

Whittlebury Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220303
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Inspector	Melanie Eastwell
Setting Address	The Reading Rooms, High Street, Whittlebury, Northamptonshire, NN12 8XJ
Telephone number	01327 350436
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Registered person	Ann-Marie Sugrue
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

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

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

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

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Whittlebury Nursery opened in 1986. It operates from the Reading Rooms in the village of Whittlebury, Northamptonshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 08:45 to 14:00 with sessions from 09:15 to 12:30. Children have use of an outdoor play area. There are currently 12 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, four receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and is able to support children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs four members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's continued good health is generally promoted by the staff who follow appropriate procedures for maintaining a hygienic environment. For example, tables are cleaned with antibacterial spray before children sit down to eat their snack and staff clean up promptly any spills from the water and sand tray. Generally effective procedures are followed when nappies are changed, staff ensure that nappies are disposed of appropriately and staff wash their hands. Children wash their hands before they eat and after using the toilet. However, they do not learn about germs and the benefits of maintaining effective personal hygiene because the staff do not discuss this with them as part of the daily routine. Children who have accidents receive sensitive and appropriate treatment because most members of staff hold current first aid certificates and a suitably stocked first aid kit is kept in an accessible place. Accident and medication records are kept. However, the accident records are not consistently recorded regarding the date and time of the accident or the specific site of any injury.

Children enjoy the snacks and packed lunches they bring from home. They sit together with the staff to eat and are encouraged to talk together which makes meal times a social occasion. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy choices for snacks including fruit and savoury items. Children begin to learn about healthy choices for food because the staff talk to them about what they are eating. Children do not become thirsty during the session because they can freely access drinking water from a small jug as they wish. Children's physical skills are developing very well. They play outside every day and staff ensure they are provided with a stimulating and imaginative range of activities and resources to promote their physical skills. They enjoy creating their own obstacle courses with a range of logs and cable spools, they move them around to make a line and are able to successfully negotiate the 'stepping stones' they have made which promotes their balancing skills. They are able to use the pedals on bikes and steer around obstacles and each other effectively. Some children are able to negotiate space successfully while reversing their bikes. Inside, children's fine skills are equally well promoted through the use of threading toys, the manipulation of puzzle pieces and construction materials. They also have free access to scissors and rolls of sticky tape to encourage their fine skills in art and craft activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given high priority by the staff who take active steps to maintain safety in the setting. For example, the entrance doors have high handles and the doors are locked with the keys kept accessible when all the children have arrived. The outside area is not fully enclosed but the staff have improvised effective measures to ensure children stay safe. These include putting visual barriers such as ropes and temporary fences, the effective deployment of staff during outside play and staff ensure they talk to children about safety and the importance of staying in the designated play areas. All parents, children and visitors are greeted and visitors are generally required to sign the book. Children and staff's attendance is recorded and risk assessments are in place, staff make daily checks of the premises, both inside and out in order to promote children's safety. Children enjoy using a good range of play materials and resources. They are stored in low-level units and trolleys to enable children to be able to self-select their activities and this promotes choice and independence. The outside play area is very well used and the staff are creative when sourcing a range of unusual items for the children to use in

their play. Children enjoy using the range of different sized drain pipes, spools, logs and trolleys to move them around. The staff provide activities outside which cover all areas of development and promote children's skills in creativity and working safely and co-operatively together.

Children enjoy regular outings and walks. Their safety is given high consideration by the staff who provide them with high visibility jackets, higher than required adult to child ratio's and ensure that written consent is in place from parents. Children begin to learn about keeping themselves safe. Some are aware of the procedures for evacuation in an emergency and regular drills are carried out. They enthusiastically help to tidy toys away at the end of the session which develops a sense of responsibility and care for equipment and to take their role in maintaining a safe environment for everyone. Children's welfare is safeguarded because the staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of child protection concerns such as recording and reporting issues to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Some staff have attended further training in safeguarding children and they are all aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality when managing such issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy attending and benefit from the small group size and the high levels of interaction from the staff who become involved in their games and ask questions about what they are doing which promotes children's self-confidence and conversation skills. They show confidence to move between their chosen activities and approach the staff for guidance and reassurance as they need it. Children are able to make decisions about their play and are able to self-select a variety of activities including books and art and craft materials. The staff ensure they make good use of the session times. For example, on a quiet day with a small group of children present they go into nearby Towcester to have their snack at a café. Children look at the items on the menu and discuss the prices which develops their awareness of making choices and numbers. Children benefit because they make decisions and lead the play during the session. For example, the manager offers them the choice to play outside but the children are fully engaged in the cornflour activity and the staff allow this to continue. The staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this to plan and record younger children's activities and achievements through snippet and more detailed observations.

