

St Georges Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226987
Inspection date	17 December 2007
Inspector	Jean Suff
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Registered person	The Childcare Company (Leicester) 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

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 satisfactory. 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?

St Georges Nursery School opened in 2000. It operates from a large extended and refurbished building on Grace Road close to the Cricket Ground and main Aylestone Road. Families use the nursery from all over the city and county.

There are currently 163 children from birth to eight years on roll. This includes 17 funded three-year-olds and no funded four-year-olds. The nursery has experience of caring for children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week all-year-round. Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:00. Children can attend for a variety of sessions.

There are 23 members of staff working with the children. Of these, one holds qualified teacher status, nine have early years qualifications at Level 3 and 11 at Level 2. There are two members of staff currently on training programmes. The nursery uses the Montessori approach to learning and receives support from a mentor teacher from the Leicester City Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment therefore promoting their good health. Children are protected against cross-infection because staff follow suitable routines. For example, when entering the kitchen staff wear a hat and when changing nappies they use disposable aprons and gloves to minimise the risk of infection. Children are competent at washing their hands so begin to learn appropriate hygiene practices and they use individual towels to avoid the spread of germs. Staff hold up to date first aid qualifications and keep suitable first aid supplies readily available enabling them to act quickly in the case of an accident. However, they do not always record accidents as they happen, therefore, children are not fully protected.

Children are appropriately nourished and offered a generally balanced range of foods to promote their growth and development. Meals are freshly prepared on the premises and menus are on display for parents so they are aware of the meals being offered to children. Children are sometimes offered fruit at snack time which encourages them to make healthy choices. They are beginning to learn about healthy eating through planned activities such as food tasting linked to celebrations and shopping in the market for more unusual foods. Systems are in place for children to access water throughout the day to ensure they remain hydrated and comfortable.

Children have a suitable range of resources to support their physical development. Most children use the outside area daily so have opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise. They run, throw and catch balls, climb steps and use the slide, steer wheeled vehicles and watch aeroplanes fly overhead. Children benefit from weekly dance and movement sessions with a specialist teacher. Children's fine motor skills are developing through activities such as cutting out paper snowmen with scissors, threading nuts and bolts and joining materials to make a decorative chain.

Younger children's physical and emotional needs are met well. For example, babies are held closely when taking their milk feeds and they sleep according to their individual routines and parent's wishes which promotes consistency of care. Staff working with babies and young children know them well, for example, when providing for the quantity and consistency of foods. Younger children are encouraged to feed themselves with appropriately sized cutlery so promoting their coordination. Babies enjoy handling cause and effect musical toys whilst younger children use the ball pond and a range of soft play climbing cushions to enhance their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in safe and secure premises. Good sized play spaces are provided for most age ranges allowing them to participate safely in a range of activities. The premises are well-maintained, warm and welcoming to children and parents. Attractive and interactive displays throughout the setting provide a stimulating environment for children. Storage is appropriate and most is organised effectively so that child can self-select. Most children use the enclosed outside space at least once a day to enable them to safely enjoy physical activity in the fresh air.

Low tables and chairs, which are in very good condition, enable babies and toddlers to eat and play safely in comfort and with growing independence. Cots, floor cushions and bedding are in good and clean condition, enabling children who need to rest or sleep to do so comfortably. Staff in the baby room are particularly vigilant of play resources and ensure that they are clean and safe for children.

Positive steps are taken to promote children's safety within the setting. For example, there are good security systems in place to protect children from intruders and to ensure children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to identify and remove potential hazards. Staff are careful in observing routine safety precautions to minimise potential hazards to children, for example, they ensure stair gates are kept secure to prevent children from leaving their designated areas and window locks are used throughout the nursery. Required adult to child ratios enable staff to supervise children at all times to maintain their safety. Children are developing a good understanding of fire safety because they have opportunities to practise fire evacuations and have the procedures discussed with them. Children are reminded to blow on their food if it is still warm and to handle items such as child-sized cutlery safely within daily routines. Staff introduce children to aspects of safety when on trips, for example, they use safety bands and stickers containing the nursery contact details.

