

Wheatfields Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221831
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Inspector	Heidi Falconer
Setting Address	c/o Wheatfield Primary School, Wheatfields, St. Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 3WF
Telephone number	01480 494960
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Wheatfields Nursery For Preschool Education
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Wheatfields Nursery opened in 1982 and is managed by a voluntary committee. It operates from two linked mobile buildings within the grounds of Wheatfields Primary School in St Ives, Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 35 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:55 to 11:25 and from 12:10 to 14:40 during school term times. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 59 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 32 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs six members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is maintained as they are provided with healthy and nutritious snacks which are low in fat and sugar. For example, children enjoy fresh fruit, dried fruit and breadsticks. Through ongoing discussions with practitioners children are learning about food which are good for them. For example, when children say that fizzy drinks are not good for them, practitioners ask them why they are not healthy, children reply 'because they make us go all funny'. Water is accessible to the children at all times which ensures that they do not become dehydrated. Snack times are a sociable time where children and staff sit together. However, children are not provided with plates and practitioners pour the drinks which limits their ability to be independent.

Practitioners promote children's health by ensuring that the premises and resources are clean and well-maintained. For example, after cases of sickness and diarrhoea practitioners meticulously clean all of the play resources. To further protect children from the risk of cross-infection the setting have a clear sick child policy which parents are asked to adhere to. If there are occurrences of infectious illnesses practitioners display notices to alert parents of potential signs and symptoms. Children are well cared for in the event of an accident. A high number of staff hold paediatric first aid qualifications which enable them to deal with accidents effectively. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through regular routines for washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet.

Children have good opportunities to be active and take part in physical activities which promote their physical development. For example, children gain control of their bodies and learn to move in different ways as they join in the bean game. They run like runner beans, jump like jumping beans and wobble like jelly beans. Indoors all children have opportunities to use cutters, scissors, paintbrushes and other small tools to develop their manipulative skills. For example, children use garlic presses to squash play dough.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and colourful environment. Their art work is attractively displayed and mobiles are used to create a child-centred environment. Resources are well organised to meet children's needs and to promote their independence. For example, throughout the session children are able to free-flow between the messy play room and the activity based room.

Children are kept safe as the practitioners take effective precautions to reduce their risk of injury and to keep them safe from harm. High-level locks have been fitted to cupboards where cleaning products are stored and the premises are kept secure at all times. Daily risk assessments ensure that safety measures such as electrical plug sockets are in place. Good procedures are in place to ensure that in the event of a fire children's safety is not compromised. The setting's fire procedure clearly shows staff's roles and responsibilities and during evacuation practices practitioners alternate the fire exits which they use. This ensures that the children are familiar with all of the exits. In addition, clearly displayed in the nursery is a 'contacting emergency services sheet'. This details the setting address, exact location and how best an emergency services vehicle could get to the building. This promotes children's safety. Children are learning

about how they can keep themselves safe and why some of their actions may be dangerous. For example, when children leave a cogs set on the floor practitioners remind them to put the set away so that others do not trip and fall over it.

Children's safety and welfare are safeguarded well as practitioners have a good understanding of child protection issues. They understand the procedures to follow and the records they need to keep, if they are worried that a child is being abused or neglected. All practitioners are encouraged to attend training in this area to ensure that their knowledge is up to date. Parents are made aware of the settings duty to report concerns through a clear written child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and take part in a wide range of activities that cover all areas of development. They particularly enjoy sensory activities such as using whisks in a water tray of red water and bubbles. As children whisk up the water they show their delight as bubbles disappear saying 'wow its red water'. To extend the sensory experiences for children practitioners regularly add different scents to water and play dough. Children said that they like the 'chocolate play dough'. Children spend some time looking at books with staff. However, the books areas are not always well presented which limits the time that children choose to spend in these areas.

Interaction between the staff and children is very good. Practitioners spend the majority of their time supporting children in activities and asking them questions to extend their learning. Practitioners have attended training relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are incorporating this into their planning and assessment records for the youngest children attending the pre-school.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Practitioners have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how children learn. They use this knowledge to plan a variety of first-hand experiences which extend children's learning. However, occasionally practitioners do not always pursue children's interests and instead stick to planned activities. Clear planning is in place, which covers all areas of learning, and shows how children will make progress towards the early learning goals. Children's achievements are well documented and shared with parents. They show how children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. These assessments are used to inform planning so that children continue to be challenged in activities.

Children show an interest in using mathematical language. As they play in the water tray with beakers and jugs children say 'it's a big jug, now it's full I'm going to empty it now and fill it up again'. Practitioners extend this learning by asking the children to describe the size of the containers they are using and introduce the concept of filling the jug half way up. Children count confidently and many are beginning to recognise numbers as they count cakes and match numbers on computer games. This learning is supported by practitioners who ask children open ended questions which make them think.

