

The Nursery Rooms

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY264808
Inspection date	26 February 2008
Inspector	Barbara Ann Greenley
Setting Address	Warwick House, Perry Road, Harlow, Essex, CM18 7NF
Telephone number	01279 866445
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Registered person	WSG 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Nursery Rooms, is owned by WSG Limited and opened in 2003. It operates from a suite of rooms at the side of Warwick House in the town of Harlow, Essex. A maximum of 66 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 until 18.30 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The group has no pets on site.

There are currently 65 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider catchment area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They can also support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 staff. There are ten staff members, including the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. Currently there are 11 members of staff working towards furthering their qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority, the area special needs coordinator (SENCO) and the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is adequately promoted. They are encouraged to wash their hands after toileting, messy or garden play as part of their day to day routine. The older children are given independence to use the toilets and hand basins on their own, taking responsibility for their own cleanliness. The use of antibacterial gel adds to the general cleanliness of the staff when they handle the children and foodstuff. Children receive appropriate medical attention as staff members have a sound understanding of the group's policies and procedures for dealing with illness, accidents and administering any medication. There are 11 members of staff on site who are trained in first aid and who are confident about dealing with any emergencies that may arise. The first aid equipment is sited within easy reach when required.

Children are well nourished and have regular meals, snacks and drinks throughout the day. Children's dietary requirements are provided by the nursery and parents are made aware of the weekly menu by a notice placed in the main entrance hall. Children have grown sunflowers in their home base and occasionally are able to cook snacks. There are plans to use the newly refurbished garden for growing plants and vegetables enabling the children to be involved in the growing process of the natural world. Children enjoy sociable meal times, using real cutlery and learning how to behave at the table.

All age groups have access to a large, enclosed outside play area, benefiting from the low impact surface. On rainy days they can also access an indoor play area. Children's physical development is generally fostered by the provision of equipment and activities available to enhance movement and flexibility. Access to the garden is limited to designated times during the day and this restricts the benefits children derive from the facilities on offer. The younger children, particularly the babies, have few opportunities to experience walks outside of the nursery. The outside area is not entirely suitable for crawling infants and this restricts their experience of fresh air, the seasons, the natural world and the local community.

Children in receipt of funded nursery education have opportunities to use tools and equipment that promote manipulation; eye and hand coordination and competence on garden apparatus. Time in the garden or inside physical play area is timetabled each day. Children show great enthusiasm for outside play and use their bodies energetically as they run, jump, throw and catch balls. However, staff are not extending the children's knowledge by talking about the benefits of exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a secure premises. Staff complete daily risk assessments to minimise any potential hazards and this assists them to keep the children safe both inside and outside of the premises. The rooms are bright, well-decorated and the natural light from the windows allows children to see the sky and what is going on outside of their rooms. Children's artwork is displayed and they are allowed to put up pictures of their own choice. This acknowledgement increases their self-esteem and they understand that their work is appreciated. Staff have also compiled colourful displays such as 'The Year of the Rat' for Chinese New Year. Photographic evidence also demonstrates the many displays that have been devised during the past year.

Children are able to use child-sized tables and chairs and access toys that are stored at their own level. This freedom to choose allows the children flexibility in their play. The resources are in good condition and the variety is such, that there is the ability to provide variety and challenge. Toys are rotated and any broken equipment is repaired or removed. Children were seen to enjoy new experiences and take interest in the activities.

Staff are aware of the comprehensive health and safety policies. Risk assessments are also completed if outings are arranged. The outside area is free of any poisonous plants as it has a rubberised surface. There is a clear fire evacuation procedure and this is practised with the children at regular intervals. Attention is paid to maintaining ratios assisting the close supervision of children, activities involving water, when used are closely monitored. Consent forms for the application of sunscreen, taking photographs and the safe collection of children are in place. These measures help staff to ensure that children are protected from harm. Staff members also actively encourage the children to keep themselves safe and boundaries are set within the nursery to prevent children running with objects in their hands, being kind to one another and playing safely with the toys.

