

Strawberry Poppets Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218500
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Inspector	Susan Rogers
Setting Address	Baneberry Drive, Featherstone, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, WV10 7TR
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Registered person	Anna-Marie Bissell
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Strawberry Poppets Nursery School opened in 2000. It operates from rooms within the Featherstone and Hilton Community Centre in Featherstone, South Staffordshire. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. A maximum of 35 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 17:45 for 51 weeks of the year. The group have a small outdoor play area and children have supervised access to a playground used by the community.

There are currently 51 children aged from five months to five years on roll. This includes 17 children who receive funding for nursery education. The nursery also supports children with learning difficulty and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 11 staff who work directly with the children and all of whom have an appropriate qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The meticulous routines ensure that children are well protected against illness and infection. For example, stringent routines are followed when washing dishes as all children's crockery is rinsed in a sanitising solution and children have their own bedding which is changed and washed on a daily basis. A wide range of different foods challenge their palates and encourage children to be adventurous in their tastes. This promotes their understanding of healthy eating and protects their well-being as they enjoy a well-balanced diet. They eat their meals in a relaxed social setting which promotes positive relationships with each other. For example, younger children use low chairs which are turned into each other to create family groups and older children sit together at tables and chairs in family groups. They have ample opportunity to enjoy drinks of their preference as they bring their own drinks from home and staff replenish their drinks as and when needed. Children are protected from cross infection as their cups and bottles are clearly labelled.

A good variety of exciting sports equipment and the active participation of children in physical activities promotes their well-being. They regularly enjoy outdoor play in the community play area and enjoy more energetic activities when using the community hall. Children develop their small muscle skills using a variety of equipment that includes scissors, spatulas to spread glue and construction equipment. The documentation is regularly shared with parents which protects children's well-being. For example, all accidents and all medication administered is recorded and parents are advised of the sick child policy where they are encouraged to care for their child at home if their child has an infectious illness. Children are well protected if there are concerns regarding their health or if they have an accident as most of the staff are first aid qualified and have understanding of how they would respond if there are concerns.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well protected if there are concerns in the respect of their care as staff have attended child protection training and have a good understanding of their obligations. Children are further protected as parents are advised of current legislation and staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. The regular risk assessments protect children's well-being and make sure that they are safe in the setting. For example, all low-level glass is safe, all exit and entrance doors are secure and children are excluded from areas that include the kitchen which protects their well-being. Additional training has been provided for staff which promotes their understanding and provides them with the skills to protect children.

The generous staffing ratio and sound organisation during outings protects children. For example, staff organise children so that they can always be seen and ensure that children hold hands with each other and staff which promotes their independence and ensures their safety. Children's activities are well supervised which affords them effective protection and ensures they are safe. Additional risk assessments and visual checks of the community outdoor areas ensures children's safety.

The regular fire drills promote children's understanding of the need to evacuate the building promptly if there is an emergency. Children's understanding is further promoted as the setting liaises effectively with the community centre and ensures the emergency evacuation practices

are well co-ordinated. The equipment is well chosen and promotes children's learning. The wide range of equipment includes a variety of sports equipment, construction, jigsaws and creative play equipment. The storage of some equipment in the toddler room has potential to compromise children's learning as the majority of this is stored out of their reach and does not encourage their independence.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have opportunities to develop positive relationships with others through specially arranged activities that encourage children to rely on each other. For example, both younger and older children are grouped together at mealtimes and some children complete physical activities where they depend on others for a positive outcome. The good balance of both adult- and child-initiated play opportunities which promotes children's learning. For example, staff become actively involved in supporting children whilst they read or become involved in junk modelling activities. Children are given the scope and space to explore and experiment with creative play opportunities which promotes their learning. Children's learning is extended as they play independently with construction equipment and enjoy supported play whilst they use recycled materials to create three-dimensional models.

Children's language development is encouraged through staff frequently asking open-ended questions and encouraging children to become involved in active conversation. Staff are highly skilled in promoting children's conversation as they ensure that they focus heavily on their activities and closely monitor their progress which provides excellent support for their learning. Children's conversational skills are further promoted as staff are eager to offer explanations and introduce new vocabulary. Regular play opportunities are provided outside the setting which promotes their learning. For example, children regularly walk around the local area observing the changes in the seasons and local wildlife.

