

Hereford College of Technology Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	223535
Inspection date	16 January 2008
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Registered person	Miss Sally Doughty
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hereford College of Technology Nursery opened in 1989. It operates on the campus of Hereford College of Technology. The nursery provides childcare for students at the college and wider community.

The premises consists of a unit for children from babies up to three years and a pre-school room. A designated sleep annexe, sensory room, kitchen, office, and staff and toilet facilities are also included in addition to these areas.

The nursery is registered to provide 40 places for children under eight years. During holiday periods a service is offered for 18 children, when only part of the premises is available for use. There are currently 54 children on roll. This includes 16 funded three year olds and three funded four year olds. The nursery cares for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open five days per week between 08.30 and 17.30. Children attend a variety of sessions depending on parents' needs. There are 10 members of staff working directly with the

children, all of whom hold the required early years qualifications. Staff also undertake First Aid training.

The nursery has recently achieved a silver quality assurance accreditation and receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is protected at the nursery because staff hold valid first aid qualifications. Practitioners maintain appropriate records of accidents that occur, and ensure that any medication children require is administered in line with parents' instructions. Children are encouraged to practise good hygiene habits, such as washing hands before meals or brushing their teeth after lunch. They are becoming familiar with these routines. The staff team ensure that equipment is of an appropriate height, enabling children to be independent in these tasks. Practitioners follow correct procedures for nappy changing; they consistently use disposable gloves and clean the changing mat after every use to protect the health of children and themselves. Staff discuss the babies' and younger children's sleep pattern with parents. Children can rest quietly in a pushchair or in a cot with bedding which is allocated to the individual child, to prevent the risk of infection. Cleaning staff are employed for heavy cleaning duties, with nursery staff responsible for the cleaning of the nursery environment and its resources. However, some of the equipment is not cleaned adequately or well maintained. For example, food splashes in food preparation and storage areas are not wiped off; some toys are badly scratched and dirty. Staff do not adhere to an effective cleaning routine or rota for this, which means that children are at risk from cross-infection.

Children are provided with drinks at regular intervals during the day; the older children enjoy opportunities to help themselves. Staff give good support to these older children in pouring their own drinks at snack time. The nursery are happy to provide a cooked meal or snack, and currently provide a mix of healthy ingredients, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, rice and pasta as well as prepared weaning foods. In addition, staff are happy to re-heat and serve items provided by parents. Staff are particularly careful to ensure that these meals are at the correct temperature, and use a thermometer and chart to check that meals are safe for consumption. Children enjoy main meals as a group, and gain benefit from this social opportunity.

Children generally enjoy exercise and fresh air in the nursery's outside play area. They are able to ride tricycles, kick, throw and catch balls, balance and climb, which helps to promote their physical strength and agility. They enjoy the opportunity to run and let off steam in the fresh air. However, these opportunities are missed when the weather is wet. Although staff do initiate some physical play indoors, it is not planned or organised sufficiently for children to enjoy the full benefit of robust exercise. Children are developing a growing awareness of the effect that exercise has on their bodies. For example, children describe feeling dizzy or thirsty after jumping up and down during circle games or action rhymes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in an enclosed, secure environment. Staff ensure that visitors to the premises are challenged and escorted at all times, and consistently use the alarm

on the entrance door to keep children safe. The staff implement sound procedures if anyone other than the parent is collecting a child.

A good range of play materials and equipment exists for the benefit of the children; older children are able to self-select toys and resources, some of which are labelled and stored at low-level. Younger children use a basic range of age-appropriate resources, brought out by staff each day. Babies enjoy bright and attractive toys and furniture to stimulate their interest and development. They choose from a selection arranged on rugs on the floor, or from craft activities on low-level tables or easels. The rooms identified for use are sufficiently inviting, and are decorated to provide stimulation for the children. The baby area contains some comfortable 'family style' furniture. The nursery has systems in place to ensure that the premises and resources are safe for children's use. For example, staff complete checks of the rooms and outdoor area on a daily basis.

Policies and procedures are in place which help to ensure that children's welfare is promoted effectively. Child protection training is accessed and updated as a matter of routine for all staff. They have a thorough knowledge of local procedures and who to contact should there be a concern about a child in their care

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and happy at the nursery. They enjoy positive relationships with the staff and quickly become secure and confident in their environment. Staff are using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities for the group of young children; most staff show insight into how to tailor these activities to enable individual children to make progress. Children under two years enjoy a range of activities and resources, which are prepared for them each day. Babies are cared for very well. Staff are intuitive to their needs and respond appropriately. For example, when babies start they are given one-to-one attention; staff cuddle, comfort and soothe them. They reassure them enough for the babies to settle, build up trust and develop attachments with their key-worker. Individual routines are followed so that babies can eat or sleep according to their individual needs. Staff respond warmly and with affection. At feed times, babies are held on their key-workers knee whilst they are bottle fed. They benefit from lots of eye contact and reassurance. The environment they use provides sound levels of stimulation, interest and comfort. Babies develop competence, for example, as they attempt to pull themselves up; they are given support and encouragement from staff. Toddlers enjoy selecting books and seek out staff to read these; children are content to be with others and happy to share staff's attention as a story is read. Children are becoming confident language users; they sing songs tunefully and with enthusiasm. However, the provision of meaningful role play is limited in the toddler room. The resources provided are not attractively organised to invite stimulation or easy access. This inhibits the children's meaningful play. Children are able to play independently when appropriate. Staff recognise when children need more direct support and attention; they provide this to ensure children become involved in the experiences on offer.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and demonstrate appropriate skills in their interaction with children. Curriculum plans are well prepared, thorough, and indicate that all areas of learning are covered throughout the year. All staff who work with the funded children complete

observations, which are then evaluated by the key worker. However, the activities on offer do not always have clear intended learning outcomes to ensure sufficient challenge for all children. For example, the water activity using ice had little focus to develop learning or inspire curiosity.