Children's welfare is safeguarded well because staff have a very good understanding of how to implement the setting's child protection policies and procedures. They are fully aware of the common signs and symptoms of abuse and of their responsibility to protect children in their care. They are confident and familiar with the processes required if they have concerns about a child in their care or if an allegation were to be made against them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in rooms according to their age and stage of development which ensures that their individual needs are suitably met. They generally settle well and are beginning to form sound relationships with staff. Babies are cared for by consistent staff who understand how very young children learn. They, therefore, provide a variety of activities that allow babies to explore and investigate. For example, babies play with a basket of clean shoes and slippers, feel a range of metal and wooden objects, stack large rings and beakers and look at themselves in the mirror. Staff are attentive in the baby room and go to babies straight away when needed. They pick babies up, cuddle them and look at cloth books with them so developing early social and communication skills.

Younger children are able to self-select toys from a sufficient range of accessible resources so furthering their own interests. For example, they are developing their curiosity as they explore cause and effect toys, build with Duplo bricks or construction sets and begin to play in role as they put dolls to sleep in cots. Staff in the toddler room are sometimes involved with children's activities as they talk to them and join in with their play. They instigate singing sessions and read stories to children so developing their language and pre-reading skills. However, some activities are not always stimulating for children as they are left out for long periods or presented to them in an unimaginative way. Children, therefore, spend periods of time disengaged because they are not encouraged by staff to become interested in further activities. In addition, routine and 'housekeeping' tasks take staff away from working directly with children so they become unsettled.

Most staff have good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this when planning activities for children under three. Regular observations are made of the children and this information is generally used to inform planning. Some staff are aware of and promote younger children's development but staff deployment at present means they are not consistently or sufficiently well supported to ensure that children make good progress in their play and learning.

Children who attend the holiday play-scheme are fully involved in the setting. They spend short periods of time playing with and helping younger children so develop patience and tolerance of others. Children are encouraged to be independent, for example, they set tables and clear away after lunch. All children at the club are able to choose what they want to do from the available resources. Children play table-football, engage in role play with dolls, high chairs and buggies, read books, complete puzzles and play box games together. They play with balloons, sing songs and create displays together which they proudly show to visitors. Children have good opportunities to learn about their community as staff take them out to the park, the skating rink or into the city to view the Christmas lights. Staff working with older children are lively and enthusiastic, know what interests children and work hard to provide it for them.

Nursery Education

Nursery Education was not being carried out at the time of the inspection, however, there was sufficient evidence to support the judgement. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a sound understanding of how children learn through play and practical activities. Staff incorporate the Foundation Stage curriculum with the Montessori philosophy as two complimentary ways of learning for children. They provide opportunities for children to be active learners. Planning is in place for all of the six areas of learning and plans build on what children have done previously and show differentiation. Detailed observations and assessments are made of children's level of development, are shared with parents and are beginning to be used to match activities to the next stage in children's learning.

Staff are friendly and show enjoyment and interest in their dealings with children, so helping them feel settled and secure. Staff work directly with children for much of the time and on occasions encourage children's continued focus on activities. They manage children's behaviour well, using positive strategies and clear explanations. Although staff are beginning to organise rooms to allow children to make choices, at present children are not consistently encouraged to purposefully and independently use resources to enhance their learning in all curriculum areas. Staff regularly use aspects of mathematics and literacy during routine activities to consolidate children's learning, for example, children recognise their names and talk about the date and the weather.

Children have positive relationships with adults and peers. They behave well and understand what is expected of them and how their behaviour affects others. Children interact cooperatively in group activities, they take turns, share and respond positively to praise and encouragement. Children use number names and language spontaneously as they count each other, objects and 'Compare bears'. They recognise numbers on displays such as magnetic numbers and match number cards to the right quantity of bricks. Children are interested in shape and space as they play a 'find a shape game' and build complex constructions with commercial construction sets.

Children use language for communication and thinking. For example, they listen and recall, they talk about what they did at the weekend, describe shape cards, look at a book about winter

together and talk about what they do in winter. Children ask questions, initiate conversations and listen to each other's ideas. Children listen to and join in with stories, have good access to books and recognise some familiar words. Opportunities are created for children to engage in mark-making, for example, they use pencils, crayons and paints and some children are able to write their own name using recognisable letters, although children do not have consistent access to mark-making equipment outside, which limits learning.

