

Seesaw Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	145823
Inspection date	28 March 2008
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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are 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?

Seesaw Nursery is one of three privately owned nurseries in Trowbridge. This nursery opened in 1988 and operates from a Victorian house. It serves the local urban community and its surrounding areas. The nursery uses the basement, ground and first floors with access to rear and front gardens for children's play. Children are cared for in small groups; pre-school, toddlers and after-school children each have their own play areas with some play-time together when numbers are low. There is easy access to toilets on each level of the setting.

The nursery is registered to care for 36 children from one year to under eight years. There are 91 children on roll of whom 37 are in receipt of government funding for three and four-year-olds. The setting supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities, and children who speak English as a second language.

The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year. It is closed on Bank Holidays. The nursery does not provide overnight care.

The owner employs a qualified manager and 11 staff, all of whom are suitably qualified for their roles and responsibilities at the setting. All staff are encouraged to attend training to

continue to update their knowledge and skills. Additional childcare students from the local college and a volunteer may be present with the children.

The nursery receives support from the local authority advisors.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

From an early age children are developing an understanding of maintaining their personal hygiene. The younger children are supervised with hand washing and staff help to ensure that hands are washed properly. Hands are washed under running water and soap is used, a step is provided for all children to help them reach the taps. The children in the pre-school room independently use the toilet facilities and wash their hands afterwards. Most of the children aged over two years know that they must flush and wash hands after using the toilet and that hands should be washed before eating food. Staff set good examples for maintaining hygiene in their behaviour. They ensure suitable nappy changing procedures are followed, wearing gloves and aprons, and they ensure that the changing mat is cleaned between each nappy change. They help to prevent the spread of infection through carrying out effective cleaning routines within the setting, such as using different coloured cloths for different cleaning duties and ensuring tables are cleaned before and after meals and snacks.

Children's individual dietary needs are known to staff and managed effectively. The balanced menu and home cooked meals help the children to benefit from a healthy lifestyle. Hot meals are provided for children at mid-day and snacks are provided each morning and afternoon. Parents have the option of providing a packed lunch for their children if they prefer. The snacks provided each morning and afternoon usually have a fruit option or possibly raw carrots or other vegetables. The children have bread and butter which they spread for themselves. However, children are not provided with plates, and they place their food straight onto the table, particularly when spreading their bread, which is not encouraging good practice with regards to serving and eating food. Children have a choice of water or milk to drink with their snacks and they are able to access additional drinks of water for themselves throughout the day.

Children have plenty of opportunities each day to run around and enjoy the freedom of the garden and benefit from the fresh air. Children access the garden on a daily basis both morning and afternoon. They use the outdoor equipment and pedal bikes and use ride on toys. These opportunities help to improve large muscle skills and coordination for all children. All documentation and records are kept up to date regarding children's health, medical and dietary needs, to ensure they are cared for according to their individual needs. Staff have a general knowledge of first aid, and most staff have been suitably trained. Most staff have a current first aid certificate and the setting has designated persons responsible for first aid. This helps to ensure that children's medical needs can be dealt with effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a safe and secure setting. A welcoming environment is provided for children and parents. Both the indoor and outdoor play space is organised effectively, creating a child friendly environment which enables the children to experience a good range of play opportunities within the constraints of the building. Children are grouped according to

age and have their own rooms which they are able to use. These rooms are suitably divided into different areas of play which the children access as part of the daily routine and rota. The children mostly have sufficient space to move about and enjoy the activities safely.

There is suitable furniture and equipment available to meet the care needs of the children attending that is appropriate for their age and stage of development. Children enjoy using the toys available to them, which are mostly clean, safe and suitable to use. Most toys and resources are kept in good condition and meet safety standards, but some of the outside toys are less attractive as they have suffered from the effects of the elements of the weather and have become faded. They are checked regularly though to ensure safety and suitability is maintained.

Deployment of staff within the setting is good and appropriate adult to child ratios are maintained. This ensures that the children receive sufficient support during activities and their safety and well-being is protected. Risk assessments are carried out and recorded to ensure all areas are safe for children. Staff make visual checks of the areas used by the children to ensure the environment is free from hazards. Safety features are in place like using safety sockets in electrical plugs not being used and using safety gates to deny access to stairways and other areas like the kitchen. Children are aware of safety when inside, knowing that they must help to tidy away the toys when they have finished using them and staff remind children to sit on chairs sensibly or they may slip and hurt themselves. This helps children to develop an understanding that they can take responsibility for aspects of their own safety and welfare. The after school children are reminded about road safety as they are escorted to the setting from their different schools. Emergency evacuations are practised with the children. However, written records show that these are not sufficient to ensure all staff and children are involved. This, therefore, compromises the safety of children and adults in the event of a real emergency. The fire log gives details of each evacuation that takes place, and identifies areas of weakness that need developing.

