take part in art and craft activities. They take pride in their creations which are colourfully displayed throughout the setting. Children play imaginatively and co-operatively when they join in with the interesting range of planned activities. For example, they take part in the 'Hospitals' role play and enjoy dressing up and acting out different parts. The 'doctors' and 'nurses' are attentive to their 'patients', taking their 'temperature', using the 'stethoscope' and 'bandaging' their 'broken arm'. Staff encourage children's involvement by asking open questions which encourages children to think for themselves and helps them to extend their play further. Children have opportunities for writing during specific planned activities and as part of their everyday play. Staff ensure various

writing materials are made available at all times to encourage children to develop their writing skills, for instance various writing materials are made available in the 'hospital reception' area to encourage children to make marks whilst 'telephoning' or 'taking calls'. Communication skills are promoted very well through relaxed conversations and an interest in what children have to say. Children enjoy having stories read to them and listen intently, showing excitement and pleasure by joining in with familiar parts of their favourite stories.

Children use number and mathematical concepts in their play and everyday routines. For example, they help to count the number of children present at the beginning of the morning and when they line up to use the toilet or access the outdoor play facilities. Children recognise different shapes and use the correct name for the shape. Their spatial awareness is encouraged through everyday activities, such as when finding a space before physical play. Rotational planning ensures a good range of construction, media and materials are offered for children to design, build and adapt. They have regular opportunities to investigate, explore and use their senses. They use the outdoor 'Forest School' area to explore their surroundings, such as collecting the fallen conkers from the horse chestnut tree. Children have opportunities to use information and communication technology as part of their everyday play. They confidently use programmable toys and enjoy using a variety of play telephones to hold pretend conversations. Physical development for children is very well fostered. They have space to explore and use their imagination when using the outdoor play facilities. They use the 'Forest School' facilities to develop their physical skills, such as skilfully negotiating the stepping stones and using the willow structures as dens. Children handle small equipment, such as scissors, glue sticks and paint brushes with increasing dexterity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children gain confidence in an environment where they feel comfortable and secure. Settling-in routines are organised for new children and time allowed to share information about their individual needs in order to establish arrangements for their care. Parents and carers are provided with good quality information about how the setting is organised and are made aware of the activities their children have taken part in through discussions and the displayed information. They are also supplied with daily record sheets which detail the babies' domestic routines, such as naps taken, food and drink intake. Children are encouraged to be involved and staff ensure all children are included. There is an effective equal opportunities policy in place which is implemented by all staff. There are very good procedures in place for caring for any children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Staff are experienced and show a very good awareness of how to ensure children's individual specific needs are met. They work alongside parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure individual care or educational plans are implemented to help all children reach their full potential. There is also an effective procedure for working with any children who speak English as an additional language. Any children with a specific need are included in the life of the nursery as activities are adapted appropriately to ensure all the children are able to progress at their own pace.

Children have access to a good range of resources to promote their awareness of diversity and take part in several planned activities to help them understand their own and other cultures and beliefs, such as when they took part in the 'Jewish New Year'. Staff used appropriate resources to promote children's understanding of this special event and children enjoyed taking part in related activities, such as making honey biscuits. Children's awareness of the world around them and the wider society is encouraged through a range of activities and outings. For example, they take part in local outings and enjoy investigating their local surroundings. Children

receive lots of praise and encouragement to help them understand what is expected of them. They are able to follow adults' instruction and hold discussions concerning safety rules and behaviour. They work and play well together, taking turns and sharing. Staff are good role models for the children, praise and encourage children's positive behaviour and ensure there is a consistent approach. Any behavioural issues are dealt with appropriately and sensitively. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Staff are very aware of the importance of involving parents and carers in the life of the nursery and their children's development. They work well together to fully promote children's progress by identifying their starting point and carefully planning the next steps to enable them to develop their skills. Staff establish a very good relationship with parents and carers which contributes significantly to children's well-being in the nursery. The parents and carers are provided with very good quality information about the setting which includes information about nursery education and how children work through the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are kept very well informed of what their children do and their achievements through daily discussions which include the activities their children have enjoyed taking part in. Staff also take pictures of individual children during activities and everyday routines, which are shared with the parents and carers to enable them to see how their children spend some of their day. There are links between home and the setting to extend and involve parents and carers in their children's learning and experiences. This includes informing parents and carers of different ways they can extend and link their children's topical work through everyday routines at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is supported by enthusiastic staff and strong management. The organisation of all aspects of the nursery has developed and hugely improved with a strong focus on developing the outdoor play facilities and children's care and early education. A happy and friendly environment is offered where children are safe, well cared for and able to make very good progress. Staff plan stimulating activities using the broad range of interesting resources to enable children to be involved in meaningful and purposeful play. However, the current layout of the building structure inhibits the older children from making more free choices and the younger children from taking part in regular and spontaneous outdoor play activities. This is an ongoing priority for the setting's development and forms part of their proposed progress strategies. The service is regularly reviewed as parents' and carers' views and suggestions are taken on board and whenever possible, changes are made to accommodate any requests. The effective policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety and well-being. There are many detailed documents in place. These are regularly reviewed and updated, taking into consideration current legislation affecting the care of children.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place which ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Parents and carers are kept fully informed of the setting's events through regular newsletters and notices. There are effective and very good systems in place for keeping the required records. Children's care is enhanced because of the expertise of staff and the good quality organisation. The professional development of staff is encouraged through a system of appraisal and training. Children benefit from the staff's commitment to further development as any new procedures or good practice is implemented into the care and education provided.

Leadership and management for nursery education are good. The management and staff are committed to developing high quality through continual review and monitoring. They have clear aims and there are good strategies in place to evolve and develop the provision. The effectiveness of activity planning for children is very good. Staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum is very good and they are aware of how young children learn and incorporate this into the sessions. They use effective questioning and ensure they supervise the children without inhibiting their ideas and imagination. Staff work closely together and are flexible in their teaching approach to ensure individual children's needs and interests are catered for. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to: develop record keeping procedures for the monitoring of sleeping children; develop the written policy for behaviour management and improve staff's knowledge and understanding of behaviour strategies; and review the child protection policy.

There is now an effective procedure for recording the monitoring process when staff check sleeping children. A chart is displayed on the door of each sleep room and staff are required to sign the record each time they physically check the children.

The written behaviour management policy has been developed to include procedures to follow for dealing with any bullying issues. The child protection policy has been reviewed to include the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a staff member or volunteer. All staff, parents and carers are made aware of these policies. Staff have accessed appropriate behaviour management training and are able to use their knowledge and understanding to promote children's positive behaviour and to deal appropriately and sensitively with any behavioural issues.

As a result of these improvements children's health, safety and well-being are assured.

Complaints since the last inspection

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents and carers, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 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):

- implement the proposed development strategies, particularly with regard to the re-organisation of the premises to enable the younger children to easily access outdoor play and the older children to experience more free choices and instigate their own play (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):

- make improvements as indicated in the Care section above.

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