

Sutton Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	229067
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Inspector	Sheila Dawn Flounders
Setting Address	Cofield Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5SD
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Registered person	Sutton Nursery School Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sutton Nursery School was registered in 1993, however it has been operational since 1980, and is very well established in this area. The Nursery School operates from two rooms in a former school building adapted for use as a day nursery. It is situated in the Sutton Coldfield area of Birmingham. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open from 8:00 to 17:00, with morning and afternoon sessions also available. A secure enclosed outdoor play area is adjacent to the building.

There are currently 66 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these 61 receive funding for early education. Registration includes children up to the age of eight years but a service for school children is not currently offered. Most of the children live locally. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Six staff work with the children. Five have appropriate qualifications to Level 3 or above. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have very good opportunities for physical play both inside and out. Daily access to fresh air is encouraged through several sessions of outdoor play where children are able to access a large space for the use of wheeled toys, specific planned activities such as practising their road safety, or opportunities to run around. They have a safe area fitted with large apparatus to enable the development of their large muscles while climbing. Many of the curriculum activities are also taken outside to provide the children with varying experiences, for example, dressing up, instruments, construction and sorting activities. Planned activities inside ensure that children access physical play daily, using equipment such as the small climbing frame, balancing beams, the tunnel, parachute or items children develop themselves with the large wooden blocks. There is also a weekly movement and music session. Children begin to learn about healthy living through this access to fresh air and physical play.

Children understand simple good health and hygiene practices, they know how, when and why they need to wash their hands, which they are encouraged to do independently although staff remain attentive so that help can be given to the younger children when necessary. Handwashing after messy play and before eating is part of their routines and is reinforced by pictorial reminders. Any toileting accidents are dealt with sensitively. Children stay healthy because they are cared for in premises that are warm and clean, with particularly robust cleaning routines in the areas used for eating and the toilet area. They are protected from cross-infection because the nursery has a sickness policy which makes it clear children cannot attend when ill. They receive suitable care in the event of an accident or illness because staff have current first-aid qualifications, suitable first-aid boxes are maintained and detailed records are kept and signed by parents. Confidentiality is maintained when completing records. 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. Children do not sleep during the sessions, but quieter activities can be provided for those who attend all day if they need to rest.

Meals and snacks are enjoyed as social occasions, children are involved in handing out the snack and drinks, responsible for laying their own place at lunch and choosing what they want to eat and drink from healthy options so that they become independent eaters. They are well-nourished due to the quantity and quality of the meals provided, which are served by staff who have a good awareness of food handling procedures and take account of their dietary requirements. They are able to access drinking water at all times independently which ensures they are well-hydrated. Children extend their knowledge of healthy eating during the current topic when they consider healthy foods, discuss why they are good for them, go on visits to the green grocer and model what they have learnt in the role-play café. They also grow fruit and vegetables and engage in role play on doctors and dentists.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. The large premises provides ample space for the children inside and out where equipment can be spaced to allow plenty of room for children to move between activities. The nursery is well-equipped with a wide range of furniture and resources which are all age-appropriate to those attending, with the safety of

items used checked daily. Most resources are stored at child-height to encourage self-selection and help with tidying away at the end of the session. The whole nursery is safe and secure, children cannot reach to open the exterior doors and the arrival and collection periods are well-organised with a member of staff supervising in the entrance area. The bell is rung to gain entry and a contact buzzer alerts staff every time the front door is opened. Children are cared for safely because of good supervision and the appropriate use of risk assessments to identify possible hazards and staff have a good awareness of when these need to be reviewed. However, it is not clear when these have been reviewed, as opposed to checked, which could compromise children's safety if it was not done after a significant change.

