

# Tops Day Nurseries

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 156231   |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 22 November 2007                                   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Pamela Woodhouse                                   |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Tops House, Leigh Road, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 2BX |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Tops Day Nurseries Ltd                             |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated   |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Tops Day Nursery opened in 2001 and is one of a local chain of nurseries. It operates from two floors of converted premises approximately one mile from the centre of Wimborne. A maximum of 98 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 07:30 until 18:00 all year round except for Bank Holidays.

There are currently 146 children on roll. Of these, 29 receive funding for early education. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas of Hampshire, Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset. The nursery supports children who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery employs 26 members of staff. Of these, 21 hold appropriate qualifications and eight are working towards a qualification. In addition, 10 staff are working towards a higher qualification. The nursery receives support from Dorset Sure Start.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's good health is actively promoted through a range of measures which help to protect them from the spread of infection, for example, hygiene practices such as providing children with individual bed linen and the preparation of their food is thorough. Children begin to learn from an early age the importance of personal hygiene in their regular routines and through activities such as cooking. The pre-school and school-age children take great delight in talking about germs and the effects these can have. They are also encouraged to incorporate hygiene in their role-play, for example, pretending to wash their hands after changing their doll's nappy in the home corner. As a result, they understand the reasons for these routines rather than practising them by rote.

The clear and comprehensive procedures for managing children's health needs ensures that they receive appropriate medical care in the case of accident, illness and medical emergencies, for example, staff regularly liaise with parents to administer to their children's health needs and to keep them informed about any action taken. They undertake regular first aid training which keeps their knowledge up-to-date and enables them to apply basic first aid to the children.

Children's healthy lifestyles are promoted through the provision of a varied and nutritious diet and regular access to fresh air and exercise. They receive up to three meals per day depending on their requirements and in addition, a morning and afternoon snack. Meals are varied and nutritious, however, older children are not always encouraged to choose a healthy snack option. The extensive range of physical play equipment, daily opportunities to play outside in the garden and indoor soft play room ensure that babies and children keep fit through regular exercise. The outdoor classroom provides shelter in inclement weather and good use is made of the local environment to give children the opportunity for walks and to explore the adjacent conservation area.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given high priority, they are supervised well and the routine procedures practised by staff reduces their risk of accidental injury. There is a comprehensive risk assessment system in place which includes a daily check of the premises and equipment. These are in addition to the regular full risk assessments and help to ensure that the children's environment remains safe for them to use. These safety routines are monitored by a designated health and safety officer who also makes sure that staff are informed of their responsibilities and current legislation.

The premises are secure and safety equipment is used where appropriate to protect children from potential hazards; for example, stairgates are in place at the top and bottom of the stairs and radiators are protected with padded covers. Children have regular opportunities to practise an emergency evacuation of the premises so that they are familiar with the procedure should a real emergency arise. They are kept safe on outings and when being taken to or collected from school. High adult: child ratios are maintained and fluorescent jackets are worn by both children and staff so that they are clearly visible. School age children are collected from directly within the school grounds and transported in the nursery mini bus for which the drivers receive appropriate training.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and receive training to ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge and information. Clear procedures are in place and the designated child protection officer makes sure that these are followed in the event that there are concerns about any of the children who attend the nursery.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery, having established a good relationship with their peers and the adults who care for them. Babies are happy, settled and reassured by the familiarity of their routines which closely follow their home routines. They are able to move around freely to explore their environment, where they crawl and climb on the soft play resources and pull themselves up on the furniture to aid their first steps. Babies receive plenty of reassurance from staff who maintain good communication with them, often on a one-to-one basis. Children in the purple and yellow play rooms are developing confidence and learning to be part of a small group which encourages them to socialise with their peers. They receive individual attention where appropriate to support them in their play and have many play opportunities to encourage them to explore and investigate, for example, splashing in the water tray and digging in the sand. Children take great delight in exploring different textures as they run their hands through the cooked spaghetti and make collages with materials such as cotton wool and feathers. Their language development is promoted well during story and singing time but not always extended during activities.

Children in the blue room and mini beasts out of school club are confident and independent. They have formed very good friendships with their peers and with the staff who care for them. Children benefit from a wide range of activities many of which they do outside in their outdoor classroom and during their regular nature walks in the adjacent conservation area. They speak excitedly about the pond skaters they have seen as well as birds and their nests, trying to identify the different species they have observed. Children enjoy role play and playing games such as UNO with their peers and staff and have ready access to a range of creative play materials and resources.

