

Alton Manor Private Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY227321
Inspection date	28 February 2008
Inspector	Sharon Dickinson
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Registered person	Treetops Nurseries 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 satisfactory. 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?

Alton Manor Private Day Nursery is one of 19 of nurseries run by Treetops Nurseries Limited. It opened in 1992 and operates from a detached purpose-built property in Belper. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas. A maximum of 90 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 155 children aged from seven months to nine years on roll. Of these, 62 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 14 staff. Nine of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Derbyshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and are members of the National Day Nursery Association. They have recently obtained the Quality Counts accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted in the setting as effective hygiene procedures are implemented. The premises are clean and well maintained. Staff wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies and serving food and an indoor shoe policy is operated reducing the risk of cross-contamination. The nursery cook holds recognised food safety qualifications and staff attend food hygiene training as part of a core training programme. Consistent daily routines help children begin to learn about good hygiene. For example, they know the importance of washing their hands before snack and remind staff to use soap to wash off the germs. Written and pictorial notices are displayed in the children's bathroom to remind them to wash their hands after using the toilet. Freshly laundered bed linen is provided for children requiring a sleep, minimising the risk of infection and ensuring the good health of children is maintained. A clear policy is in place excluding children who are ill, particularly those who are infectious. Children receive good care when they have an accident or become ill to maintain their good health. Over half the staff team hold a recognised first aid qualification and fully stocked first aid kits are readily accessible both on site and on outings. All required parental consents are obtained and clear records are maintained relating to accidents and the administration of medicines; these are effectively shared with parents. Accident records are audited regularly to prevent future incidents occurring further protecting children's health and safety. Children rest and sleep according to their needs. Quiet areas are provided to enable individual sleep patterns to be facilitated. Sleeping babies are frequently checked and older children are directly supervised during sleep times.

Children are well nourished and their health and dietary needs are met because staff work well with parents. Information relating to individual dietary requirements are recorded within children's personal details and staff discuss food allergies and preferences with parents. This information is effectively cascaded to all staff, including the nursery cook, who strictly adhere to children's personal dietary needs. Summer and winter menus are devised by the nurseries head office and used throughout the day care chain. These contain a varied selection of healthy and nutritious meal options and snacks which are presented attractively to children and provided in ample quantities. Children bake banana bread and make fruit smoothies helping to develop a positive attitude to healthy eating. The nursery has received Amber Valley Councils 'heartbeat award', which is a healthy food initiative, for the fifth year running. Suitable equipment is provided to enable staff to puree fresh food for weaning babies. Fresh drinking water is readily available to children at all times and drinks are also offered to children on a regular basis such as mealtimes. Older children are encouraged to independently access drinks provided on low-level tables. Babies are bottle fed in line with their individual routine. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions where children sit together with staff and chat about their day.

All children enjoy regular opportunities to be active and have physical exercise both indoors and outdoors. They enjoy playing in the spacious garden area with a variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment. Local outings are undertaken, for example, babies and toddlers visit the local park with a picnic. Larger outings are also planned such as visits to a soft play adventure centre and the Sea Life Centre. Indoor activities such as stories, singing, sand and water play are also extended outside, particularly in warmer weather. An external company provides an annual soccer academy which has proved popular with older children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which helps them to feel secure and comfortable. Walls are covered in displays, children's art work and information for parents, including photographic displays of children at play helping to create a sense of belonging. Base rooms are suitably equipped and provide a secure and familiar area for children. Furniture is organised to help create an accessible and stimulating environment. A clear emphasis is placed upon supporting children's independence. Many play materials are stored at child height and children are encouraged to freely access them as they choose. Children use a good range of toys and equipment which is age-appropriate, safe and suitable. Effective systems are in place to check and maintain toys and equipment. The staff team are proactive in securing funding to extend and improve the range of play materials and resources.

Children are cared for in a secure and generally safe indoor environment. Intercom systems ensure the premises are secure. Robust internal and external health and safety audits are conducted on a regular basis and staff complete daily safety checks of areas used by children. Safety equipment is fitted where necessary such as safety gates restricting unsupervised access to stairs. Children are closely supervised at all times. However, children's safety is put at risk when they are left in sole charge of staff who have not been fully vetted. An instance of this was observed during inspection which contradicts the nursery's policies and procedures. Children's safety is well promoted in the event of an emergency. Written evacuation procedures are prominently displayed throughout the building and drills are practised on a regular basis. Staff have also attended in-house fire safety training. Children are kept safe on outings as suitable equipment is provided such as pushchairs and car seats. Fluorescent tabards are worn by children and adults displaying the nursery logo. Comprehensive policies are in place for the safe conduct of outings and the transportation of children.

