

Warwick University Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507728
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Inspector	Sheila Dawn Flounders
Setting Address	Warwick University, Room 31, Westwood Site, Canley, Coventry, CV4 7AL
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Registered person	Warwick University Nursery
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

University of Warwick Nursery opened in 1993. It operates from two converted buildings, self-contained units in the grounds of Warwick University on the Westwood site. The two adjacent buildings are interlinked by a covered walk way. One is for the baby unit and the other is for older children. A maximum of 47 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens 5 days a week, for 50 weeks of the year. The nursery is open from 08.15 to 17.45 Monday to Thursday and 17.15 on Fridays during term time; with 13.00 as the end of the morning session and start of the afternoon. All the children share access to a large, secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 61 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as the nursery serves the university staff and student community. They attend a variety of sessions to meet the needs of parents' courses and staff working patterns. 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 14 members of staff to work with the children, of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications and the other is working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher within the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well-nourished due to the variety of food provided by the nursery including the provision of a nutritious hot midday meal, a healthy snack during the morning and simple tea. Children all experience social opportunities to eat together, when they are joined by the staff too. Increasing independence is encouraged and by the time children are in pre-school they are able to set out the cutlery and pour their own drinks. The four weekly menu is accessible to parents and provides a wide variety of meals which cater for the dietary needs of those attending, which the nursery identifies with parents before children attend. The main meal is cooked elsewhere, but served on site, with the staff involved having a good awareness of food hygiene. However, during snack, some of the younger children's cups are placed on the floor at times, which could impact on their health. Children are able to access drinking water throughout the nursery, with staff ensuring that cups are kept nearby on the side for the younger children, whilst older children are able to get a drink independently.

Children stay healthy in the nursery because of robust cleaning routines, particularly for equipment used by the babies, and a strong policy on illness. Parents are made aware that children will be sent home when they are taken ill to limit the risk of cross-infection and provided with details of the exclusion periods for childhood illnesses. This is well supported by the nursery policy to limit the types and amounts of medication given to children. Children are encouraged from an early age to understand simple hygiene practices and handwashing is part of their routine after toileting and before lunch in all areas of the nursery, however, this is not so before snack time, which could compromise children's health. The younger children rest and sleep according to their need. The babies have a variety of sleeping equipment which is used to accommodate parents' and children's individual preferences. The older children all use low beds or sleep mats on the floor, although, individuality is respected, for example, if children like to sleep in a particular part of the room.

Children learn about a healthy lifestyle through their access to a balanced diet and to a wide variety of physical activities. They are all able to spend time outside daily with the large outdoor area divided into sections so that varying age groups can be out at the same time, or gates can be opened to give access to the whole area when only one group is out. Thus younger children use the appropriately sized equipment in their own section of the garden, but are also able to take the pushchairs or balls into other areas which provides them with more room and a greater variety of activities. Inside, both baby rooms contain equipment and space for them to develop their emerging physical skills, for example, low-level furniture to walk along, soft cushions to support sitting and activity centres to stand in. Older children are able to engage in many activities outside which mirror those that take place inside, but they also access equipment such as the large tyres, wheeled toys and the swing to develop their large movement. A weekly optional dance lesson also provides this age group with opportunities to move in a variety of ways, become more aware of the space around them and practise movement to music.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment where the staff have a very good awareness of potential hazards and have put necessary measures in place to minimise these, for example, gates in some areas. The whole of the premises are very secure, with parents having to ring a bell to gain access, a record kept of all visitors and staff vigilant about who is allowed access to the children. Regular checks ensure that all resources are suitable for the age groups using the premises. Thorough risk assessments are in place on many aspects of the provision which are subject to regular review, although, the recent power failure identified a lack of emergency lighting to the whole building which had not previously been considered.

