

The Slade Early Years Centre and Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY276613
Inspection date	05 February 2008
Inspector	Jenny Read
Setting Address	Titup Hall Drive, Headington, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX3 8QQ
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Registered person	The Slade Nursery School
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 Slade Day Nursery opened in 2004 and operates from The Slade Early Years Centre within the grounds of Wood Farm Primary School in Headington. The day nursery serves the local and surrounding areas and provides full day care as well as wrap-around care, for children attending the adjoining nursery school. The large open-plan play space includes partitions to create three play areas, all of which have integrated bathroom facilities. One area is used specifically for the youngest children and includes a sleep room, kitchen area and nappy changing room. There is an enclosed outside area with fixed climbing apparatus, sand pit, amphitheatre, impact absorbent track and wild area.

A maximum of 45 children from three months to eight years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 72 children on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The day nursery is open each week day from 08.00 until 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The day nursery employs 16 staff to work with the children. Of these, nine staff hold early years qualifications up to level 2 or 3. The manager holds the Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Early Childhood Studies and is currently working towards the Early Years Professional Status qualification. Eight staff are currently working towards a qualification up to degree level. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn to take care of their personal care needs because they know hand washing routines. They use liquid soap before meal times, after using the toilet and following messy play activities. However, staff are not consistent in washing their hands during daily routines to set a good example. Occasional discussion and healthy lifestyle topics are helping increase children's awareness of simple good health and hygiene practices. As a result, children explain clearly how germs will make them poorly. Staff introduce the younger children to appropriate hygiene routines, encouraging them to wash their hands following potty training. Staff maintain cleanliness of the setting, thoroughly cleaning tables before and after meal times and use cleaning checklists to monitor the bathrooms and toys intermittently.

Children benefit from ample quantities of wholesome and well-balanced, home-cooked meals that cater for their individual dietary requirements successfully. The nutritious menu plan is devised in conjunction with a nutritionist and the management teams from the setting and The Roundabout Centre, where the food is prepared and cooked. Children take it in turns to help set the tables with the children's names, counting cups and plates and setting out cutlery. All the children sit together in one area with their key person, sharing news and talking about what they have been doing. Although on some occasions this becomes quite loud, it creates a positive social experience for the children and helps increase their enjoyment of food. Children are adequately hydrated as a jug and cups are available at the low-level sink, although this is not actively promoted by staff throughout the day and systems for the younger children to access a drink during free play are yet to be devised.

Children receive appropriate care if they are ill or have an accident because staff follow appropriate procedures. A child is quickly comforted and a cold compress applied when they fall over in the garden. The child's key person is notified and an accident form completed. However, a number of accident records have not been signed by parents and not all medication records contain accurate information about medicines being administered. In addition, not all have been signed by parents at the end of the day to ensure they are well informed and are able to provide appropriate care and treatment for their child.

All children rest and relax according to their needs and parents' wishes. Staff liaise very closely with parents and display detailed information about individual babies routines for feeding, sleeping and nappy changing. Each child has an individual cot or sleep mat with separate bedding to minimise the spread of infection and cross contamination. Babies have ample space to crawl around, practise their balancing and walking around furniture. They enjoy daily opportunities for fresh air, going for walks in the pram around the garden or local community and playing on blankets in a secluded part of the garden with appropriate toys during the warmer weather.

Older children's fitness and physical development are actively encouraged through daily access to robust play in the stimulating and vibrant garden. Children run freely up and down the mound and practise using a wide range of resources that increase their large muscle skills, control and co-ordination. They learn to balance on stilts, negotiate obstacles when pedalling confidently around the garden, use spades and tools to dig in the earth and develop confidence when climbing and sliding on the wooden apparatus.