Nursery Education

Children are able to play together and during activities such as role play with 'Small world' characters talk to each other in detail about their game. They use different voices to correspond to the character they take on. Children are developing friendships with their peers. Their independence skills are promoted. Children know where to hang their coats and are able to put them on before they play outside. Children are confident speakers. They talk during their activities and initiate conversation with their peers and the staff. They enjoy songs and action rhymes and join in enthusiastically while marching around the room. Children listen well to stories, they sit as a group and become completely engaged because they have been involved in choosing the book. When the story of 'The tiger who came for tea' is finished they recall their own experiences of eating in a café with their own families and the previous day with the nursery staff. Children who show an interest in the letter sounds are actively encouraged, they enjoy looking at flash cards and are able to make the letter sounds correctly with support from the staff. Children's awareness of letters is promoted through this activity and through posters and displays around the room. They have free access to books and photograph albums throughout the session and independently access this area. They re-tell familiar stories from

the pictures and talk about the photographs of their activities in the albums. Children recognise their names because they find their name card and place it on a board when they arrive. A trolley is available to children which is well stocked with a variety of mark-making materials to ensure they have opportunities during the session to practise these skills.

Children's awareness of numbers is increasing because the staff introduce opportunities for counting during the session. For example, they count each other, how many pockets their coats have and how many bananas or apples are available at snack time. Children enjoy personalising the home corner and write a number to display on the door. Most children are able to find random numbers from a box of cards during an activity with a member of staff. During outside play the children find a bike they want to use and then find the corresponding number displayed on the bike on a card in a box on the wall. Some children show a keen interest in patterns and the staff promote this interest in a variety of ways. For example, children make patterns with toy cars in the clay and sand trays. They enjoy looking at the similar but larger patterns their bike wheels make when they ride through puddles. The staff talk to them about the patterns and shapes. Children use mathematical language during exploration activities such as water, sand and cornflour play. For example, they say their containers are 'full up' and 'overflowing' and during the cornflour activity they give 'half' to their friends by using spoons to divide the dry cornflour equally. Children are encouraged to be creative in their play. They have daily opportunities to create pictures and to explore a variety of messy play activities. They benefit because they are able to explore textures and how things change when water is added such as the cornflour. They listen to music of various styles during the session, sing songs and join in with action rhymes.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing through a wide range of activities. They work to themes including the body's senses. During an activity involving their sense of smell, children are encouraged to sniff a variety of different items while blindfolded to see if they can identify the items. Children clearly show their pleasure or distaste at the different smells such as mustard or soap through wrinkling up their noses, smiling or making relevant noises. The staff carefully supervise this activity and are sensitive to children's differing levels of confidence. For example, if they are unsure about the blindfold the staff member shields the item from view instead. This ensures that all children can take part in the activity. Children have their own patch in the garden where they can dig and explore the texture of the soil. They have been involved in growing activities and learn about the need to care for plants and provide them with water and light through discussion with the staff. Children begin to understand about information and communication technology. They have opportunities to use programmable toys such as radio controlled cars, walkie-talkies and calculators. They also use hand held metal detectors during activities where metal objects are hidden in areas such as the sand tray. Children begin to develop a sense of time through a theme involving 'past and present'. They look at modern and old photographs, grandparents were invited into the setting and the staff bought in old fashioned items such as a wind up gramophone and records for the children to use. This careful sourcing of artefacts by the staff ensures the activities are meaningful and enjoyable for the children which promotes their learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff are able to give children plenty of individual attention because of the small group size which promotes children's development and self-esteem. They ask children relevant questions during the activities and successfully engage them in conversation. Children benefit because they receive lots of praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements. Children have an allocated key worker and

