

The Firs Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 218504 |
| Inspection date | 10 January 2008 |
| Inspector | Christine Holmes |
| Setting Address | 45 Rosliston Road, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, DE15 9RQ |
| Telephone number | 01283 564734 |
| E-mail | thefirstdaynursery@yahoo.co.uk |
| Registered person | Sharon Steele |
| 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?

The Firs Day Nursery opened in 1989. It operates from a converted house, near to Burton town centre. It serves the local area. It has Neighbourhood Nursery status. It is privately owned.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 76 children at any one time. There are currently 87 children aged between 3 months and 8 years on roll. This includes 31 children who receive nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery opens five days a week, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30 until 18.00.

There are 17 staff who work with the children, all with the exception of two hold an early years qualification. In addition there are two cooks, one administrator and two maintenance staff. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are significantly benefiting from the opportunities they have to enjoy the outdoors. The nursery has developed a wonderful, creative and imaginative outdoor area to promote and support all areas of children's learning. Permanent play activities have been designed and developed by nursery staff including a 'ten green bottles' activity which provides a fun way to help children develop their concept of numbers and develop their hand-eye coordination, and a musical area that encourages children to explore sound. Lots of pictures of children at play are displayed around the gardens which help to welcome children and prompt their play. Children listen to stories, look at books and take part in discussions in the large 'Hobbit House' which has a 'natural living roof' made of grasses and planted with flowers in the summer months. This has also been designed and built by the nursery. There is a herb and sensory garden which encourages children to use their senses to explore, smell, sound and texture. Other activities including mark-making, exploring compost and riding bikes. Activities continue as the weather changes and children are able to enjoy the experience of being out in the mild rain because there are child-sized umbrellas on hand for all the children. This ensures children enjoy the outdoors throughout the year. Some rooms benefit from having direct access to the outdoors which is maximised at times by having free flow play opportunities in and outdoors. This maximises children's choice and opportunities for them to enjoy the outdoors, promotes their learning and supports their good health and well-being. Indoors children benefit from the staff's awareness of the importance of exercise on the well-being of the body and mind. Gym exercises and Yoga offer the children the chance to limber up and relax.

The nurseries' passion to deliver a 'Healthy Child' programme is also extended to providing children with high quality nutritional home cooked meals using mainly fresh and organic products, some of which are grown on site. They have been recognised by a national magazine for providing high quality nutritional meals which include roast lamb, swede, potatoes, leeks and mint sauce. Children take an active part in growing a wide range of vegetables and fruits including strawberries, beans and pumpkins in the garden and in the off site allotment, which are then cooked and eaten at nursery. The nursery organises activities for both parents and children to support their awareness of healthy eating and it's importance. Planned workshops for parents include healthy eating and children take part in cooking with the nursery staff and the nursery cooks.

Impeccable hygiene procedures are implemented by staff that actively protects and promotes children's good health. A no shoes policy in the baby room and the use of disposable gloves and aprons when staff handle food and change nappies minimise the risk of cross-infection. Staff are impeccable in their own hygiene procedures. For example, staff wash their hands after wiping each child's nose. Children are actively supported to develop the skills of toileting. There are welcoming toilet areas with pictures to prompt children to wash their hands and staff use suitable equipment such as a 'step up' to the toilet to support children's independence. Comprehensive records and procedures are effectively implemented to ensure children are cared for appropriately in the event of illness or injury which further supports children's good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery is well maintained. It provides a bright, stimulating and a welcoming environment which helps children to enter happily and easily. Each room has photographs of children and lots of colourful displays of children's work. This helps to promote a sense of belonging for children. All areas are well-organised and there is a range of good quality furniture to meet children's needs for rest, feeding and play. Resources are imaginative, plentiful, of good quality, age-appropriate and set out and stored to enable children to self-select. This helps children to initiate their own play and follow their own interest. Children significantly benefit from being able to explore and experiment with the wide range of natural materials which are available to them throughout the day. Staff are imaginative and creative in making resources and displays. For example, they make story boxes which encourage children to become involved in story telling. They make 'winter wonderland' areas to fire children's imagination and they make a range of hanging mobiles and coloured water bottles in the baby room to stimulate babies' senses and attract their attention. Much work has been done in the nursery garden to make it a haven of exploration for children and more planned work is about to be undertaken in another outdoor area.