Children enjoy feelings of security as they benefit from reassurance and cuddles both as part of their daily activities and if they are distressed or tired. Children's play is confidently supported by staff who make suggestions and promote their understanding through explanations. The activities are sympathetic to children's individual levels of concentration as they are frequently changed offering children a variety of play experiences which promote their learning opportunities.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. The well-documented assessments monitor children's progress through observational and evaluative comments which actively contribute towards their progress on to the next stage in their development. Children's starting points as they enter the setting are well-documented and provide the basis for staff to plan for children's individual needs.

Staff have attended Foundation Stage training and confidently introduce several areas of learning within each activity. Children's learning is promoted through staff asking well-chosen questions which encourages children to give measured responses. The informative children's assessments include photographs and examples of children's work are used to influence further planning and progress children's development. Consequently, the planning is comprehensive and detailed.

Challenges are appropriate to children's varying ages and abilities. For example, during free play a variety of play opportunities are made available which are sufficiently diverse to provide for the wide range of children's abilities. Constructive use is made of circle time alone as staff alter their responses to accommodate children's individual elements of understanding.

Children are encouraged to be highly independent. They serve themselves at mealtimes, tidy away toys and equipment and independently provide their own personal care. They put on their coats and shoes prior to outings and understand the reasons why they need to keep themselves warm when the weather is cold. Excellent arrangements at mealtimes ensure that children's independence is promoted as they serve themselves food from serving dishes and select what they want and how much they wish to eat. Children make effective relationships with others. They resolve their differences with others and respond well to direction and in instruction.

Children are learning to recognise initial letter sounds, letter blends and sounds that are similar to each other. More able children are experimenting with forming letters that form their name and most of the children can recognise the written text that form their name. They recognise that writing and text is for a purpose, however, story time is sometimes poorly organised so that children do not fully benefit from listening to stories. Children have opportunities to practise making marks during creative play opportunities and experiment with making shapes and marks while they play with shaving foam. Consistent and active conversation encourages children to be confident communicators.

Children that are recognising aspects of the natural world by correctly naming animals and features of their habitats. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to fully understand aspects of the outside world during outings and during circle activities as staff do not fully extend their explanations. They have opportunities to use some technology during their learning but children's curiosity and skills are not fully explored as they are not encouraged to use everyday technological equipment. Children regularly compare their own lives with others through general discussion.

Children are beginning to understand the concept of volume and capacity as they discuss aspects of their play. For example, children discuss which shoes will fit them and which are too small. They confidently use equipment to weigh ingredients during cooking activities. They are beginning to recognise numerals and count confidently using this knowledge for a purpose, for example, counting the number of children in a group. They are learning to make connections in respect of size and shape. For example, they count out and group together the number of bears that are of the same size and recognise some mathematical shapes.

There are a variety of opportunities for children to use their imagination during creative activities. They are encouraged to make three-dimensional models of their own choosing using construction equipment and junk modelling and are able to talk and describe the structure they have made. They enjoy experimenting with different textures and materials, which include shaving foam, sawdust, jelly and baked beans. They describe what they see and smell and are able to make informed choices in respect of their preferences. They regularly become involved in creative play scenarios discussing their imagined ideas with each other. They are able to spontaneously move to music and match their physical movements to the words in the song.

A variety of tools and equipment help children develop their physical skills. For example, they use gardening equipment to plant seeds and dig up their plants. They use scoops and funnels when using water and use cutters when using malleable material such as dough. They are learning how to use scissors to cut with the more able children developing proficiency in cutting

accurately. They use a variety of wheeled toys when playing outdoors. They are mindful of the space that others need when sitting down the floor and skilfully arrange specific play spaces for themselves during creative play activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children thrive as a result of the effective continuity of care that is provided through the good partnerships with parents. Their welfare is well protected through the effective links with the local community centre. For example, children are able to access regular support from the local health visitor who is based on the community centre. They enjoy effective continuity of care through the gradual settling-in procedure where they are able to attend for shorter periods of time before the placement commences on a permanent basis. Children's welfare is maintained as parents are kept well informed of their child's activities through newsletters, regular assessments and daily diaries.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They behave extremely well. They have developed effective relationships with each other. For example, they readily welcome each other into nursery and appreciate their play is enhanced when they include others. Their development is furthered as they learn about aspects of the wider world through the celebration of different festivals and a variety of equipment that provides positive representation of different groups. Their learning is further promoted as staff provide them with explanations regarding different cultures.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good care as staff have attended appropriate training and have a good understanding of their individual needs. Staff utilise their effective assessment skills and protect children's welfare by closely monitoring their progress and informing parents of any concerns. Regular input into children's individual education plans promote the progress of those with specific needs. Outside agencies provide regular support which promotes children's welfare.