Children learn how to protect themselves on local outings as discussions and activities take place about road safety, including 'stranger danger', which they model in role-play and suitable procedures are followed when they are out. They also all have opportunities to take part in the emergency evacuation drill, a copy of which has been sent to parents in case they are present. During outdoor play staff ensure that space is set aside for wheeled toys if other activities are also taking place to limit the potential for accidents and ratios are maintained to allow adequate supervision when children are using the climbing equipment. Cones and directional arrows are often used to help the children self-regulate their play. Children are protected because staff understand their role in safeguarding children. They have a sound knowledge of the symptoms of child abuse and they know what action to take if they have concerns about a child. The very thorough policy is available to parents and made known to new staff and students during their induction period.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All of the children access the same standard of provision, with the day divided into two sessions to accommodate children who attend part-time. They all develop confidence and self-esteem as they have opportunities to give their opinions, talk about their homes and families or help with particular jobs, such as feeding the fish, in turn. They all are able to become engrossed in the activities as some develop to take up the whole session, for example, the role play changes from a café serving several customers into the venue for a party, with guests arriving on various modes of transport. Children ask questions often, particularly in their family groupings or at adult focussed activities, for example, about why the jelly is cold, or if the fish for lunch came out of the water, demonstrating their curiosity and desire for knowledge. Activities are planned and provided to ensure they acquire new knowledge and skills, for example, they are all learning French during which time they count to ten and sing songs to learn colours and about different animals. Children develop many friendships during their time in nursery, often moving around to several groups during the session as well as spending some focussed time with the other children in their family group. They respond particularly well to their key person, but also interact positively with all the adults during the session.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff who usually work with the funded children are well-qualified, mostly very experienced with a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and therefore of what their expectations of children are. They are all involved in the planning which is in an easy to understand format and contains the required elements. During the weekly planning meeting the previous weeks evaluations are considered, but these do not always clearly identify if the declared learning intentions were achieved or show what individual children's next steps need to be. As a result the need to revisit some learning could

be missed or individual children may not be challenged at the correct level, as activities are planned for the lowest ability in the group which staff then extended for the more able. The differentiation provided is often not formally recorded for future reference. Although older and more able children do make good progress because staff provide appropriate challenge, for example, introducing counting into water play, or supporting children to develop their own bear hunt. Regular additions are made to children's assessment records, with some information gained on entry, so that it is clear to see they are making progress, with an overview kept so that staff can identify areas of learning that individual children need to develop.

The structure of the sessions provides a very good balance between children's choices and adult-led or initiated activity, inside and out. Staff interaction with the children is very good, they listen to what the children say, respect their choices and encourage their natural curiosity. Staff enthusiasm for the activities rubs off on the children and because of their involvement they respond to spontaneous learning opportunities as they arise, using open ended questioning to extend children's understanding and make them think. Staff organise their time and the available resources well. They utilise the space fully, at times dividing into the four family groups for more focussed learning to occur. They ensure that ample resources are available at each activity, with additional items easily accessible to children for self-selection according to their choices. They make particularly thoughtful use of activities around routines, for example, having rhymes while various children wash their hands before lunch, but wait until they are all back before reading the story.

Children benefit from an interesting and broad range of planned activities that cover all aspects of the six areas of learning and relate to appropriate levels within the stepping stones, whilst reflecting their family and community experiences. They access some activities that focus on a specific area of learning, for example, using chopsticks to develop their fine movements, with some mathematics in counting how many pieces of pasta they could pick up. However most activities provide cross-curricular learning, for example, circle time provides opportunities to count the number of children and look at the numerals of the date, in some groups the children write the numerals on the chart. When more children arrive they add on to make a new total. They look at the words making up the date and consider what other words they know starting with the same initial letter, several being quickly suggested. They consider what the weather is like and discuss which is the most appropriate symbol to use. They generally talk about what they have been doing, especially about the weekend, then each child has the opportunity to talk in front of the group to choose what activity they want to do. Later, towards the end of the session, they return to their groups and again each child talks about what they enjoyed most in the session.

Children also have very good opportunities to use their imagination in a variety of creative activities. During role-play the café scenario provided is initially used by a few children to cook or serve customers, writing down their choices and they practise setting out the tables. Someone enters the café requesting birthday cake and slowly the children change the focus so that it develops into a larger scale activity with children dressing up, using the large construction blocks to invent methods of transport to get to the 'party' that is happening. Others think about organising flowers and making sure the dolls are also suitably dressed. Children also access a variety of other creative activities each session, for example, dough, water, sand and paint are available but presented in different ways each day. Currently the children paint and decorate dragon masks, the water is blue or green and the children choose which box of resources to add to the sand. They continue to use their imaginations as they play, for example, whilst playing with the sand children start to 'make cakes'. They talk to each other about what type of cake they are making and what the ingredients are, pretending that the sand is their sugar

or cocoa. A member of staff joins in and asks them about cooking at home and they develop into considering which of the containers they are using might be the heaviest. Generally the children are confident, considerate of others, articulate and obviously enjoy their time in the setting. They are learning all the time and making good progress in relation to their age and abilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met well, including those with additional needs, because systems are in place to collect all necessary information before children attend and the staff are skilled at getting to know all the children, but particularly their own 'family' group. Every child is helped to achieve their potential because all staff interact with them, contribute to their development and their observation and assessment records. Children develop their individuality and self-esteem as they are given realistic and meaningful opportunities to make choices, such as being asked each day what free choice activities they would like to do. They have a sense of belonging as they know where resources and their own possessions are, what the routines are and they also see prominent displays of their work all around. There are effective procedures in place for the identification and support of children with learning difficulties and or disabilities. Staff particularly engage the children through knowledge of their interests and promote inclusion and as a result the whole group is very supportive and considerate.

