

The Mousehole Nursery, UCLH

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	135108
Inspection date	06 February 2008
Inspector	Diane Mary O'Neill / Susan Marriott
Setting Address	U.C.L.Hospitals Staff Nursery, Lower Ground Floor, 23 Devonshire Street, LONDON, W1G 6PG
Telephone number	020 7935 5228
E-mail	
Registered person	University College London Hospital Trust
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 Mousehole Day Nursery opened in September 1991. It is owned by the University College of London Hospital Trust (UCLH). It operates from the basement of a block which contains the halls of residence for the UCLH trust. The nursery is self-contained and consists of an office, kitchen, laundry room, adult and children's toilets, toddler's group room, pre-school room and baby room. There are also two enclosed spaces for outdoor play. A maximum of 29 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round, except for a week at Christmas.

There are currently 25 children aged from five months to under five years on roll. Of these, four children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel into the city to work. The nursery provides a service for the staff of the UCLH trust only. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 11 staff members, of whom 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children effectively learn simple good health and hygiene practices as they adhere to the well-planned daily routines. For example, they know to wash their hands after messy craft activities or after doing any planting in the garden, following the use of the toilet and prior to eating. They have access to running water, soap and paper towels and tooth paste and brushes to help with their personal care. Staff ensure that steps are available to help assist the children to reach the toilets and sinks.

Children's health care needs are well supported by the staff in this well-managed setting. For example, they cleanse table surfaces periodically throughout the session. Staff consistently wear protective gloves and aprons when dealing with bodily fluids when changing nappies. This ensures cross-infection is minimised. Staff are fully aware of children's individual health care needs and take appropriate steps to care for them if they become ill or have an accident. This is further supported by the written sickness policy which clearly states exclusion periods for childhood communicable diseases. First aid and emergency procedures are recorded using appropriate documentation and these are shared appropriately with parents and carers. However, the medical record does not always confirm the exact time of administration. Most staff hold current first aid training. A rolling training programme ensures they are kept fully up to date with the correct procedures to follow to continually maintain children's health and welfare. Children are able to rest in appropriate sleeping areas. For example, there are cots for babies and sleeping bags for toddlers and older children. Staff sit with the children and soothe them off to sleep with calming music and stroking their heads.

Children's dietary needs are fully met because the provision offers breakfast, mid-morning and afternoon snacks, lunch and tea. Children are encouraged to use age-appropriate cutlery, and scrape and clear away empty plates. Named place mats with children's photographs and written dietary requirements ensure their health and well-being. Small groups of children sit down with the staff for meals. This enables lots of conversation to take place making it quite a social time. Children remain well hydrated, as drinks are freely available throughout the day. For example, children have labelled bottles in the baby room and labelled cups for the toddlers. Pre-school children have access to a jug and cups placed on low tables.

Children enjoy well-planned sessions and a stimulating range of equipment which promotes their physical development both inside and outside. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance in a successful manner to enable the younger children to experience the same physical play opportunities as older children. For example, space is organised to enable positive movements, such as running, kicking balls, confidently using sit and ride equipment, scooters and climbing apparatus. Children clearly enjoy using the garden whatever the weather. The children enjoy trips within the local community such as visiting the shops, going to the park to feed the ducks and occasional trips to the theatre.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming, safe and secure environment where their safety and welfare is paramount. Staff have put up posters and pictures, photographs and the children's art work to make all the rooms bright, inviting and attractive. This helps to enhance the overall

environment. Children have excellent access to a free-flow play environment allowing them to make the choice of where and what they play with. The inside play space is very spacious, bright, airy and well-organised making it an interesting, happy and relaxed environment for all the children. Vigilant staff recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Risk assessments are carried out and all the staff share in the responsibility for keeping children safe. Staff practise evacuation procedures with all the children on a regular basis helping them to learn about being safe. Access to the premises is well-monitored through the supervision and management of the entrance area. All visitors to the nursery are requested to provide identification and to record their presence on site in the visitors book.

Children enjoy playing with a broad range of safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are well organised throughout the setting and some equipment is in child-height storage units to encourage children to become independent and gain safe access to their resources. The children help tidy toys away and notify an adult if something is broken. Sensitive reminders by staff encourage children to take responsibility for their own safety and that of others. Outside the children have very good access to a fully enclosed area that is effectively monitored at all times by staff to ensure children's overall safety and well-being.