The partnership with parents and carers in receipt of early education is good. An informative prospectus keeps parents up-to-date in respect of the Foundation Stage and the aims and objectives of the setting. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress through the well presented assessments, planning and photographic evidence displayed around the setting. A relaxed and informal environment ensures that there is meaningful exchange of information in respect of children's progress between parents and staff. Staff actively seek parents' opinions in respect of their child's achievements. Parents are encouraged to continue with their child's education in the home setting by observing activities, a detailed daily feedback sheet and being well-informed of their child's preferred activities. Initial assessments place great value on parents' opinion of their child's achievements. Parents' opinions are greatly valued particularly at the initial assessment stage, consequently, children benefit greatly from their parents' involvement in their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children have good protection as all members of staff are fully vetted prior to having unsupervised contact with children. Managers are confident in their recruitment process and, therefore, ensure that all members of staff have the appropriate skills and experience to promote children's learning. Children are well protected as the setting is committed in promoting staff

training. For example, all staff attend a variety of different training opportunities which are closely monitored and well documented this, consequently, promotes children's well-being.

The documentation protects children's welfare. It is well presented and mostly updated. For example, all policies are regularly reviewed, however, children's contracts and contact details have not been updated which has the potential to compromise their well-being. The effective organisation of time and resources promotes children's progress. For example, daily outings promote children's well-being and include walking in the local area or supported play in the community playground. Children are encouraged to participate in the organisation of the setting by clearing away their toys and activities which promotes their self-esteem.

Leadership and management of children in receipt of early education is good. The effective organisation of the children's day promotes their learning. For example, children have opportunities for regular outings and comprehensive planning ensures that they are given a wide variety of learning opportunities to help them meet the early learning goals. Regular staff meetings ensure that all staff participate in the planning and progress of the children. Their skills and expertise are effectively utilised as the registered person has a good grasp of staff preferences and ensures that they are effectively deployed within the setting. Staff are well supported and are encouraged to regularly participate in modular training opportunities which ensures that they have the skills and expertise to promote children's welfare.

The effective use of time and resources ensure that children's progress is closely monitored as staff are given the scope and opportunity to consolidate and record their observations into children's assessments. The manager is an active hands-on participant and closely supports and monitors the progress of both staff and children. 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 setting was asked to: update the complaints procedure to include the address and contact number for Ofsted and assess the method used with parents to exchange information about children; update the child protection policy to include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a staff member; improve the safety and suitability when using the large slide/climbing frame on the concreted area and assess the space and provision used for meals and snacks for children within the Jelly Bean room. At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to assess and improve the use of number within routine daily activities, the use of initial sounds within routine daily activities and the organisation and management of time to alleviate missed opportunities.

Children are well protected as: the complaints procedure is now comprehensive and includes the contact details for the regulator; the child safeguarding policy includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff; the large slide has been removed; the concrete surface has been replaced by safety flooring and the space used for meals and snacks has been reorganised so that the space available promotes children's well-being. Children's learning is now well promoted. Time is managed well as staff support children's activities to provide meaningful learning opportunities, initial letter sounds and the use of number for a purpose are frequently used within daily activities.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received concerns from a parent regarding staffing ratios, unreported changes in the manager and parents taking their children to the toilet unsupervised.

These concerns related to National Standard 1 Suitable Person; National Standard 6 Safety; National Standard 13 Child Protection and National Standard 14 documentation.

Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit and found that: the children's safety was not protected with regard to the kitchen, this relates to National Standard 6; staff records were not available to view for all staff, this related to National Standard 14 and children were not always supervised at all times, particularly during toileting, this relates to National Standard 6. When the concerns were raised by a parent to the provider, appropriate and prompt action was not taken and a record of the complaint was also not maintained, this relates to National Standard 12.

The provider was issued with four actions to complete under National Standards 6, 12 and 14. Ofsted has received a satisfactory response to the actions. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- regularly update children's contracts and contact information
- organise resources so they are readily accessible to children of all ages.

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):

- stimulate children's curiosity about the natural world and provide greater opportunities for children to learn about how things work
- promote children's enjoyment of reading by the reorganisation of story time.

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