Children understand reasonable behaviour because they are made aware of the basic rules which are in place, with verbal and visual reminders given when necessary. Staff emphasise positive behaviour, acting as good role models themselves, consistent praise is given to those children who are implementing the rules. As a result few incidents arise and children generally get on very well together. Suitable strategies are used if necessary, although children often know themselves that the behaviour is inappropriate without any action by staff. Most of the children are aware of their own needs and are encouraged to care for these independently. They generally respect that some children make different choices to theirs and negotiate the use of resources when they want to develop diverse ideas. They are helped to become aware of the differences of wider society through access to a range of resources and equipment that provide positive images of culture, gender and disability. They learn about a variety of festivals through topic work and activities, for example, using chopsticks, making dragon masks and doing dragon dancing in connection with Chinese New Year. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. They receive a balance of information between visiting the setting, documentation that is provided and the visual display boards that are dedicated to keeping them updated about the curriculum and recent activities. They are aware of who their child's key person is and familiar with the contents of the curriculum as a planning overview is sent home for each topic. They have many opportunities to discuss their child's progress via daily verbal exchanges and more formal termly evening events, as well as an open door policy over access to their child's assessment records. Some information is collected from parents when children start at the nursery as part of their entry profile, which is supplemented during discussing about children's achievements outside nursery allowing them to share what they know about their child. They are also encouraged to record comments relevant to the current topic on the planning sheet. The nursery is pro-active in providing them with many ideas of how to be involved with children's learning at home, both before the child attends to build up their basic skills and on an ongoing basis particularly in relation to the topics. During the current theme of food, for example, suggestions are to talk about the child's

favourite foods, what they smell and taste like, think about where it comes from and talk about the foods they buy when shopping. The attractive display areas encourages parents and carers to look at what the children have been doing recently and they are also able to make their own suggestions for improvements or activities via the 'wish fish'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children receive good care because staff have high regard for their well-being, the key person system is used effectively and ratios are maintained at all times. Staff are very committed, continue to attend relevant training to keep their skills and knowledge updated and have effective arrangements in place to cover planned and unplanned absences. Children's welfare is safeguarded because all staff have undergone suitability checks. The provider is aware of their responsibilities regarding employment of staff, has suitable recruitment procedures and induction in place and notifies Ofsted of significant changes. Day-to-day documentation, such as registers and accidents records, contain all required information, together with required permissions from parents and are generally well maintained. All necessary policies and procedures are in place which work together to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievements and their positive contribution to the nursery. They are made available to parents and subject to regular review to take account of internal and external changes. Information collected on the children is stored so that confidentiality is maintained. 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 manager provides strong internal leadership to a supportive staff team, who work together very well using their complementing skills and knowledge to provide the children with an exciting learning experience. The committee are not involved in the daily running of the group, being confident in the abilities of the staff. The manager has a realistic view of the settings current strengths and weaknesses and has already put steps in place to make some improvements since she started in the position, particularly to the planning and assessment cycle. She spends most of her time in the setting with the children and staff, is involved in the planning, oversees the assessments and is therefore able to monitor and evaluate the funded provision. The committee are informed about the implementation of the educational programme at regular meetings, but they do not have a system to directly supervise or appraise the provision themselves, which could impact on the standards of the nursery. The manager and staff have a strong commitment to ongoing improvement, demonstrated by the support given for planning, research and training, the links developed with other childcare professionals and the willingness to work on weaknesses highlighted as soon as possible.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to alter the attendance records, make better use of the local environment and provide more opportunities for children to climb. There are now climbing frames available inside and out so that children are able to develop their large muscles. Children have more opportunities to take part in activities within the local community, for example, they visit local elderly people, use local amenities and visit the local school as well as using the locality for walks. The children's register is now supplemented by a separate document which details their hours of attendance. These measures have improved outcomes for children.

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):

- review risk assessments after all significant changes.

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 evaluations consider the achievement of the declared learning intentions, link into the next steps for individual children and future planning
- develop the role of the committee in the monitoring and evaluation of the funded education.

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