Children are protected by staff who have a suitable understanding in their role of protecting children. All staff have read and are aware of the setting's child protection policy and procedures. Some staff have attended training to update their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children's welfare. The manager of the setting has a clear understanding of her role in the protection of children, making sure the children's welfare is always a priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Good relationships have been developed between staff and children in all areas of the nursery. In the 'Tiny Tots' room the Birth to three matters framework is being implemented, which is having a positive impact on the learning and development of the children attending. Staff record children's progress in relation to the Birth to three matters guidance. There is a calm, relaxed and happy atmosphere within the 'Tiny Tots' room. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the development and care needs of the children in order to help them enjoy and achieve. A good range of development activities and resources are available to the children, which encourage learning and development in all areas. These are planned to be fun for the children and take into account the children's likes and interests. The children are offered a balance of free play and adult led activities. The children have developed good relationships with adults and peers; they interact well and play alongside each other, and they are beginning to share and take turns. Their personal independence is being developed as the children make choices about their play and learning. They enjoy playing with the play dough, sharing the rolling pins and cutters. They play with the soft play and bounce on the mini trampoline. They

enjoy books and look at books together, making the different noises of the animals in the pictures. They also enjoy singing and matching movements during the 'sticky kids' music activity. The children enjoy the opportunities provided for outdoor play where they use the equipment available to them. Children are making good progress as staff encourage them to learn and develop as they play.

Children in the after school club are offered a variety of activities and opportunities that allow them to relax and unwind after their school day. The children have ownership of their room base as they have worked together to organise the room to their own design. They have contributed to the wall displays and choose the activities they would like to do each day, such as cooking and craft activities. The younger children have created and written their own stories which they have illustrated and displayed for all to see. The children play games together, like board games and Twister, and they frequently request to go outside to play 'Tag' or '40-40'. Good relationships are being developed between children and staff and the children play well together. The children attending the after school facility are respectful of the younger children attending the nursery.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff in the pre-school demonstrate an understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They are suitably involved in the activities provided and question children effectively, they encourage the children to think for themselves. They ask question like 'what do you think?' 'how can we?' and 'can you remember?' Children are offered a range of activities that cover the six areas of learning which are planned around children's likes and interests. Staff loosely plan a range of activities that are adapted by key-workers as they are delivered, to suit children's needs and requirements. Staff follow the lead of the children. Activities are evaluated by the key-worker and this information is used to inform children's progress books. However, there are no systems to record which children have actually taken part in the activity. Often activities are not fully evaluated to identify if the learning intention has been met. Children attending the pre-school room are very capable and confident, and are developing well, but their development records do not give a clear picture of this. There is no clear evidence as to why some stepping stones have been highlighted as being reached. Staff do make observations of the children's progress but it is not always clear which stepping stones these relate to.

Children play well together, in small groups, and early friendships are being formed. Their personal independence is being nurtured as they follow the daily routines. They self register with their named frog as they arrive in the pre-school room. They take responsibility for their personal care as they independently use the toilet facilities. Most children are able to put on their coats and boots as they get ready for outdoor play.

Children experience a print enriched environment which they contribute to as they are encouraged to write over the labels for their displays. They enjoy books and most children sit and listen well at story time. They use the pictures to predict the story of 'The Gingerbread Man', and join in with familiar phrases. Children converse well with adults and peers, they ask adults to help with the fastenings on their coats and ask their peers if they would like to join in their game of football. They have plenty of opportunities to recognise their written name, such as at snack time where they find their place identified by their name card, and when they self register on arrival in the room.

Children show an interest in numbers and counting, and they regularly count in daily routines, like how many children are going out to play. They measure themselves and compare who is the tallest and who is the shortest and talk about long and short. They talk about containers being full or empty during the water play.

Children are developing their computer skills as they access the pre-school computer. They confidently follow the nursery routine of the day, knowing what happens next, showing a sense of time. The children have planted some flower seeds and have watched them grow. They can name different parts of a plant and know that plants need water to live. They have looked at different animals and many animals have visited the setting such as snakes and chickens.

Children have access to a variety of creative activities. They use their imagination well during role-play and games. They make cars with the construction materials and pretend to be mechanics fixing them. Children's artwork is on display which gives the children a sense of pride in their work and creations. They have free access to the craft table where they use different materials to create their own pictures and collages.

The children have regular exercise and play outside in the fresh air daily and this helps to keep them fit. There is a well equipped outdoor garden play area which is well used. They confidently use the ride on toys, pedalling and pushing, negotiating their way around the garden. They show good control and coordination of their movements and a growing awareness of space. They move around the setting with confidence, and they successfully negotiate space. Their fine motor skills are being developed as they use a variety of tools and equipment with increasing control and dexterity. They use pens and pencils confidently to draw around their peers who are led on the floor. The children use paints and brushes to create their own pictures.