The inviting outdoor area is used successfully by staff to plan interesting activities that are an extension of the learning available inside. For example, they use tools to plant sun flowers, sweet peas and plant flowers in hanging wellington boots around the amphitheatre. They explore bugs under the logs in the 'wild area' and take walks locally to listen for different sounds. The pre-school children use the homely play house for circle time, wrapping themselves in blankets and sleeping bags to read and act out favourite stories. They take part in sports day events with the school and use the parachute with staff at the play park. Some older and more able children express clearly how regular exercise and fresh air helps to keep them healthy and their bones strong.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety and security is given high priority by daily rigorous safety checks of the garden and inside play areas. This ensures hazards to children are effectively minimised. However, children are not involved in helping to contribute to the risk assessments to heighten their awareness of potential dangers. Buzzer alarms and key pad entry systems notify staff of persons wishing to gain entry and ensures they are well supervised. Effective monitoring and recording of children's, staff's and visitors attendance, safeguards the children and ensures accurate data is in place of all persons present in the day nursery at any one time. For example, parents and staff record children's times of arrival and departure individually as they enter the building.

Staff are vigilant and supervise the children closely both indoors and out. Close supervision ensures staff respond swiftly to their aid, for example, when the babies are learning to roll over, sit up and walk along the furniture. Staff regularly remind children to be careful, such as in the sand but do not consistently provide an explanation to help them learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, why they should not throw sand. Clearly displayed fire procedures throughout the rooms, the use of emergency cots, an emergency bag and staff's sound knowledge, ensures children are well protected in an emergency. However, termly practice of the emergency escape plan is regulated by the Headmaster of the school, meaning these only take place during core school hours and terms. Consequently, children attending the all year round wrap-around care do not learn how to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

The premises are bright, colourful and the open-plan play areas are spacious and inviting for the children. Children move freely between the different areas and benefit from free-flowing indoor and outdoor play. Great emphasis is given to making sure the environment is welcoming for the children to aid their development. For example, open storage shelves and units allow children of all ages to access toys and play materials for themselves. Children's pictures and creations are beautifully displayed around the play areas and what they are doing is highly valued and respected by the staff. Children observe and talk about the photographs on the displays and descriptions of what they have been doing and learning inform their parents. The areas are expertly set out into defined spaces. These include, a graphics area, role play area, reading area, block play area and a large area for babies to explore safely and calmly and play with specific baby toys and resources.

Children are generally well protected from abuse and neglect because staff demonstrate adequate understanding of child protection issues. Staff have completed up-to-date child protection training and many show acceptable awareness of the signs and indicators of abuse and the line management process to follow with any concerns. The child protection policy is clear and well laid out.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very confident and readily express their ideas and thoughts because they know their key person is flexible and spontaneous with the planning to ensure it meets their interests and individual needs. For example, some children show an interest in numerals. Their key person plans group time to encourage recognition and naming of numerals to 10. She evaluates well to recognise children's interest in sequencing the numerals when tidying them away with clear plans to introduce this element at a later time to extend the children's interest in numbers. Staff implement spontaneous activity sheets that include ideas from parents, extend children's experiences from the weekend and reflect on changes in the environment.

All the children benefit from the open-plan areas that enable them to confidently choose where they wish to play. They experience a broad range of activities that foster their curiosity and enable them to explore their senses. For example, the babies and younger children investigate how their body feels as they sit in cornflour and water, paint and pasta. They build confidence to try new things as they join in activities alongside their older peers and siblings, for instance, splashing in the water, sharing stories together and filling and emptying containers in the sand. The children have a wonderful time, squealing with delight, shaking their arms and clapping their hands in excitement as they watch and chase the bubbles around the room.

Children benefit from the family groups and close relationships with their key person. Staff know their children very well and ensure they are present during most key routines to support and nurture their emotional needs. Strong focus is given to actively promoting children's decision making skills, independence and experiences. Twice weekly heuristic play sessions enables the children to investigate using an abundant range of media and materials. For example, they experiment making sounds as they push the empty milk tins on the floor, observe the feathers as they fly through the air and post the dolly pegs and corks into the boxes.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. The children are making good progress because staff have high expectations of the children and sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result, they plan successfully to help children become independent learners and build on what they already know and can do. Planning is innovative, creative and successfully links to the children's interests and next steps, providing purposeful challenge and support in their learning. Pre-school staff successfully plan key group time to focus on individual learning, although the period following lunch lacks purpose and planning. Staff record children's ideas on the planning circle enabling them to contribute readily to the planning of activities. The foundation stage nursery nurse liaises closely with the children's key workers to promote the successful integration of care and education. Daily sharing of news about children's progress and their next steps and discussions about their individual termly review reports, ensures each child's key person is well informed to provide appropriate support.