Children are kept safe on outings, for example, the babies use a two to one ratio, suitable emergency equipment is always taken and the older children consider aspects of road safety in relevant activities before they go out. Emergency drills are held during the year to help children learn to protect themselves, and they also use hats and creams as protection against the sun in warmer months. Children are further protected because staff are aware of their roles and responsibility to safeguard them, with information about the procedures shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children throughout the nursery have access to a wide range of interesting activities so that there is always something available to capture their attention, for example, many of the older babies are fascinated by the simple shiny stars that hang on elastic. They spent time looking at their reflections and pulling the stars to see what will happen. They also have opportunities to persevere with activities that interest them and use their initiative to develop their play, for example, to move a car actively up onto the table as it makes a different noise there. Staff ensure that the activities help children to develop confidence and self-esteem, with the younger babies provided with many tactile experiences to enable them to explore everyday objects within a safe environment. For example, a container of bath foam placed on the floor allows them to explore the texture and smell, it is set out for long enough that some of those initially reluctant to join in are persuaded to do so when they see the staff and other children enjoying the activity.

Children are encouraged towards increasing independence as they get older and are provided with good opportunities for self-selection. They access an increasing diverse range of creative activities, including, cooking and design. Their planned activities demonstrate more opportunities for imaginative play, with staff skilled at encouraging children to extend their thinking in all activities, with the use of open-ended questioning encouraging the children to ask more questions themselves in general play. For example, when a simple construction is said to be a cake staff ask what might be used for candles and they respond well to the challenge. Joint activities with the pre-school children occur daily at times, for example, at the beginning of the day, when some children are asleep or for specific activities like dance. This provides the two-year olds with valuable experience of spending time in the bigger room ready for their transition and also opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills, for example, to use the computer or learn how to do a forward roll. Children make positive relationships through very good interaction with staff in all the rooms, particularly with their keyworkers with whom they some spend time during most sessions. They also get on very well together, playing with a

variety of children during the day and at times having opportunities to take part in activities with children from other rooms.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have a mix of qualifications and experience, with all, understanding the curriculum, which they are able to implement. They are all involved in the planning from an early stage, it contains purposeful activities that provide learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors. However, it does not always demonstrate how activities differentiate for children's varying ability to ensure that the most able children are sufficiently challenged. Staff use a variety of appropriate teaching methods, including, modelling activities for the children, open-ended questioning and demonstrating a particularly strong feel for when to intervene or allow children time to try things for themselves first. They talk to the children all the time, listening to what they say about what they are doing and making suggestions about various ways in which activities might be extended, but leaving the decision to the children. Ongoing observations, evaluation of the planning and discussions with parents form the basis of the children's assessment records which key-workers update regularly to provide information about what the child needs to do next.

Childrens' records and observations show that they are making good progress, particularly those for whom English is an additional language. During planned activities children are able to cover all areas of the curriculum over time, with many different learning opportunities available daily. For example, when painting pots they had made the week previously children are able to choose their colour, demonstrate good control with a fine paint brush and think about how they are going to manage to paint the whole pot when they are holding part of it. Lots of discussion takes place with each other and the member of staff, including, recalling why they made the pots for Diwali. In another area of the room the role play area is set up as a doctors surgery at the children's request. Children are busy making appointments, using the phone to call people, pretending to drive an ambulance or asking members of staff to come and be patients. As they later begin to use some of the dolls instead, the emphasis changes and the area is reassigned as a baby clinic, with staff sourcing additional props from the nursery baby room. In the sand tray, lumps are found as children use a variety of tools, so they discuss with staff how they might get rid of them and remember how they were formed. Later as they add water to the mix, it is thought to have the texture of porridge so the play develops into a detailed enactment of 'Goldilocks'.