High emphasis is given to keeping children safe and secure. Whilst there are presently good security measures in place, the nursery is in the process of making further improvements to ensure the highest standards of security. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because all potential hazards are identified and minimised. Children are supervised at all times and staff are vigilant to ensure children's safety. Children develop an increasing awareness of their own and others' safety because staff talk to them about what they can do to keep themselves safe including how to walk down the stairs and move chairs around the room safely.

All staff have the opportunity to develop their understanding of child protection issues, including possible signs of abuse and the procedures to follow in the event of a concern about a child. This helps to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded. However, whilst the written policy is fully detailed in most areas it does not contain all the necessary steps the nursery must take. This does not fully ensure children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by experienced staff that care for the children in a calm and caring manner. This helps to promote children's emotional well-being. Children benefit from consistent routines which are established in consultation with their parents to meet their individual needs. This contributes to their continuity of care which helps children to become settled and secure and develop a sense of trust. Children are well cared for because staff are always on hand to provide comfort, support and encouragement. Children's progress and development is effectively supported by staff who know how children learn and how they can support this process. Staff use their observations of each child well to support their next steps in learning.

Children throughout the nursery benefit from the numerous activities which are provided on a daily basis to introduce them to a variety of new skills and experiences. All children access a wide range of stimulating resources and initiate their own play and follow their own interests. This helps them to consolidate their learning and make sense of their experiences. In all rooms children's interest in books, singing and imaginative play is fully supported through resources and good quality interactions with staff who constantly talk and listen to children and recognise

opportunities to extend learning. As a result, children become busy and purposefully occupied. This supports children's development and progress in their communication and language skills.

In baby room children are stimulated and engaged by a wide range of sensory experiences which are particularly good for encouraging young children to explore and experiment which supports their learning. Daily 'messy play' includes squeezing, crunching and taste the crunchy cereals, splashing in water and painting and the creative range of hanging mobiles around the room engage children to pull, look and feel different textures and shapes. In the toddler room children show how they relish new experiences as they willingly taste a selection of foods including cauliflower, parsnip and meringue and they show pride in their achievements as they show their finished picture which contains an array of different materials.

During the day children are supported well to develop their independence through activities and play and most routines. However, in all rooms at snack and meal times, children's growing independence and self-help skills are not always fully fostered.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and a strong knowledge of how children learn. Staff place much emphasis on developing warm and trusting relationships with children which contributes to children's confidence and self-esteem. They are flexible in their approach to take into account children's interest. They provide a good balance between adult- and child-led activities which allows children to learn at their own pace. The environment in both pre-school rooms supports children's independence and continuous learning which is particularly effective in supporting children to progress.

Staff find out from parents what children can do when they start pre-school and they build on this information to help children progress, although the information they seek is not yet comprehensively covering what children can already do and know to ensure that from the start children are achieving as much as they can. Staff use observations to record and monitor children's progress and to identify children's next steps in learning. This information is used to inform planning but it is not yet fully effective in ensuring ongoing challenge for more able children.

Children clearly enjoy and benefit from taking part in the numerous range of activities and experiences. They enjoy regular visits and trips in the local community and a number of visitors come to the nursery to including fire officers, dentist, police officers and vets and children take part in a number of nursery events such as the Nativity at Christmas. Children work well together and show confidence in linking up with others for support and guidance. For example, children learn how to operate computer equipment following the guidance of other children and they persist with difficult tasks such as hanging wet clothes on the washing line with wooden pegs. Children show independence by self-selecting resources, taking themselves to the toilet and putting on their own coats to go out to play, but snack and mealtime routines do not always enable them to consolidate their growing independence.

Children spend a significant amount of their time listening and talking which supports their speech and language skills. They are benefiting from an environment which stimulates their interest in print and helps them to develop an enjoyment of books. They show good levels of interest in the resources made available to them to mark for their own purpose as they make

their own marks on letters and pictures they make for family members which they fold and put into envelopes to take home.

Children are developing a good interest in numbers and counting because they have numerous opportunities to see and use numbers and numerals in their play and during discussions. Whilst children are beginning to compare, older, more able children are not always challenged to use this information to make simple calculations and solve simple problems such as, are there more children wanting the new doll to be a girl, or are there more children wanting the new doll to be a boy. Children use and explore every day technology including a computer, earphones and dolls that cry. They have wonderful opportunities to learn about living and growing through first hand daily experiences in the garden and allotment and through caring for a number of nursery pets including stick insects, a rabbit and guinea pigs.