Children have a positive attitude to attendance at the nursery. They are willing helpers who gain security from the daily routine; children co-operate well together when asked to tidy away the toys, particularly in preparation for mealtimes. Children respond positively to the thanks given by staff for their considerate behaviour. Children generally show adequate levels of interest in the activities provided by staff. For example, two dolls, called Mog and Mary, go home with the children. The children are very interested in what the dolls take in their overnight bag, and suggest things to be included, such as, nappies and 'snugglies'. The practitioner then plays a game of 'what have I left out?' and the children delight in searching through the bag to see what has been hidden. Children understand that they have responsibility to the group as a whole, and show thought for each other and the environment. They form affectionate friendships with their peers and the staff team. For example, children greet staff from other rooms, or children arriving, enthusiastically and with affection. Children's self-care skills are developing well, promoted by the need to manage clothing in the bathroom or pour their own drinks at snack time. Staff judge carefully when to intervene and assist the child, and when to allow children to attempt tasks for themselves.

Children's listening skills are developing as staff make sure each child is given time and attention when speaking. For example, staff expect children to take it in turns to talk when they come together in a large group for a story or a song. Children are beginning to enjoy books and those who choose to read them during free play handle the books with care. Children are happy to attempt to write their name; at times staff provide mark-making materials in the role-play area to promote the use of writing for varying purposes. However, there are missed opportunities for children to read a range of familiar or common words during day-to-day routines. Consequently, children's ability to recognise familiar words is restricted. Children are using some number language in their play. They reliably count the images on computer games, and at circle time they count the number of children present. However, staff miss opportunities to promote calculation skills, to measure and develop children's awareness of shape or size. Consequently, children do not benefit from everyday mathematical familiarisation in their daily routines or environment.

Children have frequent opportunities to use the computer, and show good interest in the educational programmes used. Recycled materials and simple tools are available to children to promote their creative skills; some children show interest in creating their own designs, for example, at the painting and creative area. Staff organise focussed activities regularly to encourage children to experiment with the range of materials on offer. Staff support children, for example, in using scissors competently and safely, developing control of their smaller muscles and movements. They offer suggestions to children on how to create the finished design, but do allow children to be spontaneous and make the final decision. Children have a secure sense of time and place; they talk confidently about their family's plans and interests. Practitioners listen closely to what children have to say ensuring children feel valued and important.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for as individuals by the staff team, who exchange information with parents in conversation each day. Parents of babies and younger children also receive a detailed daily report on events of the day, which ensures the care of the child is consistent. Staff use simple

methods to promote children's self-esteem and involvement within the nursery. For example, children's work is stored carefully for parents. Children are generally behaving well; staff are good role models for those in their care. They deal with any unwanted behaviour calmly and always reinforce the nursery's expectations that resources are to be shared. Children learn to look positively on any differences they observe; play materials depicting positive images of diversity in our society are in daily use for older children. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given appropriate levels of support. Staff work closely with parents; they are aware of facilities available from other agencies, which enables all children to be involved and included at nursery. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The settling-in arrangements are flexible, which ensures children soon become content to part from their parents. Parents receive initial information about the nursery's practice as they register their child. Nursery policies and procedures are displayed prominently in the entrance hall and the operational plan is available for all parents. Information is provided on notice boards informing parents of activities planned with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and Foundation Stage in mind. Parents attend termly parents' evenings, which are linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum, ensuring they are aware of their child's progress. Staff are approachable and open to discussion with parents at any time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All essential policies and procedures are in place and are reviewed regularly to ensure they are up to date with current legislation and guidance. All documents, such as accident and medication records, contain sufficient detail and are shared with parents appropriately. Staff promptly amend the registers as children arrive and leave; these records are supported by the list which parents sign, including arrival and departure times, to record their child's presence. Children have sufficient space for play; rooms are adequately presented and maintained, and provide children with independent access to resources. There are systems in place to ensure that children are cared for by vetted personnel only, and that staff ratios overall are met. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and access training on a regular basis in order to keep up to date with current legislation and extend their knowledge and expertise.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to allow all children to have access to any area where they can relax, play quietly and access books. Since then, an area has been designated, that is shared with the role play area. Children are able to access books from shelving on the wall and sit on attractive, comfortable, floor cushions. Children benefit from an area where they can sometimes relax and play quietly.

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

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The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 systems to ensure effective domestic hygiene routines are adhered to at all times
- provide opportunities for children to access inviting, attractive and well organised imaginative play. This particularly refers to the older children in class 1
- implement strategies for providing well planned physical play during adverse weather conditions.

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to calculate, measure and develop awareness of shape and size
- ensure organised activities have clear intended learning outcomes that ensure sufficient challenge for all children
- provide opportunities for children to read a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently.

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