

St George's Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	957051
Inspection date	25 February 2008
Inspector	Jean Suff
Setting Address	33-37 Wigston Road, Oadby, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE2 5QF
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Registered person	The Childcare Company (Leicester) Ltd.
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?

St. George's Nursery School opened in 2001. It is situated in the Oadby area of Leicestershire, and serves the local Oadby population and surrounding areas. The setting is a purpose built, single storey building with six care rooms in use for the care of children attending the setting.

The setting is open Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 18:00 each day. It is open 51 weeks of the year, closing only for public holidays and one week at Christmas. Children attend a variety of sessions. There are currently 206 children on roll of whom 31 are funded three year olds and one a funded four year old. 29 children are registered for after school and holiday care. The nursery has experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

20 staff work with the children, 16 of whom have recognised early years qualifications, with one member of staff currently working towards an early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Leicestershire Early Years Development Childcare Partnership. It employs Montessori teaching methods to support children's learning.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted because staff and children follow sound hygiene policies. All areas of the nursery are extremely clean and staff maintain cleanliness throughout the day, for example, toilets are checked and cleaned where necessary. Staff wear gloves and aprons when changing nappies so ensuring procedures are hygienic and prevent cross-contamination. Children wash their hands at appropriate times in the day such as after messy play and before eating. However, older children sometimes use one bowl of soapy water in the classroom rather than the basins in the cloakroom which does not fully protect children from the risk of cross-infection.

The setting takes appropriate measures when children are ill or have an accident. A rolling programme of first aid training ensures that staff maintain current paediatric first aid qualifications. Accidents are recorded and signed by parents, promoting children's welfare, and written permission for emergency medical treatment is obtained. Medication is administered in accordance with the nursery's clear policy which requires prior written permission from parents. Children who are ill do not attend the setting and if children become unwell they are cared for well until their parents are able to collect them.

Quiet areas for rest are created so that children are able to sleep according to their needs. Babies sleep in cots in a separate sleeping area and staff are vigilant in monitoring them regularly. Younger children sleep on mats in one of their rooms whilst children who may be awake are engaged in activities in the other room. Older children have comfortable cushioned corners where they can, for example, read a book if they wish to be less active.

Children are well nourished. They enjoy a good variety of freshly-cooked meals such as broccoli and leak cheese bake or savoury mince with Yorkshire pudding. Fruit is offered for snack and a light tea is provided in the afternoon, helping to promote a healthy and balanced diet including fruit and vegetables each day. Babies are offered the same meals which are adapted to meet their needs. Information about children's dietary requirements and allergies are obtained from parents and clearly displayed in children's rooms, ensuring that all staff are aware of children's health needs. Drinking water is available in all rooms and children are encouraged to drink regularly, for example, after physical exercise to ensure they remain well hydrated. Children are learning about healthy living through planned activities such as cooking and food tasting. In addition, the Cook talks to the children daily about the choices available and what is good for them to eat, so helping to raise their awareness of healthy eating.

There are daily opportunities for children to benefit from fresh air and enjoy physical activity outside. Young babies are sometimes taken for walks and are able to crawl or roll outside on mats in warmer weather. Older children show confidence using balls, hoops, a climbing frame and slide in the enclosed outdoor play space. Indoors, children learn to move in different ways as they skip, march, participate in action rhymes and music and movement sessions. Younger children are encouraged to develop their dexterity as they handle board books, tactile toys and instruments. Older children follow a structured programme to develop their coordination and control and show skill, for example, when drawing with pencils and pouring fluids. With good adult support, children are developing an awareness of the changes in their body during activity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in purpose-built, warm and well-maintained premises, so helping to promote their well-being. The nursery has bright displays of children's work and photographs of staff and children on the walls. Children therefore are provided with a welcoming environment that helps them to feel secure and comfortable. Managers take careful account of the floor area of individual rooms when organising the age-ranges and sizes of different groups of children, so ensuring that children have sufficient space to eat, play and rest comfortably. Furnishings are in very good condition and appropriate to children's stage of development, so helping to ensure their comfort and safety. For example, babies lie or sit comfortably on padded floor mats or shaped cushions, whilst toddlers use low chairs when eating or playing at low tables. Toys and play equipment are checked after each use for cleanliness and damage, so helping to ensure they remain in good condition for children's use.