Children's imagination is fostered through the imaginative and creative use of space and resources. Art and craft activities are carried out on a daily basis. Children enjoy exploring media, texture and colour and their individual creativity is supported through independent use of paint, scissors and glue.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued and respected. Staff have a sound understanding of equal opportunities issues to help children find out about their own and other's cultures and customs. Children from different backgrounds are welcome at the nursery. Some staff are multi-lingual and provide support to children and parents of whom English is an additional language. Staff foster positive links with children's own culture and language, involving parents and the local community. Resources positively represent the children who attend the nursery as well as the wider community, and many festivals are celebrated. Systems are effective to identify, assess and meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure that individual needs are met.

Staff have a strong knowledge and understanding of effective procedures to manage children's behaviour which helps children to develop a strong understanding of right and wrong. As a result children are learning to play harmoniously together. In baby room children are often seen to give each other a hug. In the toddler room a number of children are able to take part in building castles in the sand tray together sharing and taking turns with the resources and in the pre-school rooms children are able to wait to take their turn to try out the new dolls and help each other in task such as zipping up each others coats. As a result children enjoy a very harmonious environment which significantly contributes towards their emotional well-being. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the high emphasis that is given to supporting and working in partnership with parents. The nursery is a funded 'Neighbourhood Nursery project' which means it is able to offer parents a wider range of support that is usual for a private run day nursery. For example, parents are able to access lower cost nursery fees and staff are trained to signpost parents in order to gain training to return to work. Staff are also trained to deliver workshops to parents to support parenting skills and to offer extended services such as a 'baby café' and toy library. Parents are provided with daily information relating to their child's care and their wishes and thoughts are sought and respected by staff. This helps to ensure children's needs are met well. Regular newsletters and an abundance of displayed information around the nursery helps to ensure parents are informed about the services the nursery provides. However, the complaints

procedure does not include all the required elements. This does not ensure parents are fully informed of issues which may affect the care their children receive.

Partnerships with parents and carers of children receiving funding for nursery education are good. Parents and carers are informed about the topic that the children will be covering and they are encouraged to supply items for activities and interest tables and given suggestion of how they may encourage further learning at home. Parents are also encouraged to take a library book home each week with tips on how to encourage children's interest and development. Arrangements to inform parents and carers about the Foundation Stage and to share children's developmental records with them are in place. Therefore parents are able to continue extending learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. The nursery management and staff have clear aims to provide high quality care and education. Ongoing training ensures staff are effective in providing children with good outcomes in line with the National Standards. In addition a number of staff are undertaking further professional training and are involved in community initiatives. This ensures children at the nursery are benefiting from current good practice child care initiatives. As a result children benefit from outstanding outcomes in health and strong outcomes in other areas. Documentation is mostly comprehensive and effective in practice, although some detail is missing in some policies. Staff and resources are organised extremely well to meet children's needs, but there are some times during the day that are not effectively used by staff to fully promote children's independence.

The quality of leadership and management are good. The manager and proprietor are very influential in driving forward and influencing improvements and they include staff, parents and children in evaluating the quality the nurseries service. Improvements are ongoing and exciting particularly for the further creative area outdoors which is to be based on the familiar children's book 'We are going on a bear hunt'. Staff working with the children are enthusiastic, well qualified and pro-active in furthering their professional development. They are eager and open to continually developing their practice which helps to ensure ongoing improvements.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to further support children's health by ensuring that all staff have access to first aid training that includes first aid for babies and young children and that staff do not enter the kitchen whilst cooking is taking place. Good progress has been made in both areas. All staff are fully training in first aid and recent improvements to the premises means that staff no longer need to access the kitchen whilst cooking is taking place.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery was asked to further develop opportunities for children to recognise numerals on a daily basis and to increase resources to develop children's knowledge of every day technology. Good progress has also been made in both of these areas. Children now have numerous opportunities to recognise numerals on a daily basis which is fostering their interest and understanding of number and resources are plentiful which is helping to foster children's understanding of every day technology.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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):

- develop further the complaints policy to include the procedure of sharing the account and findings of any investigation and action taken, if any, with parents and include in the safeguarding children's policy the procedure of contacting Ofsted when making a child protection referral
- develop further children's opportunities to become more independent at snack and meal times.

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):

- extend the range of information about children's starting point obtained from parents and ensure children's next steps in learning are fully used to inform planning to provide ongoing challenge for more able children.

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