Children are safeguarded because staff clearly understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Staff complete child protection training as part of a rolling training programme and are fully aware of types and indicators of abuse. Policies have been updated in line with current safeguarding children guidelines and include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled because staff are attentive to their needs. Individual settling-in procedures, done through close consultation with parents, ensure children are comfortable within their surroundings and form secure relationships with key workers both on entry to the setting and as they move between age groups. Children relate well to others and positively respond to adults who are interested in what they do and say. The friendly staff engage in children's play and discussions valuing their ideas and suggestions. For example, children enjoy thinking of different ways to use a large cardboard box within their play. Younger children play peek-a-boo and construct a cardboard slide whilst older children enjoy the privacy of an outdoor 'den'. Children are confident to explore and investigate their surroundings as they independently select from the broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which supports their development and learning. Children of all ages enjoy accessing a wide range of craft and malleable play such as collage and painting. They print using their hands and explore ice when playing imaginatively in the water tray with 'sealife creatures'. Sensory areas and displays

encourage even the youngest children to explore different sounds and textures. All base rooms include a comfortable area for children to relax and enjoy a wide selection of age-appropriate books. Language skills are promoted through daily activities such as reading stories and singing familiar songs. Staff working with younger children effectively use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide their practice and plan for children's progress. They regularly observe and assess children's progress and use this information to inform their planning helping children take the next steps in their development. Planning and information relating to 'Birth to three matters' is clearly displayed for parents. Staff working with babies have suitable training and experience. Continuity of care is provided through consistent staffing arrangements and by consulting with parents about children's individual routines. Children forge strong bonds with familiar staff who are affectionate and responsive to their needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Senior staff are knowledgeable of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. A comprehensive induction programme is currently being implemented with the relatively new staff team to extend their awareness and understanding of the Curriculum for the foundation stage and of the setting's planning and assessment systems. However, not all adults deployed to work within the pre-school room are as knowledgeable of the daily routines and planning systems. On occasion this results in a disorganised session and lack of challenge for children. Key staff use appropriate teaching methods and questioning to provide sufficient challenge and help support children to achieve as much as they can. Learning aims are achieved through practical activities such as tracing letters in salt and making marks using paint brushes and water outdoors. Staff successfully differentiate and adapt activities to meet individual children's needs. For example, less confident children use 'Roarie the Lion' as a tool to help them with listening skills and to talk about their pets within a small group. Subsequently, children enjoy the activities and show interest in what they do. Space, time and resources are creatively used by staff to promote children's learning and there is a good balance of free choice and planned activities.

Planning effectively covers a broad and balanced curriculum and clearly indicates what children are intended to learn. Monthly topics are planned in line with children's interests and seasonal events. Staff monitor that long term planning effectively covers the full curriculum and provides opportunities for children to revisit and consolidate their skills. Weekly plans indicate different activities and resources linked to the areas of learning and highlight intended learning objectives which are generally in line with children's development. Staff know about children's general capabilities on entry, for example, using information from parents or previous carers about their child's development. Staff regularly observe and assess children's progress towards the early learning goals but at present do not identify individual 'next steps' for their learning and development to assist in planning.

Children are confident and freely access resources and activities for themselves because they know where things are kept and the areas where different activities are carried out. They display good levels of concentration and are provided with opportunities to work alone and in groups. Friendships are forged and children are beginning to play cooperatively with their peers to recreate roles and experiences. Children demonstrate an awareness of boundaries and behavioural expectations as they happily share resources, for example they know to take turns on the computer once the game is completed. Children develop a strong sense of themselves and the community through topics, visitors to the setting and outings. Most children clearly and confidently express their needs and ideas within the group. Children have good opportunities for mark-making and to develop early writing skills. The writing area enables children to use a

variety of media including pencils, envelopes, rulers and hole-punchers. They develop pencil control through practical activities such as tracing patterns and letters in salt. Children extend mark-making opportunities into other areas of learning, for example, they write in meaningful situations such as making lists and appointments in the role play area. Children begin to form recognisable letters as they trace their name and label their art work. Staff develop children's awareness of letter sounds through activities such as rhyming lotto and sounding out initial sounds of their name. Children listen attentively to stories and songs enthusiastically joining in with familiar phrases. They freely access a good selection of fiction and information books and other media such as magazines.

