

Little Strawberries

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY227326
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Inspector	Jayne Rooke
Setting Address	275 Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, DE14 2BE
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Registered person	Hannah Elizabeth Durose
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?

Little Strawberries is run by private ownership. It opened in 2002 and operates from a converted two-storey house in Burton-upon-Trent in Staffordshire. A maximum of 70 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 07:30 until 17:45 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 119 children aged from three months to under eight years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas.

The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 16 members of staff. Of these, most hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and comfortable environment where they learn to follow simple good health and hygiene practices from an early age. They learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care through consistent daily routines, washing their hands with antibacterial soap and brushing their teeth after meals. They follow 'healthy rules' which are attractively displayed in the bathroom. Children take responsibility for monitoring the healthy environment as the 'germ buster' monitor ensures that soap and paper towels are always available and reminding children to wash their hands after visiting the toilet. Rooms are generally maintained at a comfortable temperature, although on occasions some areas, including the nappy changing room on the ground floor feel cold. This potentially minimises children's good health. There are clear procedures in place for sick and infectious children which help to prevent the spread of infection. The majority of staff hold current first aid certificates which means that children can receive appropriate care in the event of a medical emergency.

Children's dietary needs are promoted well, taking into account their individual needs and preferences. They are provided with healthy and nutritious meals each day which consist of fresh food produce including fruit and salad snacks. Older children talk about the benefits of a healthy diet and know that they should drink water or juice because it helps them to 'grow strong' and 'stops' their 'throat being sore and thirsty'. Babies and young children enjoy sociable meal times where they are encouraged to use their cups and utensils independently. Older children enjoy planting and nurturing the growth of vegetables in the garden. They carefully tend the produce in the vegetable patches which is then used for meals and other learning activities. This successfully helps children to understand the benefits of a healthy diet, promoting positive attitudes to food and drink.

Children enjoy a range of physical play experiences that contribute to a healthy lifestyle indoors and outside. They have good access to the outdoor environment for daily play and special events. Older children enjoy outings and walks in the local environment. All children have opportunities to visit the indoor ball-pool room for robust activity. Children regularly move between rooms for different types of physical and social activities.

Children move confidently with good control and coordination. They are able to move around furniture with skill and avoid obstacles. Staff plan the outdoor learning environment very well. The garden is used effectively for all types of physical activity, using small and large play equipment. For example, children enjoy bouncy castle play in the summer. They manage scooters well and negotiate uneven ground with skill. They are able to take controlled risks as staff closely supervise, but do not restrict children's free movement. They enable children to make sensible judgements as they negotiate riding their bikes down a small hill, ensuring children are aware of potential risks and their own safety. Children play enthusiastically on small climbing equipment and with imaginative play toys extending their physical and imaginative development. Indoor physical play is an important feature of children's regular routine as they learn to move their bodies in different ways during music and action movement games. They use small and large equipment in their role play, writing, drawing and modelling with play dough which helps them to develop fine manipulative skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where they can move around freely and independently under staff's close supervision. Staff consistently monitor access and exit to the premises, meeting and greeting parents and visitors on arrival. The entrance to the nursery remains locked at all times and security posters are prominently displayed for parents' information to prevent any unauthorised access.

Children have access to a range of interesting and good quality toys and equipment that meet safety standards. Daily risk assessments ensure that rooms and resources are well organised to minimise risks and reduce the likelihood of accidents. This means that children have safe access to a wide range of clean and well-maintained equipment. Staff are well trained and understand the needs of babies and young children, closely supervising their activities, care and sleep routines so that children are protected within a safe environment.

Children are encouraged to keep themselves safe as they learn about safety rules for indoor activities and when on outings. Activity and story projects help children learn about sensitive issues such as 'stranger danger' and 'trusted adults'. School age children are safely escorted to and from school because all required safety arrangements are in place and fully implemented.