Children are gaining confidence at speaking in front of a group as they choose to sing familiar songs and share information about their families and their friends. They are motivated and have fun as they act out familiar stories using props in the outdoor play house and enthusiastically make marks to represent their name on their pictures. The children draw pictures relevant to their favourite stories and respond to staff's effective questioning to encourage and extend their thinking. Children readily access their name cards from the alphabet board and have several opportunities to recognise their name in print, such as their coat pegs and name cards at lunch times. They practise their emergent writing in various role-play scenarios, making appointments, shopping lists and pretending to take the register, exclaiming 'I am being the teacher'. The children eagerly draw pictures and show pride as they write recognisable letters or numbers and ask to display them on the mark making board.

Children develop their awareness of pattern and space as they complete various jigsaws, follow patterns when threading cotton reels and match compare bears to colour and size. They enjoy many daily opportunities to count. For example, they compare how many boys and girls are present each day and respond well to staff's good questioning, such as 'how many children have milk and how many have water?' The children competently recognise and write numerals. They find the number card relevant to the number of children present each day and regularly use number lines to practise writing numerals beyond 10. Practical activities, for example, counting how many objects they can fit into a match box, help them begin to count beyond 10 and use basic mathematical language such as, most, least and more than.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities to be autonomous in their play, observing and showing interest in their environment. The displays, plans, staff and the children excitedly recall how they re-created the building site opposite the nursery using recyclable boxes from home and wooden building blocks. They designed and built their crane, digger and new house, selecting the tools and techniques they needed to construct and assemble the materials. Excellent support and questioning from staff, enabled the children to think carefully about their design and work out ways to adapt the crane to make it move up and down. The children learn about the process of change as they plant and tend sun flowers, sweet peas and grasses in the garden and explore the wild garden for insects and bugs. However, children have no access to a computer or programmable toys to increase their interest in everyday technology and further develop their skills and learning.

Children express and communicate their ideas and feelings through different types of music, including jazz, dance, classical and ballet. They excitedly choose dressing-up clothes, imitate ballet moves and imaginatively dance around the room, exclaiming happily 'its great dancing', 'I do this at my dance class'. They make instruments and think of words that describe the different sounds objects in the feely bag make, such as 'it's a crackly noise', or 'it's crunchy'. The children investigate different media everyday. For instance, making three-dimensional shapes with the play dough, using a range of toys imaginatively in the water and exploring with paint and occasionally seeing what happens when mixing their own colours.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from well planned activities and a generally good selection of resources that help them value diversity. They gain good awareness of their own and others cultures through celebrating a selection of festivals. They cook bhajis, make Indian breads and cook Chinese noodles, attempting to use chop sticks to eat them with. This helps the children learn about different food from around the world and show how people use a range of tools to eat with.

High priority is given to promoting inclusion. Staff are learning key words and phrases in children's native tongue and gain in-depth knowledge about their key children's backgrounds through visiting their church at the weekend. This meets their individual needs effectively and ensures they are fully integrated into the life of the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children learn about those less fortunate than themselves through contributing to yearly charity events and readily take part in activities within the local community, for instance, maypole dancing with the school. Children are happy, settled and confident because they build very special bonds with their key person. Careful matching of parents, children and staff at the introduction visit helps strong relationships to form. Children feel secure because their key person completes all paperwork with their parents and works closely to imitate their routines from home. The staff know their key children and link well with their buddy staff member to nurture children's emotional needs. They ensure they are present at most key times to provide appropriate support. As a result, children are generally well behaved. They respond positively to most staff's consistent approach and frequent praise and encouragement encourages their self-esteem.