Children are confident with numbers and count readily to 10 and beyond. Practical activities are used to develop children's awareness of simple number operations. For example, they know that five is more than three when counting how many children are sat at the snack tables. They match the correct number of objects onto numeric flashcards. Other mathematical concepts are introduced and consolidated through fun activities such as making patterns and sequencing using peg boards and threading beads. Children accurately copy picture cards using geometric shapes. They access a wide range of equipment and resources to consolidate mathematical concepts such as scales, calculators and tape measures. Through first-hand experiences children develop an understanding of the world around them. During a focus activity children handle objects relating to pet care and discuss similarities and differences between animals and themselves. For example, they talk about how pets need to be kept warm, be fed and feel loved. They experiment by making an erupting volcano using bicarbonate of soda and vinegar and observe change as objects are frozen in a block of ice. Children have good opportunities to design and make using a wide variety of construction toys. They freely create and also design with a purpose in mind when making models out of recycled materials. Children have regular access to a computer enjoying a variety of educational software. They develop an awareness of everyday technology as they use electronic toys, remote control cars, old keyboards and fax machines. Children develop an understanding of the wider community as they take 'Roarie the Lion' on holiday and bring back photographs, pictures and postcards of his travels. They develop an awareness of other cultures and beliefs as they take part in festivals such as Chinese New Year and listen to various styles of music from around the world. Visitors are regularly invited to the setting in line with current themes and events, for example recent visits include Zoo Lab and staff from Pickford House museum.

Children move with control and coordination using a variety of small and large equipment with increasing skill. They confidently climb and balance on large outdoor apparatus and manipulate smaller tools such as scissors, brushes and pencils well. Staff skilfully support children to grasp new skills such as using a rolling pin or throwing and catching by demonstrating the activity and offering praise and encouragement. All areas of learning are extended outdoors, particularly in warmer weather. For example, children make marks using chalk and pots of water with paint brushes and share a quiet story in the garden. Children describe their rosy cheeks and warm hands after an active play session and feel their heartbeat, helping them to understand the effects of activity on their body. Staff from the local leisure centre were invited into the setting to talk to children about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. Children have daily opportunities to be creative. They are given time to complete activities to their own satisfaction and their representations are valued by staff. A variety of malleable experiences such as rice, pasta, sand and water are provided for children to explore and investigate using all of their senses. Children's imagination is promoted through 'small world' toys and a very well-equipped role play area. They enjoy dressing up and recreating roles and experiences with their friends, often staying in character during snack and story times. Children imaginatively create their own props, for example, by using construction pieces as 'food' for the toy rabbit. Role play is linked

to current themes helping children to make sense of the world. For example, it is currently set up as a post office with appropriate props, notices and technology. Children use instruments to recreate sounds to stories and enjoy regular music and movement sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met by staff who work in close partnership with parents and carers. Children's records contain relevant information to enable staff to provide appropriate care. Key workers discuss children's changing routines with parents and ensure their individual needs are met during their time at nursery. All children are helped to feel valued and included. They benefit from activities and resources which help them value diversity. Posters and displays depicting positive images and notices in various scripts are displayed throughout the setting. Play materials and planned themes and activities promote children's understanding of the wider world helping them to develop respect for others. Various festivals are recognised such as Christmas, Mothers Day and Chinese New Year and children take part in fun, practical activities such as making cards and dancing to cultural music. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well cared for and are given good levels of support whilst at the setting. Key staff work closely with children, parents and other agencies to ensure children's individual needs are fully met and 'next steps' are identified and used effectively to inform planning.