High priority is given to maintaining children's safety. Careful arrangements for children's arrival and collection, and for the arrival of any visitors, minimises the risk of children having contact with any unauthorised adults. Staffing arrangements are effective in ensuring that good adult: child ratios are maintained within the nursery at all times. Children are always fully supervised by adults cleared as suitable to work with them and closed circuit television is in operation in every room so protecting their safety. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place and updated regularly to ensure that potential hazards to children are minimised. For example, vision panels reduce the risk of children trapping their fingers or being hit by doors. Children's safety is further promoted as they develop an awareness of fire safety through their participation in fire drills. Permission is obtained from parents for children to go on outings and additional safety precautions are taken. For example, the nursery only uses coaches that provide individual seat belts for children, there is a higher ratio of adults to children and staff take first aid equipment out with them.

Staff have a very good practical awareness of what child abuse and neglect mean, and of what to do in the event of any concerns about a child in order to safeguard their welfare. Clear policies and procedures that reflect current guidelines are in place and shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children who attend the nursery are relaxed and settled in the friendly environment. They are confident as they leave their parents to play. Staff are welcoming and enjoy the company of the children in their care, joining in their play. In the baby room they present activities attractively using mats and cloths to designate particular areas and toys. Babies are calm, content and interested in the activities provided in the welcoming environment. They shake instruments, wheel trucks and fill containers with sand. Staff sing and read to children, help them choose a book and provide vocabulary as they look at pictures together.

Younger children involve themselves in a range of activities such as playing with construction sets and farm animals and dressing up. Staff working with younger children take account of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan a generally balanced variety of experiences and play opportunities such as making biscuits, playing with water, participating in action songs, construction and small world play. Staff record their observations of children at play so helping them to ascertain their stage of development and progress. However, some activities, such as

making cards and sweets are particularly adult-led, so not fully supporting children in exploring and extending their creativity at their own level.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Senior staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and a good understanding of child development. They provide a purposeful learning environment for children to learn and develop as individuals. Sessions are structured to provide a good balance of adult-directed and child-focused activities, often using Montessori equipment. Staff set out some resources before children arrive, encouraging them to take part whilst allowing for children's choice later. Although the outside play space is used to develop children's physical skills well, it is under-used as a resource for learning. Staff pace the session well and provide an environment where children have space to complete activities in their own time. Routine tasks are managed well allowing staff to work directly with children for most of the time.

Planning for the Foundation Stage is based on the six areas of learning but does not include all the aspects each week. Not all staff who work with funded children have received the necessary training so that they fully understand the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are not fully aware of all the areas of learning and how activities contribute to children's progress. As a result opportunities to extend children's learning are missed. Observations and assessments are used to record what children can do and how they respond to activities. Staff know the children well and are aware of their developmental needs. For the older children, observations and assessments of children's achievements are linked to the stepping stones to identify next steps in learning which helps children to make progress.

Children are happy and purposefully engaged in their play showing good levels of interest and concentration. Children's work is valued and opportunities are given for them to share their work with others. Children make sound relationships with staff and peers, seeking out their friends on arrival and helping each other to complete activities. They are learning to be kind and caring to others through discussion and the good role models that staff provide. All children use practical life toys such as a jug and beaker to practise pouring so develop essential skills of manipulation and independence.

Children confidently chat to staff and each other, describing events from home or talking about the animals that they know. They listen attentively to stories both in large and small groups. They have opportunities to mark-make as they draw, paint and write with a variety of instruments in purposeful situations such as the post office. Children have good opportunities to use and understand mathematical language in their play as they compare the height of models and the size of their hands in relation to others. They trace sandpaper numerals with their fingers, calculate with an abacus and count clothes pegs on side of a tin whilst matching with the numerals. Younger children confidently use numbers to count how many children are at a table and recognise numerals when they change the date on the calendar.

Children enjoy construction as they join together Polydrons and Stickle-Bricks to make shapes and towers. They take part in festivals throughout the year as they learn about their part in the wider world. For example, they make flags to celebrate St. Georges Day. Play areas and resources provide opportunities for children to extend their tactile experiences and develop their imagination. Children pour water and squeeze sponges, hold shells to their ears and feel wet cornflour change composition beneath their hands. They experience a range of painting and printing techniques, creating artwork for displays. Sand, play dough and cooking activities

