



Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY299059
Inspection date	29 July 2005
Inspector	Virginia Cooper
Setting Address	Maidstone Hospital, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 9NN
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Registered person	Just Learning Ltd
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

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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Just Learning Nursery at Maidstone Hospital has been registered since 2005. It is one of a chain of nurseries run by Just Learning Limited. The nursery operates from a large, purpose built, single storey building in the grounds of Maidstone Hospital in the Barming area of Maidstone. There is access to a fully enclosed outside play areas.

A maximum of 112 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 06:45 to 19:00 all year round. Children attend on a

sessional or full time basis.

There are currently 151 children aged from two months to under 8 years on roll. Of these 46 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery offers places to parents who work at the hospital and families within the local area. The nursery supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 30 staff. 24 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification.

The group receives support from the company early years co-ordinator and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a close relationship with the staff who are kind to them and give them comfort if they are feeling unsure. Children are familiar with the daily routine and consequently know what to expect and feel secure.

Babies' nappies are changed regularly to keep them comfortable. The staff prevent cross infection by adopting sensible hygiene procedures. The staff work closely with parents; they ensure children are ready physically and emotionally before starting potty training.

Adults remove their outdoor shoes before entering the baby rooms resulting in a more hygienic environment for babies who crawl.

Babies sleep comfortably in a travel cot; the staff supervise them closely while they sleep to ensure they are safe.

Young babies observe and respond to their immediate environment and communicate with those about them.

Babies cannot easily cruise around the room whilst they are learning to walk independently because there is no domestic style furniture. They use one bar across a mirror, the door handles on the cupboards and some can manage using the windowsill.

Babies and toddlers eat nutritious meals. The staff sterilise feeding equipment and teething toys to protect them from bacterial infection. Staff do not have domestic style furniture to sit in when bottle feeding babies or spoon feeding them whilst they sit in low chairs, the positions they resort to do not look the most comfortable for the staff or babies.

The staff have good procedures in place for the administration of medication to

ensure parents are well informed and children are not given anything that is unsuitable, however occasionally staff forget to ask parents to sign accident and medication forms. They do not care for children who are contagious ensuring children are not at risk of cross-infection. Children who become poorly whilst attending the nursery are comforted and made comfortable until their parents are able to collect them. All staff hold a current first aid qualification; they are able to administer first aid to children in the event of an accident or emergency. There is a first aid kit that a member of staff checks and replenishes as necessary.

Children independently use the toilet; they understand the importance of good hand washing and drying procedures.

Children often play outside in the fresh air; they regularly play in the garden.

Children use a range of outdoor play equipment that encourages their physical development.

Children receive healthy and nutritious meals cooked on the nursery premises, fresh fruit and vegetables are used regularly. Children sit at the table, and learn good table manners. Children always have access to drinks; their cups are re-filled regularly to prevent them being thirsty.

Nursery Education

Children move confidently, imaginatively and safely. They move with control and respect one another's space. They have opportunities to practice new skills like throwing and catching balls, balancing and climbing.

They understand and learn about the importance of staying healthy through various projects and discussions they have with staff, for example to eat fruit and vegetables.

Children use a range of hand held tools and are able to construct materials safely and with increasing control. Most children use scissors competently.

They use a range of large outdoor play equipment that encourages their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy an environment that is bright, cheerful and clean, they have space to move about safely. They cannot access areas that are hazardous, protecting them. The garden is secure and fully enclosed and children cannot escape or wander off.

Children choose what they want to play with from a good range of age appropriate toys. Toys and resources are selected carefully for their suitability and these are checked regularly to ensure there are no broken parts that could harm a child. The babies use some useful equipment that allows them to sit up safely to play when they are still a little wobbly. The babies learning to walk do not however have much

equipment that enables them to safely cruise around the room; there is no domestic furniture, and objects for them to hold onto are limited. Children use child sized furniture; this enables them to manage tasks more easily.

The nursery management undertake a thorough risk assessment and staff use a daily check list to ensure the environment is safely maintained. The potential hazards and risks are identified and safety equipment is in place to prevent accidents. Children's safety in the event of a fire is considered. There is fire safety equipment to effect a speedy evacuation in an emergency, and staff know how to use this. Staff do not always put the anti-bacterial spray away and taller children might be able to reach it.

Children learn about safety because the staff explain the reasons why they can or cannot do particular activities. They are familiar with the security arrangements and cannot leave the premises alone.

Children ask for assistance readily if they are learning a new skill or feel unsure about something.

The staff understand their role in the protection of children and parents read the Child Protection policy when they first place a child in the care of the nursery. The staff understand the signs and symptoms of abuse; they feel confident that they would recognise if a child were being abused.

Children are always in the direct care of the staff and therefore will never experience the unsupervised company of unsuitable adults.

The procedures to follow if any staff have concerns about a child in their care are clear.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies enjoy the staff talking and singing with them; they respond positively and mimic sounds and simple words and phrases.

Younger children's individual needs are met and staff take account of any special needs they may have. Babies enjoy heuristic play, especially a variety of treasure baskets that they use to explore objects and make discoveries, within a safe environment. The staff rarely plan specific activities for the babies and toddlers, their development and learning is often opportunistic.

Children take part enthusiastically in lots of the activities and some children talk quite a lot about what they know. Staff sometimes undertake tasks that children might easily manage alone or with a little assistance, for example pouring their own drinks.