Children are suitably protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures. Staff are secure in their knowledge of child protection, reporting concerns appropriately to senior staff and documentation is in place to support them in the event of any concerns. The nursery has a rolling training programme in place to ensure staff's knowledge and understanding is continually updated.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and enthusiastic in this vibrant and well-organised setting. Staff eagerly greet the children and their parents making them feel very welcome. Efficient and experienced staff are on hand to sensitively support any children who may be unsettled. The entrance area is very inviting as there are informative notice boards and comprehensive information available to the parents.

Children are contented, motivated and thrive well in this secure, stimulating and very caring environment. They confidently explore and access the wide range of stimulating activities and are beginning to form firm relationships with staff and the other children. Staff have a good awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has a positive effect on the children's enjoyment and achievements. Staff use the guidance to effectively plan activities and are beginning to gain sufficient knowledge about what younger children can learn. They have developed systems for recording children's achievements and these enable them to focus their planning for the children's next steps within their learning.

The children develop their investigation and exploratory skills through the extensive and interesting array of activities both inside and outside of the setting. The babies show wonder and surprise at what they see and feel whilst exploring toys that make sounds. For example, babies are stripped to their nappies and vests and a plastic sheeting is put down so they can enjoy experimenting and exploring an activity with shaving foam. Some is put in small bowls with spatulas and spoons and some children enjoy smearing it on a mirror. The babies clearly enjoy the activity which produces laughter, smiles and wonderment. The staff attempt to do a messy activity every day such as painting and sand. Children gain enjoyment from using different

equipment within the sand tray and using the paints to make pictures. Children experiment with construction materials, shapes and colours. Staff are totally dedicated to the children which has immense positive effects on their learning and levels of contentment.

Children have excellent opportunities to explore their world through various play activities and are exceedingly well-supported by the committed staff team. Children develop their communication skills as they respond to others around them. For example, the children enjoy chatting to each other as they play out in the garden on the sit and ride toys. Children are animated and eager to take part in activities. For example, they enjoy sliding down the slide and making whooshing noises. Their mobility is extended through excellent support and direction offered by staff as they move freely when playing inside or outside.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff have a competent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a varied programme of play-based activities which provide an overall balance across all six areas of learning. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their ages and starting points. Children are happy and settle quickly in the gentle and nurturing environment. They generally display high levels of involvement and gain a sense of achievement, self-confidence and self-esteem through planned and spontaneously chosen activities. Staff work together as a very effective and committed team deploying themselves to support children's learning with sensitivity and respect.

Planning builds successfully on the Foundation Stage guidance. Staff believe in child-focused learning. They conduct detailed observations of children's learning and gather information about children's needs and interests. Staff then plan accordingly on a month-by-month basis, where possible consulting children about what they want to do and what they want to learn. For example, following a successful visit to the theatre at Christmas to see 'Hogwash and the Three Little Pigs', staff noticed that the children were talking about the show and that the story contained many elements found in other classic stories. Therefore, staff planned a follow-up topic of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. They develop a topic web which covers the six areas of learning and break each area down into selected stepping stones. These are transferred to the weekly activity planner and provide clear intentions for children's learning linked appropriately to the curriculum guidance. However, observations and notes placed in the children's assessment folders do not always correlate appropriately to the stepping stones and this means that the setting is not using the stepping stones in a clear way to identify the next steps in children's learning. The potential impact of this weakness in the assessment system is currently minimised by the efficient, practical teaching skills exhibited by the staff team and the small numbers of children attending the setting.

Children enjoy good, trusting relationships with staff who get down to their level and engage in meaningful questioning, conversation and discussion which develops learning through play and promotes their individual language development. However, on occasion, eager staff can talk too much, being unaware that they may be inhibiting opportunities for children to respond, communicate and express themselves. Staff encourage the children to be independent. In response to a request to fasten a coat, a staff member secures the zip fastening and suggests that the children then try to finish the task themselves. When asked to fasten shoes, staff show how to fasten one strap and then challenge the children to do the others.

Appropriate emphasis is generally given to the development of children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Children gain confidence to speak in front of a small group as they

tell one another about their news and their friends learn to listen courteously. Children discuss the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they represent. Children learn to recognise their names and share books with their friends. Children learn about numbers, use mathematical language and solve simple problems. Numbers and letters abound in this environment. Photographs inform parents and visitors, showing a wealth of interesting activities and the learning which is gained from them. Children have good opportunities to expand their knowledge and understanding of the wider world through topics and activities. For example, the children have a growing area and enjoy eating the strawberries they have grown. Their knowledge and understanding is further extended through outings within the local community.