Children enter happily and separate from their parents and carers quickly. They are settled and purposefully engaged throughout the session, confidently moving between activities and

making independent choices about how they spend their time. For example, children say 'I'm going to do some painting and wear the Tutti fruity apron'. Children are actively involved in activities which help them to gain a greater understanding of the world in which they live. They go for walks around the local area looking at changes in the environment and collecting leaves and pine cones to create an autumn display. As children create autumn pictures practitioners ask them 'what happens when the leaves turn brown?' children reply 'they fall to the ground'. This demonstrates children's understanding of the changes that take place.

Children play imaginatively as they use role play resources to act out their ideas. As children sit in the play car they make engine noises and turn the steering wheel, calling out 'beep, beep we are not going to crash'. Each day children are creative and can paint freely and create models. However, at times some craft activities are over directed by adults. This hinders children's ability to express their creative ideas fully. Children take pleasure in singing and are building a wide repertoire of songs which they like to sing to others.

Children listen well at circle times and are becoming confident speakers who are keen to contribute their ideas and recall past activities. For example, they are keen to share their experience of taking 'Rodger' the group teddy home for the evening. They talk in detail about the teddy's adventures including a trip to a local supermarket to buy a play poodle. Children become aware that print carries meaning. Many recognise their names and the letters that are in their name. Children experiment at writing for a purpose such as writing their names on their pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are learning to value diversity and learn about the wider community. They celebrate a range of festivals from around the world such as Diwali, Eid and Christmas. Practitioners effectively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children. For example, through discussion practitioners challenge the stereotypes that children have. When boys say 'robots are not for girls' practitioners ask the children why they think this, they reply 'because they are green'. Practitioners continue this discussion with the children explaining that the resources at the nursery are provided for everyone who attends. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are recognised and very well supported by experienced and caring staff. As a result, they are able to join in all activities at their own level of ability. Practitioners have developed good links with outside agencies and children's parents to ensure that their needs continue to be met. For example, staff have spent time observing how other professionals work with the children and then used these approaches in the nursery. As a result, children make progress as they receive consistent care.

Children are developing a good understanding of right and wrong and are able to play happily within clearly set and explained boundaries. For example, with support from practitioners young children are learning to share resources. In the role play area when children are reluctant to share plates, practitioners intervene and explain how they could share resources and play together. Older children are learning to understand the consequences of their actions. As they crash cars together, practitioners ask them to think about what may happen children reply, 'they will break and then we won't be able to play with them'.

Children benefit from consistent care as the practitioners work hard to ensure that parents are fully informed about the setting and their child's activities. For example, the nursery's policies are displayed in the entrance area and staff take time to talk to parents at the beginning and end of each session. Parents speak very well of the setting, the commitment of the staff and the activities that their children take part in.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. The prospectus includes information on the setting's curriculum and gives parents details of the different areas of learning which they aim to promote. Newsletters and notices on the 'Foundation Stage parent's board' keeps them informed about activities and how the setting's key worker system operates. Parents are always welcome to look at their child's records of assessment, adding comments to reports or at parent's evenings to share what they know about their child's achievements. However, currently the setting do not talk to parents about their children's educational starting points when they first attend the nursery. This causes a delay in staff being able to plan for some individual children's needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff who have been appropriately vetted to ensure that they are suitable and have sufficient skills and knowledge to work with children. An effective induction procedure ensures that new staff are informed during their first week of employment about key policies such as health and safety and child protection. This helps to keep children safe. All staff work very well together and demonstrate a commitment to continuing to improve the provision for the children who attend. For example, staff regularly attend training sessions and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision through parental questionnaires and discussions with other professionals. As a result, children benefit from practices which are in line with current legislation.

Policies and procedures are clear and comprehensive and staff's knowledge and understanding of these clearly contributes to their implementation to ensure that children are safe and well cared for. All documents are stored securely to ensure that they remain confidential. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager is able to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision and take action to improve children's ability to learn and make progress. The staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for each session and there is a positive team spirit. All staff are involved in delivering the curriculum and regular staff meetings are held to ensure that children benefit from consistent teaching. The close links with the school contribute towards the children's smooth transition as they start school, as they are familiar with the premises and staff.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group was asked to review their documentation to ensure that it accurately reflects the National Standards and current practice within the setting. All documentation has been reviewed and is regularly updated to ensure that it reflects current legislation and guidelines. This supports children's care and welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

- improve the organisation of snack time to promote children's independence and ensure that they are able to eat from appropriate plates or bowls
- improve the book areas to make them more inviting, so that children continue to be interested in looking at books for pleasure

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

- ensure that children are able to explore and extend their own ideas in creative activities
- develop a system to gather information about children's starting points from parents.

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