The younger children's learning and development is promoted through activities which are planned around the Birth to three matters framework and regular observations of their progress are undertaken. However, there is little flexibility in the structured activities and children can only do these when it is their turn. This means that they only have the opportunity to participate when it is their given turn and are not always interested because the activity is not of their choosing. The resulting assessment is not taken into account to support staff in planning for their next steps. As a result, children are not always offered challenges which support their development.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan a balanced range of activities for the children which promotes their development in all areas of learning. However, structured activities are time led and targeted towards individuals, this inhibits children from being able to access the activity spontaneously and does not always engage their interest. Staff work closely with parents to determine the children's stage of development on admission and undertake regular observations and assessments to monitor their progress. However, this information is not used to effectively

plan for their individual learning. As a result, children are not always offered appropriate challenges which are commensurate with their current stage of development.

Children have developed a secure relationship and friendly rapport with their peers and staff. They demonstrate good levels of independence and are beginning to take responsibility for themselves by carrying out simple tasks such as clearing away and washing up their breakfast plates. They generally behave well and know their boundaries, for example, that they must walk when using the stairs and be courteous to others. Children are confident speakers, contributing to group discussions such as trying to identify animals by the sounds they make and helping to tell the story. Children have a good repertoire of songs which they sing with great enthusiasm as they prepare for their Christmas concert. They listen to what their peers have to say and initiate their own conversations particularly in the role play where they assume roles which are familiar to them. The varied range of resources to promote children's early writing skills are always available to them, however, they are not routinely encouraged to practise, for example, by naming their own drawings.

Children use a range of resources to promote their understanding of simple mathematical concepts. They take part in structured activities which promote number recognition and to compare groups of objects, using simple calculation such as adding one more and taking one away. Children competently count the number of children present, matching this to the number of plates and cups required at meal times and recognise objects by shape and size; for example, using mathematical language to describe how big, small, heavy and light objects are. However, number is not used incidentally in play situations to consolidate children's understanding. Children use a range of resources to familiarise themselves with simple technology. They regularly have use of the computer and enjoy working in small groups with a member of staff to operate simple programmes, controlling the mouse very well. They play with a range of resources in the role play area such as cash registers, telephones and pretend kitchen aids, operating these by, for example, pressing buttons and levers to make them work. Children have regular opportunities to understand the world around them. They receive visits from members of the local community such as the emergency services to demonstrate their work and to discuss with children how they can keep themselves safe. They also learn about the natural habitat around them. This includes growing their own seeds and plants in the garden and visiting the adjacent conservation area each day to watch and discuss the wildlife. Children are developing an awareness of others who are less fortunate than themselves by taking part in charity events such as the local Christmas Parade and Children in Need.

Children's physical development is actively promoted through a wide range of indoor and outdoor resources and activities. They have opportunities to climb, slide, tunnel and balance on the large equipment and to throw and catch with small scale equipment such as hoops and balls. In addition, they enjoy moving to music and participating in action songs. However, children are not always encouraged to play constructively indoors with, for example, the tunnels. As a result they become over exuberant, bumping into each other and the furniture. Children use a range of small tools such as scissors, brushes, knives and cutters which help to promote their hand-eye coordination. Their creativity is promoted through a range of planned and free choice activities such as collage, gluing and using malleable materials. They experiment with different paint techniques, using for instance, brushes, their hands and sponges to create different effects and explore textures. Children play imaginatively in the well-equipped role-play area, acting out roles which are familiar to them. They initiate their own games and decide between them the direction of the play, for example, putting baby to bed and making the dinner.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are treated with respect and their individual needs are valued by the management and staff team who take care to liaise with parents to ensure that any relevant information is shared. This enables them to put suitable support systems in place. There is a gradual introduction to the next group when children are developmentally ready to move up. This ensures that they are able to cope with their new surroundings and routines and as a result, children are made to feel safe and secure. Suitable arrangements are made to support children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and individual assistance is available for those who may require this. All aspects of their care and development are agreed with their parents who are invited to contribute to their children's individual learning plans. As a result, all children are made to feel welcome and are fully integrated, participating in all of the activities and routines of their particular nursery unit.