Children have opportunities to explore and investigate as they describe features of objects, guess the sound of a hidden drum and watch ice melt into water. They construct with a purpose in mind as they use cotton reels and construction toys or fold a cone to make a paper angel. Children listen to story tapes, operate programmable toys and games and use everyday technology in role play. They develop a sense of time and place as they talk about things that happened to them at home and the clothes they wear in each season. Children show interest in their world, for example, they look at and ask questions about the fish. Children explore sounds with instruments and through listening to poetry, they sing familiar songs such as their nativity songs and make up their own songs to well-known tunes. Children use their imagination as they create an angel using three handprints, make glitter pictures, bubble paintings, self portraits, collage pictures and posters. They engage in imaginative 'stories' and role play together in the same theme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's self-esteem is promoted well by staff who respect individual backgrounds and know the children and their families well. Children are developing a positive attitude to others by celebrating festivals and having access to a good range of resources and images that reflect diversity. For example, they taste Divali sweets, compose Chinese New Year messages and look at Christmas lights. Children dress up in clothes from different cultures, sing songs that embrace diversity and see community languages on display throughout the nursery school. Children learn about their local community and become aware of the wider world as the setting has good links with, for example, the local school and takes part in charity events such as Children in Need. Appropriate systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting has a qualified special needs coordinator on site and works with outside agencies such as local authority staff to ensure that children's individual needs are met.

Children mainly behave well as most behaviour is handled appropriately by staff. For example, some staff give clear explanations to children about expected behaviour such as not climbing on furniture to look out of the window or finishing a mouthful of food before talking. Staff use positive strategies to encourage good behaviour such as when they praise children for waiting patiently at a table or distract them by singing a song with them. Children's self-esteem is therefore boosted. However, on occasions, nursery routines and the number of young children in one room together with staff who are not clear as to their roles and responsibilities does not support children's good behaviour. Older children are encouraged to use good manners, share and take turns. They enjoy sharing books, showing their work to visitors and cooperate very well when making a group picture. All children benefit from the positive relationships that exist throughout the nursery school and particularly when older children help those younger and less able than themselves. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work well with parents to meet individual children's needs so that all children receive appropriate support. For example, parents receive details about the nursery school in a well-presented prospectus. Notice boards display relevant information for parents, for example,

staff photographs and qualifications, curriculum planning, menus and policies. Parents receive daily feedback about their children's activities and routines either verbally or, for younger children and babies, in writing. Good information for parents is given as children move between rooms. Formal meetings with parents to discuss progress take place regularly and parents are invited on trips and to 'stay and play' sessions. A clear complaints procedure is available to parents.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funded early education is good. Parents are given good information about the Foundation Stage and their children's progress towards the early learning goals. For example, time is given for individual appointments at curriculum evenings which are well attended by parents. Children's developmental records are available for parents to see and written reports are sent home annually. Staff set monthly targets for children which they share with parents and give ideas as to how parents can support their children's learning at home. Parents are asked to inform staff of any significant developments achieved at home such as physical or social skills so that these can be added to the children's profiles and taken into account when planning activities for children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall children's needs are met. The recruitment and vetting procedures for staff are rigorous so ensuring that those working with children are suitable to do so. Staff are well qualified, enthusiastic and enjoy working with children. They understand how children learn and generally follow this through with the provision of interesting activities and suitable support. Although staff numbers are within required ratios, staff deployment throughout the setting and a lack of clarity of roles within rooms does not always support children's care and welfare, particularly at change over times such as tidying-up or meal times. Senior staff do not always provide the practitioner role model that less experienced members of staff require to meet the needs of the children in their care. Regular staff appraisals are in place and training needs identified therefore performance is generally monitored.

Resources are generally organised to promote independence for children. Available space is organised into designated areas for eating, sleeping, messy play, group times and quieter activities. The outdoor provision generally extends the range of activities available to children. There is a good range of generic policies and procedures in place that effectively underpin practice and promote positive outcomes for children and these are accessible to staff and parents. Most records and consent forms are regularly updated to ensure the safety and welfare of children. However, staff are not always sure who is responsible for recording accidents that happen to children.

The leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. There are some effective systems in place to monitor and promote the quality of teaching and learning. For example, staff have regular opportunities to meet as a team to discuss activities and children's progress. Staff have worked closely with the local authority in recent months to improve the planning and assessment of activities for children. The area manager and the early education room leader are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and demonstrate commitment to further improve the quality of education for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to develop the range of toys and activities in order to meet the developmental needs of all children, and in particular children aged one to three years. This requirement has been met therefore children's care and development is enhanced.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to ensure that assessments of children's progress are used to identify what children need to do next, so that activities are planned and based on children's interests in order for them to make progress. This requirement has been met therefore children's learning is enhanced.

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 by 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 satisfactory. 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 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 a record is maintained of all accidents to children
- deploy staff effectively to ensure the care, welfare and development of children.

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 the effective use of indoor and outdoor accommodation as well as the resources for teaching and learning to enable children to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

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