allow children to explore different materials and use their senses. Children enjoy singing and action rhymes as they take part in planned and spontaneous music sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A welcoming and caring environment allows children to develop confidence that they are valued as individuals and that their needs are recognised and respected. For example, staff respond sensitively to younger children's individual care preferences as they wake from their sleep, and take account of babies' eye contact and gestures to help identify and respond to their needs and interests. Staff take careful account of information from parents regarding children's health and care requirements to ensure that individual needs are met and consistency of care is provided. Children throughout the nursery see and use resources reflecting a diverse society. For example, photographs and posters on display show a range of faces, children use puzzles and dressing up clothes reflecting different cultures and they taste foods linked to different festivals such as Chinese New Year. Systems are in place and staff recognise the importance of liaison with parents or other relevant professionals to support the inclusion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children behave well and are cooperative because staff manage their behaviour in positive ways. Staff are given clear guidelines as to what to do in various situations and helpful prompts are on display throughout the setting. Consequently, children are given clear explanations and affirmation of good behaviour so know what is expected of them at nursery. Staff help children learn to share and take turns by modelling and using age-appropriate language. Children like to show staff their work and achievements and are pleased when staff praise them. As a result children's self-esteem and confidence is enhanced. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children enjoy good continuity of care because staff work closely with parents to ensure that individual needs are met. Parents are given a good and useful range of information about staffing, routines and procedures on the nursery display boards ensuring they are well-informed about arrangements for their children's care. Flexible settling-in procedures allow parents to develop a sense of trust in the staff who are to care for their children, and an 'open door' policy is in place. Staff recognise the importance of children's comforters in helping children make the transition from home to nursery. Staff work well with parents and communicate with them daily to ensure all children's needs and routines such as sleep patterns are met. Use of a suggestions box and a regular parental survey supplement on-going opportunities for parents to discuss any ideas, queries or concerns with room staff or managers. A complaints policy is in place and available for parents to see.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Parents are given good information about the Foundation Stage and their children's progress towards the early learning goals through newsletters, annotated photographs of children at work and regular contact with staff in the classrooms. Children's developmental records are available in rooms for parents to view at any time, formal appointments are arranged at a time convenient to parents and a written report is produced at the end of the child's time at the nursery. Staff set targets for children which they share with parents and give ideas as to how parents can support their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Nursery managers and staff work hard to establish and maintain a secure and welcoming environment enabling children across the age range to feel settled and confident. The deployment of staff is carefully organised to ensure ratios are maintained and children are cared for appropriately. A high proportion of staff hold relevant qualifications, helping to ensure they have a secure understanding of good childcare practice. Systematic recruitment and induction procedures help to establish that staff are suitable to work with children and have a good understanding of the routines and procedures underpinning children's safety and welfare. Clear and comprehensive records are kept regarding children's individual health, care and contact details ensuring that children's individual needs can be met. Policies are comprehensive, regularly reviewed and methodically organised. They are followed well by staff therefore, are effective in underpinning the management of children's care. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. Staff regularly meet together as a team which helps to ensure that all staff have a shared understanding of the nursery's aims and are able to contribute their suggestions. Staff delivering the funded nursery education provision evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and experiences provided for children. However, the management team do not ensure that those staff who have yet to receive training in the Foundation Stage are using the developmentally-appropriate curriculum framework when planning activities for children. Appraisal systems are in place to help staff evaluate their current practice and identify areas for continuing professional development. Such development is then supported through internal training and mentoring or through some local external training opportunities. The setting has strong links with the local authority and works with them to develop the quality of education provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was given three recommendations. Firstly, it was asked to ensure the system for registering children and staff attendance on a daily basis accurately shows children's hours of attendance. It was also asked to ensure all children have regular access to fluids such as water throughout the day. These requirements have been met therefore children's safety and well-being are enhanced. Thirdly, the nursery was asked to consider the suitability of some activities given to two year olds in relation to their age and stage of development, and the length of time provided for outdoor play. Children now use the outdoor play space for longer and more frequent periods. Some activities provided for young children are overly adult-led therefore a further recommendation with regard to the provision of suitable activities has been raised.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was also given three recommendations. Firstly, it was asked to ensure curriculum planning is more clearly linked to the learning needs of children as individuals through more effective and frequent use of assessment. Secondly, it was asked to ensure relevant emphasis is given to cluster areas not covered through daily routines and that plans allow sufficient flexibility to consolidate children's learning. Thirdly, it was asked to improve children's opportunities for creative self expression and outdoor physical play. These requirements have 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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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 positive steps to prevent cross-infection during hand washing are consistently applied
- develop more effective use of observations of what younger children do to ensure that activities are appropriate to their developmental level, particularly with regard to creative activities.

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 knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum
- develop the outside play space as a learning environment for children.

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