Other areas of learning form integral parts of the activities, for example, stories are read to patients in the hospital, children get their name cards to write their own names on the hand prints they make after painting their pots, a game of dominoes provides many opportunities to count and size is discussed when children are building with Lego. Children are familiar with the resources available and move between the differing areas of the room to support their own learning at times, for example, during a discussion it is decided that a character on the computer might be able to help so several children go over, find the programme and investigate it. This results in them copying some of the actions on the computer, which eventually leads to an outdoor physical session from a child- initiated idea.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met well because detailed information is obtained from parents as part of the enrolment process, particularly about routines for the younger children. All

parents are encouraged to bring their child for as many introductory sessions as they feel necessary so that there are opportunities for ongoing discussions with staff during those early visits. Continuing daily exchanges, either written or verbal, take place throughout the time a child attends to ensure information is kept updated. Children with additional needs receive good support, those with English as an additional language quickly develop sufficient understanding to fully take part in activities, and staff liaise appropriately with external agencies when necessary. They are all provided with many opportunities each day, to make choices and decisions for themselves. All of the children have a sense of belonging because they all have a key-worker to provide a consistent adult presence, they are proud to see examples of their creative activities prominently displayed and they have somewhere to keep their own possessions, which the older children are encouraged to take care of independently.

A consistent approach to the handling of behaviour helps children understand what reasonable behaviour is. Simple boundaries are in place and although some of the children test these at times, they are aware of what they are. Positive behaviour is encouraged by staff listening and responding to children's reasonable requests, them spending time playing with children in activities or sitting alongside them for meals. Any behaviour issues are talked over with the older children, whilst distraction is normally all that is needed for the younger ones. Particularly at times when groups join together, children develop respect for others as they learn to share and co-operate in activities with a wider group and become aware that others needs are different to their own. As the children get older they have access to an increasing wide range of resources and activities which help them to become aware of the diversity of the other families in the nursery and of wider society. Thus, funded children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All parents appear to be very happy with the provision and have close working relationships with staff, demonstrated through their positive response to the recent power situation. They are aware of the settings routines, the types of activities the children engage in and how to access information about policies and procedures. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive funding is good. They receive detailed information about the early years curriculum through the nursery handbook and are updated about daily activities during discussions with staff or their child as they collect them, by examples of work they take home and the various displays around the room. Twice yearly appointments are made to discuss each child's achievements and progress with their key-worker, which are well attended as staff ensure they are at times which are convenient for parents. They have opportunities to share what they know about their child's abilities, which is added to the records and are encouraged to become involved in the child's learning by spending time in the setting whenever possible.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all staff are suitable to care for children with ongoing systems in place to identify and meet training needs. Effective deployment of staff, maintenance of the registers and combining of groups at times enables ratios to be maintained overall. The use of the premises, time and resources is generally good, although, some staff make better use of opportunities arising from routines, for example, to read a story whilst children are having their snack. All necessary paperwork and records are in place, with those about individual children shared appropriately with their parents, for example, to obtain signatures or update them. Policies and procedures which contribute to the effective management of the provision and welfare and learning of the children are maintained, subject

to periodic review and made available to all parents and staff. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of early education is good. Both the manager and deputy spend time working in the pre-school room and have regular meetings with the staff which enables them to keep a good overview of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. The manager undertakes the annual appraisals; with the deputy then arranging the ensuing training, trying to balance the needs of the provision with staff's areas of interest. The main yearly planning is done together, then the deputy keeps an overview of the weekly evaluation and planning meeting so that she is able to monitor the overall effectiveness of the early education as discussion takes place about what children have learnt. A strong commitment to improvement is demonstrated through the opportunities provided for training, the provision of a suitable environment and resources, ensuring that sufficient adults are available to work directly with the children and an ongoing desire to improve facilities.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to improve the outdoor area to make provision for an outdoor classroom and to involve more staff in the planning. There is now a planning system in place which involves all staff in the longer term and detailed weekly planning for each room within the nursery, linked closely with an evaluation of the previous weeks activities. The outdoor area is used daily, weather permitting, with a variety of activities and learning opportunities provided as an extension to the indoor environment for all age groups.

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

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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):

- ensure that children's snack time complies with hygiene standards, with specific reference to handwashing and the placing of cups.

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):

- extend planning to provide routine challenge for more able children and sufficient differentiation for the ability range attending.

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