Children are cared for in a positive environment which effectively promotes their self-esteem. Staff provide lots of praise and encouragement to children and recognise achievements using rewards such as stickers. A 'pride tree' is prominently displayed in the foyer and children are awarded 'apples' to hang on the tree highlighting aspects of good behaviour or personal achievement; these are taken home to share and celebrate with parents and other family members. Children are generally well behaved. They respond to appropriate expectations for their behaviour helping them to work harmoniously with others. Challenging behaviour is appropriately managed in order to support their well-being. Staff talk to children, respecting their level of understanding and maturity, and clearly explain the consequences of their behaviour helping them to begin to distinguish between right and wrong. Prompt action is taken for instances of reoccurring behaviour issues and staff work closely with parents to identify and resolve possible triggers for the behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Effective systems are in place to exchange information between parents and members of staff. Key workers exchange information verbally with parents upon collection and this is supported by daily log sheets for younger children outlining the child's daily routine and progress. Parents are very positive about the care provided and feel the excellent and caring staff team provide a holistic approach to the care of their children. They feel fully involved in their child's time at the setting, in particular when children first start the nursery and during the transition between age groups. A wealth of information is available for parents through informative displays, regular newsletters and a useful website. Policies and procedures are effectively shared with parents including information about how to make a complaint. Robust procedures are implemented in relation to the collection of children successfully maintaining their safety.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive good quality information about the provision including the educational programme. Staff inform parents about themes and activities both verbally and through newsletters and planning is displayed for their perusal. Parents are effectively informed about

children's progress and achievements. They are reminded they can access their child's assessment file at any time and are invited to bi-annual parent evenings where they can talk to their child's key worker about their child's progress. Parents' views are sought on their child's assessment and they are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways, for example sending in items such as photographs to support themes and taking 'Roarie the Lion' on his travels.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. However, a staff member currently undergoing relevant vetting procedures was in one instance observed to be left unsupervised with children. This is in breach of National Standard 1. The staff team work collaboratively and show a commitment to continual professional development which supports the care and learning of all children. Regular appraisals allow staff to reflect on their practice and consider future career development. A rolling training programme ensures all staff have a basic awareness of 'core' skills such as child protection and behaviour management. Additional training is also provided including nationally recognised childcare qualifications to Level 2 and 3. Staffing levels positively support children's care, learning and play. Children's, staff and visitors' attendance is accurately recorded. Suitable contingency arrangements are in place to ensure ratios are maintained. Regular relief staff provide cover for staff absence and separate staff are employed for domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning and maintenance. However, on the day of inspection staff were not effectively deployed within the pre-school room impacting upon the fluidity of the children's daily routine as adults were unsure of routines and planning systems. Policies and procedures mainly work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement. They are regularly updated to bring them in line with changing practice or legislation. Record systems are used well to meet children's needs and are securely stored to protect confidentiality. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. Management have a clear vision for the nursery. Staff monitor and evaluate the curriculum to identify strengths and areas for improvement. They work closely with their local authority mentor to review and improve practice. For example, pre-school staff have devised systems to identify 'next steps' in children's learning and methods to ensure parents' own observations are incorporated into children's assessment files. Regular management and staff meetings ensure good communication links and enable staff to contribute ideas for future themes and activities. The nursery manager has a wealth of experience working with the Curriculum for the foundation stage and effectively uses this knowledge to assist her in overseeing the effectiveness of the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was requested to ensure the movement of food between the kitchen and the pre-school room does not pose a hazard to the children. Steps have been taken to minimise hazards to children and the setting now uses a food serving trolley to transport meals between rooms on the ground floor.

At the nursery education inspection the nursery was requested to increase children's opportunities to link letters to sounds. The setting now provides a suitable range of activities to develop children's awareness of sound and phonics. For example, children play sound lotto and staff bring their attention to initial phonic sounds in their name during daily routines such

as when sitting down for snack. Staff are due to attend in-house training relating to linking sounds and letters.

They were also requested to review the deployment of staff to ensure children gain the most from activities provided. Pre-school staff are mainly deployed effectively to support and engage in children's play. Key staff are knowledgeable about their roles and are allocated focus activities and/or areas to promote learning objectives. During free-play sessions staff are effectively deployed between the three play rooms enabling children to move between areas independently choosing preferred tasks.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 satisfactory. 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):

- deploy staff effectively to ensure the welfare, safety 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):

- ensure all adults working within pre-school are knowledgeable about daily routines and are able to implement planning systems effectively
- devise and implement systems to identify children's 'next steps' and use these to inform planning.

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