All children play outside in the fresh air regularly, they experience a variety of physical outdoor play equipment that becomes progressively challenging as they move through the nursery.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff need to improve their knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. They do not use the stepping-stones effectively to establish what children already know and can do. The children's development records have big gaps and their next steps are not identified. The staff are beginning to write Individual Educational Plans for children with special needs but this system is not developed. Staff do not understand fully how to use children's assessment records to plan appropriate activities that take account of children's individual needs, and evaluate what children have learnt. The evaluation of activities often centres upon what children enjoy rather than what they learn.

Children are mostly interested, excited and motivated to learn new skills. They are confident to try new activities, suggest ideas and speak in a familiar group. They concentrate and sit quietly when they listen to a story or a member of staff is talking to them. They enjoy learning about different cultures, beliefs and special festivals. They relate well to adults and one another and often talk about their home life. Children work co-operatively in a group, take turns and share fairly. They sometimes use an egg timer to help them achieve this. Children behave well; they understand the difference between right and wrong.

Children like to chat with each other and the staff, they are confident to express their thoughts, likes and dislikes. Staff extend children's vocabulary and encourages them to talk about what they are doing; children answer questions confidently. The children enjoy books but the reading areas for three and four year olds are not attractive or inviting. The books are tatty; information books in particular are not easily accessible and tend to be in a cupboard. Most children recognise their own names and some can write their names. The younger children however, are not helped sufficiently to know where to start and finish writing letters and numbers.

Most children can count competently and recognise different shapes although this is not recorded in their development records. Children rarely make any simple calculations and staff miss many opportunities to include this into the activities. Some children however, are exploring quite complex mathematics; they have grasped the concept of Venn diagrams. They understand sorting and grouping objects into categories. Children make simple measurements and use some mathematical language for example large and small. They rarely refer to three-dimensional shapes although some children are more than able to understand this.

Children investigate and experiment whilst they play; they particularly enjoy playing with water. They learn about their environment through a variety of projects, for example they enjoy gardening and have grown sunflowers. They have examples of natural things like shells and have opportunities to handle mini beasts. They like to cook but the activity is over-prepared leaving the children few tasks to tackle, for example when they make pizza the muffin was already cut in half, the cheese is already grated and the ham is cut into squares. They make self-chosen projects with various materials. Children are familiar with everyday technology and use the computer confidently.

Children enjoy musical activities and join in singing with real enthusiasm. They love

to listen to familiar stories and join in with repeated text. They have some opportunities to explore different art materials but their creativity is often stifled because the activities are often over-prepared and adult led. Three year olds have limited opportunities to use their imagination in role-play and small world play. This mainly results because of the organisation of shared resources.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. They choose equipment carefully. Children have access to books and toys that reflect our multi-cultural society positively. This helps children challenge stereotypes. Images are available of people of all races, cultures and abilities, developing children's empathic skills.

Children with special needs are integrated; staff will make adaptations if necessary but allow children to reach their full potential.

The care of the children's welfare is good; they are settled and happy. If children become upset, they are comforted. Staff manage children's behaviour sensitively and in an age appropriate manner. Children are spoken to quietly and explanations are given if they need to be reminded how to behave. Good behaviour is recognised and praised; children receive lots of encouragement.

Partnership with parents is good. They receive good quality information about the nursery and how it operates. There are lovely displays in the nursery that explain to parents how the staff are teaching their children. The manager and staff greet parents and children warmly when they arrive. Parents approach staff readily to ask any questions they may have about their children's development. The staff write in a contact book for the youngest children and parents are able to contribute to these records. Staff help children separate from their parents or carers in a sensitive way. They are able to stay as long as they want until their child is settled. Parents ring to find out about their child if they feel anxious or have left them whilst they are upset.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory. Staff feel supported by the nursery manager and approach her easily if they have any concerns or worries.

The nursery has grown quicker than expected and therefore some of the manager's plans are still to be introduced. The parent company have been slow to deliver the new paperwork to record children's development records and therefore staff are working between systems.

The progress children under three make is not being recorded and therefore cannot

be used to help staff plan appropriate activities that take account of what children already know, and what they are likely to learn next.

The assessment records for funded children are not being used to plan future activities.

The staff keep all required records. Formal records are kept confidentially but management have not considered children's privacy when lists are displayed in rooms to keep the staff informed about some children's medical needs. Some accident and medication records have not been signed by parents.

The staff share resources but the system for children to access the full range of equipment is not working effectively and some children are missing opportunities to regularly use their imaginations and role-play.

Staff are not able to sit comfortably when they bottle and spoon-feed the babies. The provision of adult sized furniture is limited resulting in staff looking very awkward and not as relaxed as they might be whilst feeding babies.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- ensure all accident and medication records are signed by parents

- ensure cleaning materials are out of reach of children
- consider how to record children's development for children under three and to use this information and observations to plan appropriate activities taking account of children's individual needs
- ensure staff can comfortably and safely feed and attend to children at the children's level
- ensure confidentiality about children's medical conditions is considered
- consider how children learning to walk can cruise safely around the room
- ensure staff do not undertake tasks that children might easily manage alone or with a little assistance, for example pouring their own drinks

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):

- improve staff understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation stage and how to use the stepping stones to establish what children already know and can do
- improve staff knowledge of how to use children's assessment records effectively to plan appropriate activities that take account of children's individual needs, and evaluate what children have learnt
- provide more opportunities for three year olds to use their imaginations and to role play
- provide more opportunities for children to make simple calculations
- provide more opportunities for children to independently access information books, encouraging them to have a love of books for knowledge as well as stories

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