Children are protected from harm and neglect as all staff generally demonstrate good understanding of their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children, although some staff are less confident about allegations procedures whilst children are in the care of the provider. This potentially minimises children's safety. Clear guidelines, policies, training and induction procedures ensure that staff and students fully understand what action to take and what to do if they have concerns about a child's well-being. Designated responsibilities are in place between senior and deputising staff which promotes consistency of care and good practice. This effectively helps to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting and are making good progress in their learning, leisure and personal development. Children of all ages settle quickly in the friendly nursery atmosphere and develop strong relationships with their carers. All staff know the children well. A good key-worker system enables staff to identify children's age and stage of development and meet their changing needs. Children under three years of age make good progress because staff take great care to ensure their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework is implemented with success, although initial information is sometimes missing from development records regarding children's dates of birth and what they already know and can do. This minimises opportunities for staff to accurately assess children's level of progress. Good links are made between frameworks such as the 'Birth to Three matters' and Foundation Stage to inform planning so that children make good progress through a range of learning experiences. For example, babies and younger children enjoy using a variety of musical instruments to shake, pour, tip and bash whilst singing rhymes and songs. They enjoy small group activities which helps them to take part in active and sensory play. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to further develop and extend children's knowledge of texture during some practical activities which occasionally lack meaning and purpose. Staff are knowledgeable about child development as they have attended training and are committed to developing and improving their practice.

They use lots of positive language and good eye contact at children's level to develop and support all children's learning and imagination.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning. They use their knowledge well to plan a stimulating environment to support children's learning and development in most areas. Activities are varied and interesting and help children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Plans cover the six areas of learning and what children are to do. However, evaluation methods sometimes lack detail regarding how children's knowledge, understanding and skills can be further extended and adapted to suit children who learn at different rates or who have particular needs. This potentially minimises opportunities to further enhance children's development and learning.

Older children play, explore and experiment within practical, meaningful and fun activities. They express emotions such as awe and wonder during a 'magic moment - erupting snow' activity. Children use words to express their anticipation saying 'this is going to be really fun'. They express surprise and amazement as they watch what happens to the powder mixture when water is added, changing it to 'magic snow'. They touch, stir and rub the snow mix in their fingers. Staff use questions and language techniques well to encourage children to think about differences between the texture and temperature of the powder snow and real snow. Children initiate conversations based on what they know and like or dislike such as how it 'look likes rice' and how to 'make snow hard' and 'cold' in 'the freezer' and the 'fun' they have 'making snowballs'. Additionally children develop counting and number skills as they estimate and count the number of scoops needed to 'make a lot of snow'. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to introduce children to mathematical concepts linked to calculation during everyday activities and routines. Children learn how to handle technology equipment such as the computer as they handle the mouse and operate drawing and games programmes with increasing control and confidence. Older and more able children learn how to use computer words such as 'file', 'save', 'print', 'cursor' and 'mouse' as staff help them to save their finished work to a computer file.

Children use a variety of craft materials to stimulate their imagination and creativity. Projects about space and the night sky inspire children to learn about real and imaginary concepts, creating constellation pictures, painting pictures of aliens and making three dimensional models to use as a telescope. Staff use the outdoor environment imaginatively helping children to observe patterns and forms in the clouds in the sky. Role play activities include resources to promote writing for a purpose such as in the home corner or office. Writing books are freely accessible to children to encourage them to make marks, forming recognisable letters and writing their own name. Music, rhymes and stories are used well to encourage children's speaking and listening skills and develop their interest in reading. Other languages are introduced to children as they can choose to take part in foreign language classes. Picture and information books are used effectively to encourage children to make up their own stories.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a sense of belonging because staff know them and their families well and ensure that they are all valued and included. Children feel good about themselves because the environment includes pictures of them on individual coat pegs and taking part in a variety of