The group has a comprehensive child protection policy in place and some members of staff have completed additional training. The updated safeguarding information is on file however not all members of staff understood their personal responsibility for keeping children safe, the agencies involved in protecting their welfare or the changes that have taken place in the safeguarding organisation. This potentially compromises the well-being of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children show interest in their play and enjoy the games and activities laid out for them by the staff. They participate eagerly with the staff to complete tasks. The babies play with a good variety of colourful toys, climbing and crawling in and out of the larger pieces of equipment. They are able to pull themselves up on furniture around the room and enjoy equipment such as a ball pool. They have ample room to move around and practise their walking skills. The slightly older children are able to use sorting boxes and handle the pieces with confidence. They enjoy looking at themselves in a large wall mirror. They respond to the praise they receive from the staff and clap themselves too. Staff members sit with the children and read books, they are beginning to appreciate the tempo of the stories. Language skills are being extended as staff members listen to the sound the children make and repeat words or phrases to reinforce meaning.

The children in the toddler room have access to a cosy corner to read books or sit quietly. They are gaining in concentration when listening to stories and sing nursery rhymes. Children are congratulated and their artwork is put up on the wall to be acknowledged and appreciated. Children enjoy being told how clever they are and go back to their task eagerly. The children like small world play and floor puzzles. There is evidence that they can use paints and crayons with confidence and are able to use their own imaginations to create pictures and models. They like using a variety of materials such as shiny paper, card and tissue to create cards and presents for Mother's Day. Children can express their views and a delightful conversation took place regarding trips to Disney theme parks, the characters that have been encountered and the rides that have been experienced.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make adequate progress towards the early learning goals. Staff members have completed training on the Foundation Stage and the forthcoming Early years Foundation Stage. However, emphasis is on a timetable and the amount of time clearing up does not use time effectively. The curriculum features all six areas of learning but the core activities are not available to children throughout the day. The range of activities on offer limits the challenge and fun derived by the children. Children are taught one-to-one, for example, on the computer and in larger groups depending on the task to be completed. Development records have been drawn up based on observations made of what the children can do and know. Their records of assessments are updated regularly and the information is available to plan the next steps. The plans are inclusive to ensure all children are able to participate. Children behave well and respond to the adults in a positive manner.

Children can access a range of books arranged invitingly in a quiet corner. They enjoy listening to stories read by the staff and to anticipate what happens next. Children are beginning to recognise letters and names through the use of labels, signs and posters around the rooms. Examples of the children's attempts at writing are seen around the walls. Children can use numbers and can count confidently when asked to do so. Children are able to recognise numbers and demonstrated a degree of problem solving when sharing out objects. Small groups of children were asked to complete a number puzzle with a member of staff and the more able showed good ability. Children know about the use of everyday technology and can use the computer equipment to support their learning. They have some opportunities to observe and identify features of the natural world by growing plants such as sunflowers. They complete projects on festivals such as Diwali and Halloween and are beginning to learn about their own culture and the beliefs of other people through topics. Children are able to join in with simple rhymes and can sing songs with the staff. The use of music is beneficial but has limitations as staff are not encouraging the children to dance spontaneously. They do create their own pictures but much of the art and design is adult-led. The role play areas are not always in use and children's imaginative play is not fully supported by the staff. Children can express their enthusiasm when playing in the garden; making up games, using equipment that extends their physical skills and exploring around the trees. Pots and pans strung from the branches created fun as children made sounds with a wooden spoon and metal kitchen tools.

Children are willing to engage in activities and clearly want to learn. Staff are working together to improve the standards in all areas of learning. Children respond to praise and encouragement; developing their independence and confidence to try new things. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Older children are beginning to be aware that we have similarities and differences and are starting to value each other's abilities. There are some resources on site reflecting diversity in the community such as dolls, books and small world figures. Boys and girls have equal access to resources. Discriminatory remarks are challenged through discussion. There is a policy and a designated person in place whom staff and parents can consult for advice.

There is an awareness of the needs of children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. There is a designated member of staff who has completed training and she liaises with the local authority area worker. Adaptations are made to ensure that children can use the building with ease and staff ensure that all children are included in the activities. Staff members understand the aims of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Children behave well, respecting each other, their surroundings and the boundaries set by the staff. There is a general emphasis on positive instructions that acknowledge helpfulness and courteous behaviour. Staff members understand the behaviour policy and this ensures that they deal with children of all ages consistently.

Parents are made welcome and access information from the staff, from letters and notice boards. The complaints procedure, which facilitates a quick resolution of any concerns between parents and carers, has been updated. Parents can liaise with their children's key workers for progress on their everyday well-being.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is satisfactory. Parents have opportunities to be involved in the children's learning either by talking with staff or taking home reading books. Staff supply posters and written paperwork to inform parents about the Foundation Stage, the six areas of learning and the aims of the curriculum. The children's development records are shared with parents on a regular basis and this promotes coordinated working. Parents express their satisfaction with the setting and recommend the 'friendliness of the staff', 'the fun environment to learn in' and the 'good resources' as key features.

