

Pastures Way Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY280683
Inspection date	06 March 2008
Inspector	Jill Nugent
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Registered person	The Governing Body of Pastures Way Nursery School
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Pastures Way Nursery School registered in 2004. It has recently been awarded Children's Centre status and operates from purpose built premises in Luton. The centre is open from 08.00 until 18.00 every weekday for 48 weeks a year.

A maximum of 117 children may attend the children's centre at any one time. The centre supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Children share access to a variety of outdoor play areas.

The majority of staff, including the centre manager, hold relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well as there are good procedures in place. Children are protected from infection because parents are given clear information about exclusion periods for infectious illnesses. Children are well taken care of in the event of an accident as staff are suitably qualified

in first aid. All medical records are maintained appropriately, although staff have not requested written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. Consequently, there is a potential risk of delay in children receiving appropriate treatment.

Staff are attentive to matters of hygiene and ensure that children are cared for in a clean environment. Children sleep, or rest, according to their needs and in a place where they feel comfortable. There are guidelines in place for the hygienic changing of children and all necessary equipment is easily accessible to staff. Children are becoming aware of good hygiene practice themselves. They learn to use tissues independently and to wash their hands before eating. These procedures contribute effectively to keeping children healthy.

Children learn about healthy eating through the provision of a wide range of healthy and nutritious foods. At snack time children choose from a variety of fresh fruits. Cooked lunches are provided by the neighbouring school and staff make healthy choices from the menu. For example, children enjoy fish, vegetables and yoghurt. Staff take opportunities at mealtimes to talk with children about the healthy aspects of different foods. There are plans to improve further the quality of these meals as the centre now has its own kitchen and a new cook. Children with special diets eat appropriately as all adults are made aware of their dietary needs. Fresh drinking water is available at all times so that children avoid the risk of dehydration. Overall children are well nourished.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities for regular physical activity. There is a variety of outdoor areas available providing areas for children to explore and investigate, balance and climb, or just enjoy the natural surroundings. Children can go outdoors throughout the day and enjoy freedom of movement in the fresh air. For instance, toddlers like to sit in the sand pit digging or feed balls into coiled tubes, collecting them further down the ramp. Older children particularly enjoy a large climbing frame and a collection of wheeled vehicles. Children develop their control and coordination as they make use of adventure equipment in the garden. They learn about growing vegetables such as broccoli, which they harvest themselves. Babies and toddlers enjoy going for walks and visits to the local park. In these ways children develop confidence and skills which help them to keep fit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. They move freely around the various indoor and outdoor play areas making choices from the wide range of activities on offer. The rooms are bright and attractive and have extra resources stored at low-level so that children can select independently. The furniture is sturdy and of good quality. All resources are checked regularly for safety and are suitable for children of differing ages and abilities.

Children's safety and security is promoted through detailed risk assessments of the whole premises. Any concerns arising from these are acted upon so as to minimise potential hazards to children. Staff supervise children closely both indoors and outdoors. However, staff are not always vigilant in their day-to-day safety checks. For instance, regular checks of the outdoor play areas, and of babies at sleep, are not recorded. In the event of checks not being carried out children may be put at risk with regard to their safety.

The premises are secure and visitors to the setting are closely monitored on entry. The environment is generally safe for children. For example, there are high handles on all internal doors, low-level cupboards are locked and electrical sockets are covered. Children are encouraged

to play safely in each learning area as staff increase their awareness of personal safety through reminders and discussion. They learn to use various staircases within the rooms in a safe manner. There are good fire precautions in place and children practise an evacuation plan regularly so that they know what to do in an emergency.

Staff have a particularly good knowledge of safeguarding procedures. All staff attend training in safeguarding children and are aware of how to record any concerns. They know where to seek advice and have the necessary information available to enable them to respond in an appropriate manner. Children keep safe on outings as staff follow the recommended procedures. Staff ensure that children are collected at the end of a session by a known adult. Therefore, children are well protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and very happy in the nursery. Babies and toddlers enjoy good opportunities to explore and begin to make connections with their environment. The baby room is particularly stimulating with a variety of attractive resources easily accessible. Babies are encouraged to use their different senses as they investigate items from treasure baskets. Toddlers particularly like the freedom to express their own ideas creatively, for instance in free painting or printing. Children enjoy the close attention of staff who involve themselves in play and interact to enhance play situations. Children develop communication skills through being engaged in conversation during activities or sharing books with an adult. They develop self-confidence within a child-centred environment which encourages them to learn as they play.