Overall the children are making good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals and are confident and settled within the nursery. They receive good support and care from staff who liaise closely with parents and carers to ensure children's individual needs are met. There are good systems in place to support children who have any learning difficulties or disabilities, as staff have a sound understanding of issues. They ensure that appropriate action is taken within the nursery to ensure children are fully included in the activities at their own level. Throughout the nursery, the effective key-worker system helps to ensure good relationships are developed between children and staff. Children play well together, in small groups and encourage others to join in. In all areas of the setting the children are beginning to share and take turns.

The children are aware of the realistic boundaries and expectations for behaviour that have been set, and they are mostly well behaved. Most of the children respond well to staff direction. Staff are consistent in their approach and use age appropriate strategies to manage behaviour. Staff use lots of praise and encouragement and are positive role models for the children. The children demonstrate good manners and are polite, saying 'please' and 'thank you' when appropriate, like at snack time when this is actively encouraged by staff. Children receive verbal praise from staff, who encourage the children saying 'well done' to acknowledge acceptable behaviour. In the pre-school room the staff use a 'kindness tree' where children's achievements and acts of kindness are written on paper leaves and fixed to the tree for all to celebrate.

Children attending the after school facility have devised their own 'rules' which are realistic to their own expectations for behaviour.

Through planned activities the children are offered opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the natural world around them. They freely explore and investigate nature and the outdoor environment. They make good use of the garden areas within the setting, creating their own vegetable garden. The children are growing vegetables like carrots which they will eat while at the nursery. They celebrate a variety of festivals and have access to resources which help to promote positive attitudes to diversity. A varied range of resources and activities is provided, that reflects positive images of diversity. This contributes to the children developing an accepting attitude towards others in society. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff are available to talk with parents each day which helps to contribute to the consistency in the children's care and well-being. There is an effective key-worker system in place and parents are able to talk with their child's key-worker if they have any concerns about their children's care. Parents are able to access their children's details and progress folders at any time. The progress folders in the pre-school room though do not give a clear picture of children's progress and achievements through the stepping stones in the Foundation Stage. Parents spoken to are happy with the care their children receive at the nursery. They feel staff are very approachable and meet the needs of children and parents. In all areas of the nursery children's activities are displayed for parents to see what their children will be doing. Activities and achievements are shared with parents at the end of each session when the children go home. Information is also available to parents through newsletters, notice boards, and the group prospectus. Parents receive good quality information about the provision and the activities so they understand what their children will be doing.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The care offered is supported by efficient organisation. The leadership and management of the setting are good. The manager oversees the general running and organisation of the nursery, and she is supported by a team of staff and the nursery owner. The daily sessions are organised by the manager and nursery staff. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced for their roles and responsibilities within the setting. Most staff have a good understanding of child development. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work effectively together as a team. They are enthusiastic in their roles and committed to working with the children and all contribute their thoughts and ideas when planning activities. The children benefit from an organised environment, which enables them to play and explore freely. They experience a variety of different play opportunities which support their development and learning. The key-worker system which is in place helps to ensure consistency of children's care. The staff are suitably deployed within the setting to ensure adult to child ratios are maintained.

The required documentation relating to the children's education, care, health and safety is in place to ensure that they are cared for appropriately and the outcomes for children are promoted. Documentation is suitably stored to ensure confidentiality. Most documentation is suitably maintained, although the written policies available for the after school club have not been updated alongside the policies for the whole nursery. The nursery has systems in place to monitor and evaluate their provision of care and education for children. Staff appraisals take place and training needs are identified. The owner, manager and staff work well together to

provide a safe and welcoming environment for the children where they can enjoy their day or their time after school.

Overall the nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the combined inspection of November 2004 there were two recommendations made from the care inspection, and a point for consideration from the Nursery Education inspection. The care recommendations were to: ensure the number of adults including students working with the children remains appropriate for their age and stage of development, and widen the choice of activities set out for all children as they arrive and throughout the session; and ensure outdoor toys are clean and attractive. The provision has reviewed the deployment of staff and volunteers to ensure that the numbers of adults supervising the children are appropriate, yet still meet required ratios set out in the National Standards. Children now have free choice of activities as they arrive in the mornings and at 'free time' and 'choosy time'. Children have free access to the resources in each room and staff help to accommodate their wishes with regards to the activities they wish to do, and they involve themselves appropriately in such activities. Some of the outdoor toys, however, still appear to be grubby and faded due to being stored outside in the elements of the weather.

The point for consideration from the nursery education inspection was to review how to help children consider the whole range of activities available to ensure there is a balance across the early learning goals during the week. This has been addressed as above with children having free access to resources at 'free time' and 'choosy time'. The written activity plans show that the children are offered a range of activities that cover the six areas of learning within the Foundation Stage.

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

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 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):

- review the snack time procedures to ensure children are offered sufficient utensils to meet their health care needs
- ensure sufficient practises take place of the emergency evacuation procedure.

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):

- develop children's progress folders to ensure recorded entries and observations clearly link to the stepping stones of the six areas of learning; use these records as an aid to inform planning to ensure all children are suitably challenged
- continue to develop the evaluation of planned activities to identify children's participation and to determine if children have been suitably challenged and learning intentions met.

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