activities and games. They are given 'helper of the day' responsibilities and are encouraged to care for themselves and each other. Staff take great care to monitor the learning environment to make sure every child has equal opportunities to take part in routine and significant events to promote inclusion. There is a good system in place to support the individual needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff take time to talk to parents and other agencies to provide appropriate care and support for all children. There is a good range of resources to raise children's awareness of diversity; for example, pictures and posters are attractively displayed within the setting and children learn about a wide range of cultural and traditional festivals and celebrations throughout the year. They look at books and play with toys which help them to understand that people have differences and similarities. Staff manage children's behaviour positively and consistently. As a result, children are clear about what they can and cannot do and therefore behave well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers are made to feel welcome by the friendly and approachable staff and have regular opportunities to be involved in the life of the setting, attending parent consultation evenings and festival and event celebrations throughout the year. Parents are provided with the opportunity to raise any suggestions, concerns or compliments they may have. There is a good system in place to record any complaints in line with regulations and guidelines. Parents feel valued and express very positive comments about the activities provided and the care and support their children receive from experienced staff. The partnership with parents and carers whose children receive funded education is good. They receive useful information about the educational programme and their children's progress and learning. Attractive development records are shared at frequent intervals throughout the year including photographs and examples of children's work. Development notes add meaning and purpose which helps parents understand how their child learns and makes progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff organise the setting effectively to provide a stimulating and child-friendly environment in which children can take part in a range of activities to support their care, learning and play. Staff are deployed effectively and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The effective use of time, staff and resources help children to make good progress in their learning. Activities are well planned incorporating all areas of learning and development linked to current child development frameworks, although on occasions staff miss opportunities to further develop children's natural curiosity as learners during play and first-hand experiences. Rigorous vetting procedures ensure children are protected. The premises are well maintained in a good state of repair and décor, although some areas used by children are not always maintained at an adequate temperature. Each staff member is rigorously vetted to make sure they are suitable to work with children. All appropriate systems are in place for the effective monitoring of staff suitability. Staff work well as a team and are committed to their role in supporting children's development and learning. Thorough induction procedures are in place to ensure staff know and implement the setting's policies and procedures consistently, although some staff lack confidence in their knowledge of all safeguarding children procedures. Children's well-being is promoted well. All of the required documents and information is kept, this is well organised to ensure children's details are kept confidential.

The leadership and management is good. Staff meet together regularly to review the implementation of the Foundation Stage, to share good practice and ensure consistency. They attend regular training events, continually evaluate their own practice and welcome support from the local authority. Observations and assessments are used well to monitor individual

children's progress, although some lack detail regarding children's initial stage of development. Staff adapt activities and routines to support all children's learning experiences although sometimes miss further opportunities to extend children's knowledge of mathematical concepts such as calculation. As a result, there are only minor weaknesses in early education and children are making good progress within the nursery education programme.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to: improve staff's knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities and ensure the equal opportunities policy is consistent with current guidance and to extend the use of the key worker system to include the baby room. Since then, the provider has taken positive steps to review the equal opportunities policy and procedures. Staff have attended training and a designated member of staff takes responsibility for all equal opportunities issues. The equal opportunities policy has been developed to ensure that children's differences and similarities are valued. Resources are used during everyday play activities and children see positive images in posters and books of people from different parts of the world and with disabilities. All children, including babies are cared for by an identified member of staff who is responsible for supporting their care and development.

At the last education inspection the provider agreed to: link planning and assessment systems to the stepping stones and increase children's awareness of sounds and letters and the purpose of writing. Also, introduce a rigorous system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the teaching. Since then, staff have developed good systems to link children's development and progress to the stepping stones and early learning goals. They use observations and assessments well to inform planning but occasionally miss opportunities to complete initial assessment information. As a result, a further recommendation has been raised following this inspection. Good use is made of role play situations and practical activities to help children understand the meaning and purpose of writing. The manager works closely with pre-school staff and early education advisors to support the development of the education programme so that all areas of learning are implemented.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

- maintain rooms at an adequate temperature
- develop further staff's knowledge and understanding of all safeguarding children procedures.

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):

- further improve development records to take into account children's initial stage of development
- develop further opportunities for children to build on their natural curiosity as learners during play and first-hand experiences (also applies to care)
- develop further opportunities for children to learn about mathematical concepts including calculation.

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