

The Town Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133466
Inspection date	06 December 2007
Inspector	Angela Cole
Setting Address	24 London Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 5AX
Telephone number	01608 645646
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Registered person	The Town 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 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?

The Town Nursery is run privately by a partnership. It opened in 2001 and operates from the Old Convent next to the Catholic primary school near the town centre of Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. A maximum of 57 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00. The children have access to enclosed, outdoor play areas and a field.

There are currently 100 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 39 children receive funding for early education. Children come from within the town or from the surrounding area. The staff have experience of supporting and caring for children with learning difficulties and /or disabilities.

The nursery employs 21 members of staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The staff work on different sessions within the nursery with a maximum of 15 adults present at any one time. The nursery uses the Reggio Emilio educational approach.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies regularly benefit from fresh air as they go out in small groups in better weather. Older children have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise, for example, to control wheeled vehicles or dig the fruit and vegetable patches. They have space to run and splash in a huge puddle on their way to the field or wood where they kick balls and climb. Children gain neat skills with small tools, for example, to add paint colours to their drawings. They effectively develop self-care skills in dressing and toileting.

Children are cared for in warm, clean premises where they practise some aspects of personal care, including hygienic use of tissues. However, they are not encouraged to learn about hygiene through consistent routines for nappy changing, sleeping on clean bedding and washing their hands under running water, for example, before eating. Staff maintain clear documents to make sure children's medical needs are met. However, first-aid items are not regularly checked and staff do not ask parents to sign some accident records so children's health is compromised. Those who become ill are well cared for and the risk of catching infectious illnesses is reduced, as parents are aware of the importance of keeping sick children at home.

The children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. They choose between milk and water to have with their food so they do not become thirsty. The nursery takes close account of parents' wishes and children's choices to provide nutritious snacks and home-made meals appeal to children and meet their dietary needs. These include sugar-free cereals, daily portions of fresh fruit and vegetables and seasonal foods that children grow themselves.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play safely in the nursery as attentive staff supervise them. The older-style premises are suitably maintained, and kept at an appropriate temperature, to ensure children's safety and comfort. Children have sufficient space in open play rooms for each age group with flexible areas for sleeping and access to varied, outdoor spaces. The nursery is, generally, well-equipped with quality resources that are suitable for the children's ages and stages of play. Children's access to these varies from room to room as, for example, much low-level storage for younger nursery children is curtained off.

Staff record risk assessments and carry out informal, daily checks which identify most hazards to reduce risks for children. Parents hand over and collect their children in the base rooms so the children arrive and depart safely, although staff do not check each family as they are let into the building. Children are accommodated on two floors so they periodically practise fire drills to ensure that they can leave safely in the event of an emergency. The support for resting and sleeping children varies. Staff stay with older children, though do not record the times they go in to the babies to ensure the checks are sufficiently regular so they are safe.

Children begin to learn to keep themselves safe as young ones hear some explanations, for example, why they must not trip others, and older ones discuss safe and unsafe situations. They take some risks in controlled situations, such as walking along a plank with their arms out for balance. The children's welfare is supported by staff's increasing knowledge and

understanding of child protection issues. Staff know how to access information and support in the event of any concerns about the children's wellbeing.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are happy and have access to a range of experiences and activities, indoors and outdoors. The routine, that includes a lengthy breakfast period, satisfactorily allows for the children's care needs as well as periods for activity and rest. Children have opportunities to decide upon resources for themselves when in their base rooms or outside, though younger one's choices are limited and adults decide the length of play times. Staff caring for the under threes are suitably aware of how children generally develop and they record detailed observations illustrated with photographs and examples of work. They satisfactorily support young children to progress, focusing on random groups at a similar stage of development, for example, by reading familiar stories to those gaining early language skills. Children develop knowledge and skills through different experiences. For example, while listening to a number song, they learn how to behave socially, follow instructions and practise physical movements, such as rolling. They work together as a whole group while investigating materials and changes in cooking sessions. Children of all ages enjoy interacting with the attentive staff, for example, to stroke the rabbit and play inside material dens. In the baby room, this is particularly effective in developing babies' social skills as they respond to sounds and singing.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Adults have an effective understanding of how children learn, although some team members are not secure in their use of the Foundation Stage as links between assessment and planning are not clearly shown. Staff plan and attractively resource a range of group projects arising from some children's interests, including their 'collections'. The teaching engages children, helps them to become focused and allows them to decide to play outdoors during good weather. Children have a good choice of indoor resources during timetabled periods of free play, though independent learning is not maximised in some whole group activities and by changes in routine. Children are well extended by staff's high expectations and effectively-considered challenges in all areas of their learning.

Children make good progress towards each of the early learning goals. For example, they confidently interact with adults, each other and in groups. They learn challenging words, such as 'fragile' and 'blustery', and listen carefully to each other. They ask questions and begin to negotiate, for example, who will come into the imaginative area. Children suggest rhyming words and recognise sounds in their names. They effectively talk about pictures in books and recognise words for days on the calendar. They draw freely and neatly copy text to help create books, such as 'What makes you sad?'

