



## Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY239818
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 September 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Melanie Cullen
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<b>Registered person</b>	Just Learning Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Just Learning Day Nursery opened in Stevenage in September 2002 and operates from a purpose built building in the Great Ashby area of the town. A maximum of 112 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round with the exception of bank holidays. All the

children have access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 90 children aged from 0 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 15 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery serves the local area. The nursery makes provision for children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 23 members of staff. There are 13 members of staff who hold appropriate early years qualifications. Some staff members are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from an advisory teacher from the local Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is inadequate.

Company health and safety policies and procedures are in place. However, inconsistent implementation by staff compromises children's health. Changing mats are split and unhygienic. Sufficient supplies of protective gloves are not available. Measures to prevent the spread of infection are ineffective because staff fail to follow company procedures when changing nappies. For example, some staff wear gloves and aprons and others do not. Children do not learn the importance of good personal hygiene. Staff fail to recognise and extend opportunities to talk to children about staying clean and germs. Although the children are sent to wash their hands before meals they do not know the reason why, and children visiting the toilet independently rarely wash their hands afterwards. Children do not learn to manage their own personal care needs. For example, a three-year-old is not given the opportunity to access a tissue to wipe their own nose. Staff wipe the child's nose and dispose of the tissue. Children's independence skills are not promoted. Accident and medication records are in place and these are analysed regularly, contributing to company risk assessment. Children's health is compromised because of inconsistencies in the storage of children's milk. Staff working with two-year-old children store uncapped bottles containing milk on work surfaces within the room. The bottles are left unwashed after the children have had the milk for significant periods. Sufficient numbers of staff have received first aid training to enable children to receive appropriate emergency treatment. However, the first aid boxes do not contain sufficient supplies for the size of the setting and there is no suitable checking system in place.

Children benefit from a healthy diet and have access to regular drinks throughout the day. Children aged three-to-five years are encouraged to serve themselves at meal times. They are reminded to think about how much food they want to eat and that they can have more if they wish. However, children do not pour their own drinks which hinders their emerging independence skills.

Children enjoy physical activity because they have the opportunity to use the outside areas frequently. Older children benefit from a free flow system which allows them to

play inside or in the garden, weather permitting at their own choice. This promotes the development of some physical skills. Children's experience of balancing, throwing and catching is limited because the storage of small apparatus is poor. For example, bikes piled on top of small apparatus mean that hoops, skittles and quoits are damaged, unusable and not readily accessible. Some children have access to regular football coaching which is provided by an outside company. Children benefit from the input of the enthusiastic footballers. They learn skills such as the importance of warm up exercises and how to control the ball with their feet. However some children are not involved in this activity. They are not offered a suitable alternative activity and continue to run from one side of the garden to the other watching their peers in the football session. Staff do not actively promote learning through physical play and this limits children's development of physical skills. Children have some opportunities to practice skills such as threading, dressing dolls, using scissors and a variety of writing implements which contributes to the development of children's dexterity and hand-eye coordination. Children have access to fixed equipment in the pre-school and toddler gardens. The babies garden has a purpose built, gazebo style shade to protect children from the sun.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for in a purpose built nursery environment which is pleasantly decorated and suitably equipped. However, children's safety is compromised because staff are inconsistent when implementing company policies and procedures. For example, monthly fire drills do not always take place and risk assessment procedures in respect of rodent control measures are not complete. However, security systems for entry to the premises are robust and ensure that unauthorised persons do not have access to children. Other safety measures in place include finger guards fitted on doors which help prevent children from trapping their fingers.

Babies have access to a suitable range of activities, resources and equipment. However, the two-year-olds have limited play opportunities because staff do not provide sufficient and varied activities for them. For example, a group of children aged two years have access to a drawing activity which includes only one coloured pencil and a few sheets of paper, all of which were drawn on. Poor organisation of resources for older children has a negative impact on the range of opportunities presented for pre school children. For example, staff are positioned with their backs to the sand tray and are unaware that children throw the sand in each other's faces. Children do not access the role play area regularly because staff do not become involved in the play to extend language and learning with the children.

Children's welfare is compromised because staff have limited knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. There is currently no suitably trained designated person to whom staff can refer when the manager is absent from the premises.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

There are inconsistencies between the care offered to children of different ages in the setting. Generally children enjoy attending and participate in the activities provided. Babies take part in a variety of activities which contribute to their development. They explore their surroundings, play materials and texture. For example they use glue to stick pasta shapes on paper and touch the glue with their fingers. They explore and taste dry breakfast cereals. Babies smile, laugh and respond to the gentle reassurance from staff. They enjoy stories because staff sit on the floor and involve the children, keeping their attention through the use of pop up books. These activities contribute to the development of children's confidence and self esteem. The Birth to three matters framework is used effectively to plan appropriate activities for children under two years. Children over the age of two do not always have sufficient play opportunities to promote their development. For example, poor organisation and presentation of a toy pirate ship fails to entice children to play with it. Model pirates and equipment are not arranged attractively and no other resources are placed nearby to support and encourage the development of play and imagination.

#### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. The setting has company planning and assessment systems in place. The planning is linked to the Early Learning Goals. However, most of the staff have little knowledge and understanding of how to implement the planning or to identify the next steps of learning for each child. Staff do not know how to identify the learning outcome for children, or how to evaluate and review activities. None of the staff currently working with the funded children have completed the Foundation Stage training. Children's assessment records are not regularly updated. Starting point assessments have not been completed for children receiving funding for nursery education for the first time this term. Children's individual learning and development is not promoted and extended by the staff. They do not involve themselves in children's activities. For example, children do not use the role play area which is set up as a shop. Staff do not take opportunities to participate as the role of the shop keeper to encourage children to play in this area. Children's interest is not stimulated and opportunities to introduce and extend language for thinking and imagination are missed.

Children frequently access the writing table and art trolley. Some attempt to write their name and form letters correctly. However, children are not supported in their learning during this activity because staff do not regularly sit at the table or become involved in conversation with them. Children take part in a range of art activities using techniques such as marbling, printing with various items, collage and colouring. Children's work is valued and is displayed on the walls. Children use named placemats at lunchtime and recognise name labels on their coat pegs. Children learn to recognise some familiar words.

Children who take part in focused adult-led activities such as board games and playing cards receive satisfactory interaction from staff. They take turns and talk about what is happening in the game. However, during a board game the success of the winner is not acknowledged by the member of staff who moves on to the next

child for their turn without comment. Children's developing self-esteem is hindered because staff do not acknowledge their efforts and achievements. Children who are not involved in adult-led activities are not supervised sufficiently to ensure they are participating in purposeful activities. They lose interest in the limited play materials provided, they run in and out of the toilet area and engage in rough and tumble play on the floor. Children's development is not promoted and the lack of supervision and stimulating activities contributes to children becoming disruptive.

Children have various opportunities to practice counting during group activities, songs, rhymes and circle time. Children enjoy participating in role play. They wear animal masks relating to the story of the "Little Red Hen". Items such as an ear of wheat, grains of corn and bread which have been used during story time are used again to help the children act out the story. Children join in enthusiastically and staff encourage them to use the words from the story. Some children watch the play, the staff encourage applause for the actors then re-distribute the animal masks to allow other children to participate in the play again. Children begin to learn to take turns, to appreciate and acknowledge the efforts of their peers.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is inadequate.

There are inconsistencies in the staff's management of the behaviour of children of different ages in the setting. Younger children generally behave well because they have sufficient stimulating activities available to them which keep them suitably occupied. Older children often do not have access to sufficient supervision or interesting activities which means that their behaviour deteriorates. For example, children in the pre school room begin to run in and out of the toilet area and indulge in rough and tumble play on the floor. In some instances time out is used effectively. For example, a toddler continues to hit a friend having been told to be kind. The child is sat on a mat for one minute away from the situation. Staff explain why the child is sitting on the mat and the child is invited to re-join the play. Time-out for older children includes the use of a sand timer. Children can see the duration of the time-out period. Some members of staff are not pro-active when managing children's behaviour. This has an impact on children's learning about right from wrong. For example, a child throws sand in another child's face. The injured child is managed effectively and sensitively. However, no explanation about the action being wrong and dangerous is given to the child who is throwing the sand. The child shows no concern or awareness that another child has been hurt.

Children's developing self esteem and confidence is hindered because of the inconsistent approach from staff. Some children receive praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements in activities. However, numerous instances occur where children are spoken to inappropriately. For example, toddlers are sat down at the lunch tables too early and play with their cutlery because there is nothing else to amuse them. The staff repeatedly tell them to put their hands in their laps and face the front. A baby puts their arms up to a member of staff because they want to be picked up. The member of staff makes an inappropriate remark and walks away from the child. Pre school children use opportunities at meal times to talk to each other

and the staff. They recall events from home and discuss activities they have participated in. Older children benefit from the relaxed social atmosphere during meal times. However, opportunities for discussion about children's news and topics during circle time are not used by staff.