Children are settled in their environment and behave very well. The babies and younger children are secure in their small family groups and interact well with the staff, confidently approaching them for support and reassurance. The pre-school and school age children have a good rapport with their peers and the staff who care for them. They are confident, have good self-esteem and show high levels of independence which is actively encouraged by staff. Children's awareness of the wider world is promoted through a range of topics which celebrate a variety of traditions and cultures such as Diwali and Christmas. They play with resources which promote positive images of culture and disability and begin to learn about diversity through discussion and activities such as role play.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the regular liaison staff have with their parents. Their key worker takes responsibility for ensuring that they are making good progress and to be a personal contact point for parents to discuss all aspects of their children's care. In addition, parents of babies and the younger children receive a daily record of their children's routines and activities. Parents receive a comprehensive range of information about the nursery and the organisation as a whole as well as information about their child's particular unit. This keeps them up-to-date about current and future plans as well activities their children will be participating in. Parents views are valued, they can make these known directly or through the parent representatives. They are invited to make comment about the nursery and how the provision can be improved, for example, parents have recently been asked for their views about the children's menus. This has led to arrangements being made to add more variety.

Partnership with parents of children receiving nursery education is good. They are invited to be part of their children's learning through activities which they can share at home; for example, by continuing the current topic and have regular discussions with staff about their children's progress through the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents share what they know about their children prior to them starting their educational provision which enables staff to establish their stage of development. However, this information is not used to plan for their learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which has been arranged to offer separate accommodation for children of different ages. This ensures that they have suitable space and equipment according to their stage of development. Space is generally used well, however, the dining/creative area in the yellow group is not used effectively and the school age children do not have enough space in their dedicated play room. As a result, children's movement is restricted in these areas.

Children receive suitable care and attention because staff are deployed effectively and work well together as a team in their respective units. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and make sure that activities are prepared and suitably resourced in readiness for the children arriving. However, the organisation of the structured activities and the system for monitoring and evaluating the play provision is not used effectively. As a result, these do not always provide appropriate challenges for the children.

Children's safety and well-being is assured because there are robust procedures in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. All staff undergo a period of induction and probation as well as regular personal development meetings and appraisals to monitor their continuing suitability to their role. Their training needs are monitored by the in-house training coordinator who ensures that they receive training which is appropriate to their needs. This includes basic training such as child protection and first aid, as well as having the opportunity to increase the level of their qualifications. As a result, children are cared for by a well qualified staff team.

All required records are maintained and obtain appropriate consents and agreements from parents. These are stored securely to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The sessions are planned and prepared in readiness for children arriving and staff share responsibilities to ensure that these run smoothly. There is regular communication between the management team and the staff who work together to promote children's progress through the Foundation Stage curriculum. Systems in place to ensure that staff are covering all areas of the curriculum and to evaluate the nursery education provision. However, these are not used to usefully monitor the effectiveness of children's progress.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last childcare inspection the provider agreed to: develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice; revisit medication procedures and policy to ensure that parents are contacted prior to the administration of any non-prescription medication and that the administration of all medication is accurately recorded.

These issues have been addressed by: ensuring that the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has regular training to update her knowledge and she in turn cascades this information to her colleagues. As a result, support systems for the children are effectively implemented; parents give prior permission for the administration of medication and are also contacted prior to any non-prescription medication being given to their children; administration of medication is clearly recorded and the record shared with children's parents when they collect their child. This means that parents are kept informed at every stage.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to: develop the monitoring of activities to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are given equal emphasis; that children are able to select freely from a wide range of activities daily.

The provider has addressed these issues by: planning activities according to each stepping stone, to ensure that all areas of learning are given equal emphasis. This means that children receive a balanced curriculum; the play room has been reorganised to enable children to freely select their toys and activities from low shelving. As a result children's independence and confidence is well developed.

### **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 satisfactory.

### **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):

- consider the organisation of structured activities to ensure that children are appropriately challenged and their interest maintained (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that space is used effectively particularly in the yellow and mini beasts play rooms to enable children to access their activities more ably

#### **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):

- continue to develop the observation and assessment system to plan for the next steps in children's progress and learning (also applies to care)
- ensure that the system for monitoring and evaluating the nursery education provision is used effectively

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)