Children's specific needs are well met because the special educational needs co-ordinator within the setting has good experience, attends regular training and works very closely with other staff, parents and agencies to identify and support their needs successfully. For example, displaying very specific Makaton phrases she is working on for particular children, enables all staff to sign and communicate appropriately. All staff have attended Makaton training and use signing effectively to aid communication with key children. Detailed individual educational programmes, implementation of emotions boxes and trialling techniques, such as developmental journals with parents for children with specific learning difficulties are having a significant and positive impact on the children's development.

Parents receive good information about the setting through the practical prospectus. This explains clearly the role of the key person, a brief synopsis of policies and procedures, useful information about what parents need to provide for their children and an overview of the Birth to three matters framework and Foundation Stage curriculum. Many parents value the informative displays, photos and daily informal communication with their key person or buddy worker. They express their delight that staff have good opportunity to attend training, stating it is benefiting their child. Children are cared for according to parents' wishes because staff work very closely, obtain written permissions for all aspects of care and share most records appropriately.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving funding for nursery education is good. Displaying of all the planning, informative displays, numerous photographs and discussion about the stepping stones with the foundation stage nursery nurse ensure parents receive good quality information about the education provision. Talking to parents about intended learning for specific activities they can do at home, such as counting and finding objects to fit in a match box and choosing library books to share with their child, encourages parents involvement in their children's learning. Parents value the termly review of their children's progress and appreciate the opportunity to make comments and help discuss and choose their children's next steps in conjunction with the foundation stage nursery nurse. This empowers parents and enables them to fully contribute to their children's development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The strong staff team work well together to provide sound care for the children. They are well qualified and have excellent opportunities to attend training, conferences and workshops to promote their professional development. Staff attend regular forum meetings to link with three other nurseries in Oxford to share ideas and good practice. The key person approach works successfully most of the time and communication between 'buddies' and the senior management team is on-going. Staff feel generally well supported and readily raise concerns and express ideas during yearly appraisals and twice monthly staff meetings. These have a clear agenda, which result in well laid out action plans that aid future improvements. However, appraisals have rarely taken place over the last four years for the day nursery manager to ensure workload management systems are appropriate and support is consistent. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Most staff are very good role models, enthusiastic and very encouraging to the children to provide rich learning experiences in a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment. Staff place high emphasis on encouraging children's decision-making skills through ensuring good organisation of the setting and resources to promote their independent learning and development. The operational plan is a working document and links closely to the outcomes for children and National Standards. Most policies and procedures are in place and contain sufficient detail. However, there is no formalised induction programme specific for the setting and a number of policies have not been reviewed since 2004. Staff show good awareness of procedures to follow, although completion of records, such as accident and medication are not consistent to ensure parents are well informed.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The foundation stage nursery nurse is very enthusiastic, knowledgeable and uses her sound experience to implement innovative ideas and activities that stimulate and motivate the children's learning. Support and monitoring systems for the education provision are thorough and successful. Weekly discussions about activities and the children with the nursery school's foundation stage teacher provides valuable on-going support. The senior staff member collates all staff's daily planning to ensure all areas of learning are covered and meet children's individual needs. The displaying of the individual focus activity planning and weekly intended learning for the pre-school children each term, helps to inform all staff and enables them to provide effective support during children's play and learning. As a result, the children are making good progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection recommended the provider compiled and submitted an action plan detailing how the recommendations made by the Fire Service were addressed. The smoke detectors and alarms are centralised to ensure all areas of the building are informed appropriately to help keep the children safe.

This is the first nursery education inspection since registration, therefore not applicable.

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure accident and medication records contain sufficient detail and are shared and signed by parents
- improve systems for supporting the manager, including regular appraisals.

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):

- review daily routines, with particular regard to the lunch time period, to ensure children are purposefully engaged (also applies to care)
- increase the information and communication technology resources to help children learn to use and operate programmable toys with skill and control.

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