Children have access to positive images of people throughout the setting. Various resources such as dolls, books and posters are available which reflect society's diversity. Staff acknowledge the skills of children from different cultures. For example, a parent is told by staff that their child had been sharing words from their home language. The child smiles with pride and pleasure as their bilingual ability is acknowledged. The plans show that festivals and celebrations from various cultures are included in the teaching programme but the quality of children's learning is limited because of the staff's lack of knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Parents have access to information on notice boards regarding the policies, menus, daily activities and the Birth to three matters framework. They have access to general information on behaviour and childhood illnesses. Children and their parents are greeted by staff when they arrive and staff are available at the end of the day to give verbal feedback. The quality of partnership with parents and carers of children receiving funding for nursery education is satisfactory. However, staff's lack of knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage affects the quality of information which is passed to parents regarding their child's learning and achievements. A complaints record is kept but it does not contain all the required information. For example, records of complaints are incomplete, some documents have been removed and there is no provision to record the outcome of investigations or the name of the person recording the information.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is inadequate.

Children's individual needs are not met overall. There are clear company policies and planning systems to guide staff but poor implementation and monitoring of these systems inhibits the quality of care and education provided for children. All staff receive induction training, including health and safety. However, most staff are not vigilant in their practice. Children and adult's safety is compromised because attendance registers are not completed correctly. For example, some staff do not sign in, visiting children are not recorded and head counts of children and staff present do not match with numbers recorded on attendance registers. Some significant events have taken place in the setting which have not been reported to the company's head office or to the regulator. For example, a pest control company has supplied rodent traps containing poison which are accessible to children in the nursery garden. Risk assessments have not been completed and Ofsted has not been informed.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is inadequate. Most children remain unsupported in their play and learning because of organisational shortcomings and the limited knowledge and understanding of the

staff. For example, children aged two-to-five are not provided with sufficient activities to promote their development. Funded children's starting point assessments and development progress records are not maintained. Staff have not completed any training on the Foundation Stage and most do not know how to implement an effective programme of learning. Most documentation complies with the national standards however, implementation of the company procedures is inconsistent. These inconsistencies compromise children's safety and welfare. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to ensure the accuracy of all room registers to include the actual numbers of children present at any time. Attendance registers are completed in each room and a main register is held in the office. However, the setting continues to record attendance inaccurately which compromises the safety of children and staff.

The provider was asked to develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour while taking account of their age and stage of development. Ineffective practice continues in the setting and none of the staff have attended recent training on behaviour management.

The provider was asked to ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken with parents on any concerns raised and to maintain a record of all complaints. A complaints record is now kept but does not fully comply with requirements.

The provider was asked to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of appropriate first aid practice. Some staff have appropriate first aid certificates and written procedures are displayed in each room giving step by step instructions on how to deal with nosebleeds. However the first aid boxes are inadequately stocked to enable appropriate first aid procedures to be carried out.

This is the first inspection of nursery education.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been two complaints relating to National Standards 1, 7, 11 and 12.

A concern was raised in relation to Standard 11: Behaviour, regarding staff's handling of behaviour management. The provision had already informed Ofsted that this concern had been raised directly with themselves, and they had conducted their own internal investigation. As a result they implemented an action plan reviewing their practices. Ofsted is satisfied that the registered person has taken appropriate steps to address this concern, and the provider remains qualified for registration. The outcome for this concern was no further action.

A number of concerns were raised relating to Standard 1: Suitability, Standard 7: Health, Standard 11: Behaviour and Standard 12: Partnership with parents and



carers. Ofsted carried out an unannounced inspection of the provision on 25/04/2005 and issued three recommendations in relation to Standards 7, 11 and 12. These were to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of appropriate first aid practise, to develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development and level of supervision for the children and to ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken with parents on any concerns raised and a record of complaints is maintained. These will be checked at the next inspection. The provider remains qualified for registration.

## **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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that all attendance registers are clear and include accurate records of numbers of children present at any one time
- improve the organisation of the care to ensure continuous good practice in the nursery and support continuity of care for children
- ensure consistent implementation of company policies and procedures relating to safety practices (this refers to recording of risk assessment and emergency evacuation drills)
- ensure the consistent implementation of the company policies and procedures relating to health and hygiene practice (this refers to procedures for nappy changing, maintaining the first aid boxes, safe storage of bottles and children's learning about personal hygiene)
- develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development
- ensure a complete and clear record of complaints is maintained
- improve staff knowledge and understanding of Child Protection issues and the implementation of appropriate procedures

- ensure that the regulatory body (Ofsted) is notified of any significant events

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to ensure that the quality of activities provided for children actively promotes their learning and development
- ensure that children's assessment records are regularly maintained and that the information gained from assessments is used to plan the next steps in children's learning
- improve the leadership and management of the nursery education to support progression in children's learning

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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