Children are completing topics about the world around them and are beginning to learn about the wider world. A visitor from the local fire brigade has visited when the children were completing a project on 'People that help us'. They have opportunities to sit quietly, looking at books and talking to friends if they wish. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The manager of the nursery has worked at the setting for 12 years and she is in charge of a very settled workforce who gel together very well. Both the manager and deputy have the relevant childcare qualifications and are currently extending their professional standing by studying for Level 4 status. They also seek additional short courses whenever possible to increase their knowledge and understanding of the latest approach to their work. The manager works in conjunction with the owners of the nursery and combined with her positive management approach, has established a strong bond with her fellow workers.

Children are cared for in their own home base rooms and are grouped appropriately. They are able to get to know the staff members well and in particular their key workers. Additional staff can be called in to help should there be a problem with staffing and maintaining ratios everyday. Staff members are checked through the setting's own vetting procedure and are not allowed to work with the children unsupervised until all of the checks are complete. Staff files are on site and available for inspection at any time. New members of staff undergo an induction course that includes awareness and understanding of the group's policies and procedures. These measures contribute to the children receiving consistent care from all members of staff.

All of the relevant documentation is in place and kept confidential. Parents can access records regarding their own children and any policies and procedures they wish to see. The group has an operational plan in place and this and the other records are regularly reviewed. Records are kept for the appropriate timescales. The paperwork helps the staff to ensure that the children's welfare is well protected.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The nursery manager has a clear overall aim for the operational plan which encapsulates the organisation of the setting in one document. She allows the staff delivering nursery education to use their own expertise and training to plan the curriculum and organise the activities. The manager knows her staff well and she promotes training courses and the furthering of knowledge. All of the staff within the pre-school room have responsibility for teaching the Foundation Stage. The staff have opportunities to identify their own strengths and weaknesses through monitoring and assessment at their supervision sessions. The room leader has the day to day responsibility for presenting the Foundation Stage to the children and can discuss ideas with the nursery manager. The nursery manager feels that high expectations are set for the staff and children.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was required to devise written risk assessments for the premises, to be completed on a daily basis. Risk assessment sheets are now in place and completed by staff each day. In addition an overall risk assessment has been completed by the management team, minimising risks both inside and outside of the premises and assisting staff to keep the children safe.

It was also required that staff encourage children's independence particularly at snack and meal times. Children in the pre-school now lay the tables and serve their own food, making choices and helping each other. This routine promotes the children's ability to make decisions for themselves.

The setting was required to ensure that the complaints policy was up to date and that the Regulator's contact details were correct. This has been addressed ensuring that staff and parents can access the current guidelines if required to resolve concerns.

There were three recommendations made for Nursery Education. The setting was required to review the presentation of their written plans to ensure that all areas of learning were covered. This has been addressed and all areas feature in the curriculum. Further changes will be taking place to coincide with the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

It was also recommended that regular assessments were made of the children's progress and use them for planning their next stages of learning. Development records are in place and these are updated every three months. Daily assessments are also made to ensure that records remain accurate.

The group was also required to provide parents with information regarding the Foundation Stage. There are information posters around the nursery plus parents are able to discuss their child's learning with their key worker. The outcome is that parents and carers work together to provide for the children's education.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received concerns regarding the hygiene routines, staffing ratios, recording of incidents and the complaints procedure.

An Ofsted childcare inspector conducted an unannounced visit on 30 March 2006 to investigate these concerns in relation to the following National Standards (NS): 3 (Care, learning and play,) 7 (Health) and 12 (Working in partnership with parents and carers).

As a result of the investigation the provider was given one recommendation as follows:

NS 12: Ensure that complaints policy and procedures are updated in line with Addendum to the National Standards dated October 2005. This recommendation was checked at the inspection.

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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- expand younger children's contact with the weather, the seasons, the natural world; the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant
- ensure that all members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for child protection and the changes that have taken place in the safeguarding children organisation.

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):

- expand the challenge and range of resources presented to children, using time and equipment effectively to cover the six areas of learning and providing the core activities throughout the day
- extend children's opportunities to exercise; developing their understanding of the importance of active play and promoting healthy lifestyles and well-being
- provide further opportunities throughout the day for children to use their imaginations freely, dance and sing, using a range of media and materials to explore the real world.

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