their achievements are recorded through the Foundation Stage stepping stones. Staff record snippet observations each day on an ongoing basis and these are stored in children's individual files. A focused observation is recorded for each child every half term. The files for each child clearly identify where they are currently in their development. However, the next steps for learning are not recorded consistently for every child and the setting's assessment recording system requires further development to clearly show how key workers identify the next steps for individual learning and the activities they will provide to enable children to succeed. The planning is linked to the Foundation Stage and the staff work to themes linked to each of the six areas of learning. The staff are skilled to ensure the activities are carefully planned to be meaningful to the children. They invite visitors to talk to the children such as a nurse and take them on outings, for example, to the local optician. This helps children to remember the activity because it is a real experience that they are able to recall at a later date.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals and with respect. Their views and opinions are valued and listened to by the staff who ensure that the children are engaged in a suitable range of activities both inside and outside. Children are learning about the local and wider community because they take part in outings around the local area and participate in the celebrations of a variety of festivals. For example, children visit a local café for their snack, enjoy a Pinata activity for the Mexican New Year and light candles for Diwali and Hannukah. The activities are meaningful to the children because the staff carry out thorough research and acquire the required resources. Children learn about the festival because the staff talk to them and take photographs that the children enjoy looking at and freely recall the event with enthusiasm. All children are welcomed into the setting following careful discussion with their parents to ensure any specific needs can be met effectively. Staff are confident to liaise with other agencies involved with children and adaptations are made to ensure the child's placement is successful.

Children behave very well. They listen to the staff and respond to their gentle reminders to be careful and to think of others. The small size of the group allows staff to give children plenty of one to one attention during the session and the staff's highly positive interaction during activities contributes to the children's good behaviour. Children enjoy accessing the good range of activities and play materials which cover all areas of development and provide sufficient challenge and therefore promotes positive behaviour. Children are learning to consider others and to think about the effect of their words and actions on others through discussion with the staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Children benefit from the positive relationship between their parents and the staff who make themselves available at the beginning and end of the session to discuss any issues. Parents receive regular newsletters and have access to information from the notice boards about the curriculum, forthcoming events and general childhood information. They are provided with a booklet giving information about the Foundation Stage and staff give verbal information about the activities provided and the learning opportunities the activities offer for their children. Parents make positive comments about the care and learning opportunities provided at the setting and comment on how their child's individual needs are met through the setting's flexibility. For example, children who show an interest in phonics are encouraged because the staff provide them with cards showing the letter sounds which are shared with parents for them to continue at home. The setting is able to be flexible in its operating hours to help out parents who require a slightly later collection time for their children. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning at home.

For example, they become involved with the topics by coming in to talk to the children during the sessions on 'people who help us' and grandparents are invited to the setting as part of the 'past and present' topic. The positive relationship between the setting and their parents contributes to children's feelings of belonging, confidence and security at the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the small group size at the setting because the staff effectively use their time to give all children sufficient individual attention. Children are able to self-select most of the activities and are encouraged to make decisions about the activities and play materials they choose. The flexible routines ensure that children feel secure because they know what comes next but are able to extend their activities if they wish to allow them to complete what they are doing. All the required documentation is in place and is kept up to date. However, there are some inconsistencies in the records of visitors to the setting. Generally, the written policies and procedures are reflected in the staff's daily activity with children and this contributes to their welfare and safety. Effective use is made of the available space. Children are able to access each of the six areas of learning within the setting and in the outside play area which is used to its full potential. The staff take all types of activities outside and incorporate learning opportunities such as identifying which bikes the children use by corresponding number cards to the numbers on the bikes.

Leadership and management of funded children is satisfactory. The manager and staff team work well together to ensure that children are provided with an appropriately challenging range of interesting and stimulating activities that meet their individual needs. Suitable systems are in place to check the suitability of staff who are supported through induction procedures and annual appraisals to identify areas of strength and areas requiring further training. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to improve the attendance records by including the hours of attendance and the names of the staff present each day. This information is now recorded daily in the attendance register. The provider also agreed to ensure that all children belong to a key group and have an identified key worker. This is now in place for all children on roll. Regarding nursery education, the provider agreed to improve the organisation of resources and activities to ensure they are available to children when they arrive and to ensure that staff are effectively deployed throughout the session. The staff now prepare for the following day by getting out the planned activities in readiness and staff position themselves with the adult-led activities to ensure that children understand how the activity will proceed to ensure a quality learning experience for them. The action taken by the provider has a positive impact on the children's safety, care and 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 parents, which they can see on request. The record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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

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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 sufficient detail is consistently recorded in the accident records
- ensure that children are encouraged to learn about personal hygiene through the daily routine
- ensure that consistent records are kept of visitors to the setting.

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):

- ensure that the children's assessment records are used to clearly identify their next steps for learning and the activities that the key worker will provide to enable them to continue their learning.

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