Children learn about basic information technology. A wide range of construction toys enables children to build and fix pieces together, improving manual dexterity. Children enjoy a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities to promote physical development. They have regular play sessions outside and benefit from an exciting, dedicated outdoor courtyard where they may enjoy fresh air whilst learning all year round. Children have good opportunities to express their creativity through the use of a broad range of media and materials. Their art work is proudly displayed on the walls of the nursery. Children begin to use imagination playing alongside others in role play situations. Staff extend ideas as needed, model roles they might use, ensure all can join in and that children share resources fairly.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they warmly greet staff and each other upon arrival at the nursery. The staff team ensure that the resources positively represent the diverse range of children who attend the nursery as well as individuals from the wider community. For example, photographs provide evidence of trips out within the local community which help to expand children learning opportunities. Children are beginning to learn about some familiar and unfamiliar festivals and resources reflect positive images.

Although the nursery currently does not support any children with learning difficulties or disabilities, they have good links with the local authority specialist worker who offers support when needed.

Children's behaviour is good. Positive role models and consistent staff support for the children ensure that any incident is dealt with calmly. There is an excellent team spirit throughout the nursery. Children get on well with one another, playing happily together, being respectful of each other and sharing resources. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. This contributes significantly to children's sense of belonging, security and well-being. Parents are given an extremely warm welcome in the nursery. Staff are on hand to discuss any issues and readily share information. Parents are encouraged to settle their children into the nursery with great support from the staff. Parents receive an informative prospectus together with newsletters and very informative notice boards are available by the entrance and within all the rooms. Parents are encouraged to speak with their child's key worker at any time to discuss progress and how they may help with their children's learning at home.

Parents appreciate the friendly and the open attitude of the staff team. They are happy in the knowledge that their children have access to a wide range of activities and resources. Positive

relationships between the parents and staff impact positively on the children's sense of well-being and security within the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Most of the required documentation is successfully organised and in place to support the efficient operation of the setting. However, some of the nursery policies and procedures do not accurately reflect the daily routines. There are some weaknesses in the recording of medication and registers do not always contain correct data, which potentially compromises children's safety. Some documentation is not readily available for inspection on the premises, in breach of requirements.

High staff to child ratios are maintained in this small nursery. The staff work very effectively as a team, moving with the flow of the children where they can actively involve themselves in the children's play. This promotes positive outcomes for children. Children are keen to participate in the nursery activities on arrival and freely move around talking to staff and their peers. Indoor and outdoor space is set out in an inviting manner for the children, which helps them to obtain the maximum enjoyment from the play opportunities that enhance all areas of their development and learning. Staff are highly knowledgeable and have a very good understanding of child development. Most of them hold relevant childcare qualifications and extend their own professional development through access to regular training and reading childcare literature. For example, they regard attending training on child protection as a high priority. They continue to develop their practice and knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to extend, challenge and further enhance children's learning and development. This contributes to the overall effectiveness of the organisation of the nursery.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The staff team are well-qualified and dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education. The established staff team are well supported by the nursery manager who oversees the management of the pre-school room and this safeguards and promotes children's care and welfare. Staff are actively involved in planning and decision making and contribute to the continuous monitoring of the setting through effective self-evaluation and reflection in line with 'Every Child Matters'. Staff clearly and confidently speak about their procedures to follow in the event of a range of scenarios. Planning is excellent and staff continue to refine assessment systems to secure and progress children's learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked update the operational plan to include the redevelopment of space and group rooms. The manager has devised an operational plan and put all information together and has gained a clear understanding of the nature of an operational plan which has contributed to the safe and efficient management of the provision.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to give consideration to improving the planning to include more opportunities for children to explore natural objects and living things. The manager saw that the nursery was lacking in this area especially in the toddler garden. The large sand pit was converted into a vegetable garden and fund raising paid for plants, parents provided tools and the children now grow strawberries, courgettes and other vegetables. The nursery also purchased a fish and a hamster and the children study butterflies

and tadpoles. The overall impact is that children's knowledge and understanding of the world has been enriched.

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:

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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 that appropriate written records are kept of all medicines administered to children
- ensure that correct data is recorded on the registration system
- review and update all policies and procedures to reflect the National Standards ensuring the safe and effective management of the provision. Ensure that records are always available for inspection by the early years childcare inspector

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):

- improve the opportunities for children to respond, communicate and express themselves to further promote their individual language development
- ensure that observational notes reflect children's progress through the stepping stones and continue to improve the assessment system to clearly monitor, evaluate and identify the next steps in children's 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