Children make good progress in relation to their starting points, for example, in mathematical development. Staff continually challenge them to extend their learning so that, for example, they use large numbers in practical activities to say that cakes cost £50. They frequently count and recognise figures suspended on a number line. Mathematical words are used in daily activities, such as 'I need one more', and able children know if they take one object away from eight, then that leaves seven. Very good ideas of shape, space and measure are gained through play, for example, drawing triangles for a leaf and comparing heights of the children.

Children gain a good knowledge and understanding of the world. Children regularly talk about their families and begin to explore different countries through books and music. A good sense of time and place is gained through growing seeds, experiencing changes in the seasons and exploring the town. Children have absorbing opportunities to explore materials, such as raw and fired clay, and were delighted to investigate a specially adapted car when the police visit. They confidently choose their own materials to build and construct, for example, using sticks. Everyday and information technology are effectively used to support their learning, for example, to compose a letter and to print copies of their drawings.

Children's creativity is highly valued. They have good opportunities to explore colour shades and to respond to the stimulating environment with a wealth of media and materials, such as shells and mirrors. They make very good use of imagination in art, design and role-play; their ideas are highly supported by staff and used as a basis for further learning, for example, to create a 'riding stable'. Children increasingly respond through their senses to make imaginative, group collages and highly detailed drawings from real-life, including a pomegranate. They appreciate a wide range of classical music and enjoy learning new songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle well in the homely atmosphere supported by caring and interested adults. They are known as individuals and benefit from thoughtful planning of movement between rooms to support their personal needs. They gain good self-esteem, for example, as their art work is praised at group times. Children relate well to staff and others, learning to be aware of their needs and helping younger ones when in family groups. The nursery provides a range of resources, including books, posters and small figures, that positively represent children who attend as well as giving them experience of needs different from their own. They often become involved in the local community, for example, making decorations for the library and meeting people on their walks into town.

The nursery offers good support for children with additional needs in close liaison with their parents and other professionals. Adaptations and resources are skilfully developed to support all children, including use of signing and self registration with photographs. Children's behaviour is, overall, managed sensitively following clear procedures. Staff use consistent strategies, including praise, distraction, re-direction and, sometimes, a change of atmosphere, so children increasingly manage their own differences. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Families are warmly welcomed by room staff and children benefit from consistent support for their care, including arrangements for confidentiality and safe collection. Families receive helpful information about the nursery and Foundation Stage as children progress between rooms. There are good systems for sharing information about the children, including two-way diaries for babies, and meetings about the older ones' progress towards the early learning goals. Parents' comments about children's interests at home are noted and they are meaningfully involved in the learning, including providing materials to support projects, such as horse riding.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by teams of familiar adults that, mostly, include qualified and experienced staff. The hands-on managers support room supervisors to communicate constantly so that children feel settled and secure. There are sound procedures to appoint staff, though not to check their ongoing suitability. Appropriate ratios of staff and organisation of the premises means children receive personal support from key workers and access varied quantities of play equipment.

All legally required documents are in place with suitable regard to confidentiality, and most are satisfactorily maintained. The operational plan is clear to reflect the nursery's day-to-day practice, though attention to some procedures for children's health and safety differs across the nursery. A log for any complaint is available to include the necessary information. Daily registers accurately show children's hours of attendance and adults are usually asked to sign the visitor's book.

Leadership and management are good. Senior staff are committed to providing good quality nursery education. Adults are well supported to develop their teaching skills and personal confidence through clearly defined roles, close teamwork and good role modelling. The setting has good ability to focus on its strengths and areas for development, for example, in relation to organising support for children soon to work towards the early learning goals. The management informally monitors aspects of the nursery provision and promotes regular links with local schools so that good practice can be shared.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the setting improved aspects of safety, arrangements for children's privacy and access to drinks and the setting's documentation.

The nursery has reviewed safety precautions to protect children from hazards. The field has been re-fenced and staff ensure a low sink does not contain standing water. Visitors usually sign the visitor's book at some time during their stay. As a result, children's safety has satisfactorily improved. Children have regular, though not free, access to water or milk and they have privacy for their toileting needs in the designated areas. As a result, the provision for individual children's physical and emotional needs is sound.

The nursery now ensures that children's hours of attendance are clearly recorded, policies and records are dated, the child protection statement includes contact details, and the late collection policy indicates the procedure to follow if emergency contacts are unavailable. As a result, the nursery's organisation satisfactorily supports children's welfare.

The previous nursery education inspection required the setting to improve some aspects of the curriculum and planning. The nursery has extended the planning of specific areas of the curriculum to include more work on feelings, sharing and calculating. As a result, staff are suitably prepared for activities to be able to extend the children's learning.

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 the parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 that the first aid box and its contents comply with Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations and that all accident records are signed by parents
- make sure staff are informed of, and kept up to date with, hygiene procedures regarding nappy changing, bedding and handwashing
- assess the risks to children in relation to front door security and the regularity of checks on sleeping children and take action to minimise these
- ensure there are effective procedures in place for checking the ongoing suitability of staff to work with 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):

- enable all staff to link assessment in the Foundation Stage to the planning for children's learning and implement a system to monitor the effectiveness of the nursery education
- consider the routine, organisation of groups and free access to indoor and outdoor resources for children to become independent learners. (also applies to care)

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