Staff in the toddler and baby rooms plan a range of activities to meet children's individual needs. These cover all learning areas and offer children good opportunities for independent and group play. For example, children enjoy exploring 'gloop', constructing models and bathing dolls. There is an effective system in place for observing children and recording their achievements. These are used in combination with the evaluations of the planned activities to assess children's next steps in their learning. Staff then use these targets to plan relevant activities such as mark-making, moving to music and matching pictures. In this way, children's learning is focused and stimulates their natural curiosity. However, the planning in the toddler room is not as diverse as that in the baby room. At times toddlers lack stimulation, particularly in the afternoons, as a limited range of key activities are planned to interest children for the whole day.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included, enjoying much individual attention. They develop close relationships with staff and approach them confidently, often having fun together as they play. They show a sense of belonging and a happy, busy atmosphere prevails. Older children receive a friendly welcome each day as they gather in their base rooms. Those staying for wraparound care enjoy getting together for tea at the end of the day. Children learn to make decisions through being offered choices within the setting and this helps them to develop personal independence.

Staff are aware of children's individual needs. There is a flexible arrangement for moving children from the baby to the toddler room and potty training is carried out with children's individual

needs in mind. Older children who stay for lunch are given continuity through the day as familiar adults stay around. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good support. All staff learn 'Makaton' sign language and in turn teach it to the children. Staff devise programmes which focus on children's care, and well-being, in liaison with parents and other professionals. Gifted and talented toddlers are extended through a programme of extra activities.

Children's behaviour is good. Children are aware of their boundaries within the setting and respond positively to staff. Young children are encouraged to share, and take turns, and older ones learn to negotiate. Staff act as good role models, remaining calm and gentle if needing to persuade or correct children. In this way children learn to distinguish between right and wrong and develop respect for others. They find out more about a wider society when taking part in activities based around cultural and religious themes, for instance, tasting Chinese food and making cards for Mother's Day.

Staff liaise closely with parents and carers. They provide very clear information about the centre's policies and procedures. Home visits are arranged for new children as a part of the settling-in procedure. In the baby and toddler rooms staff exchange information daily with parents through a system of link books, notices and verbal communication. Parents also have opportunities to talk with staff about their children's progress. Staff respond to parents' comments on the care they offer, reviewing their procedures if necessary to benefit all children. However, the written complaints procedure has not been updated in line with changes to the National Standards. If parents are unaware of how to raise a concern in the correct way children's continuity of care may be adversely affected. Overall parents are happy with the care offered to their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The centre's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. Parents complete registration forms, providing necessary and useful information about their children's needs. All attendance registers are well maintained and confidential information is stored securely in the office. The written activity planning is kept up to date so that staff are able to implement it effectively. This documentation provides a good framework for children's care.

Staff are well qualified in childcare and committed to the ongoing improvement of their practice. There is a thorough induction procedure in place for new staff and annual appraisals to monitor professional development. Staff have recently attended courses in various aspects of care, ranging from behaviour management to children's learning difficulties and creative play. They demonstrate a high regard for the well-being of all children, providing a child-centred environment which is particularly successful in encouraging individual learning.

Staff are deployed effectively, being allocated to play rooms and responsibilities. They make good use of the space available and work to daily routines so that children have times for free play, meals, rest and group activities. Toddlers and babies often mix together and this helps very young children to develop social skills. Older children benefit from the system of key workers which ensures that staff are aware of each child's personal development. The centre is well-resourced and so able to offer a variety of learning experiences for children of all ages.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the nursery was asked to ensure that the operational plan is kept up to date. The operational plan is now maintained appropriately and updated when necessary. This contributes to the quality of care on offer.

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

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.

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):

- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure that all staff have a good understanding of safety issues and procedures
- develop the activity planning in the toddler room to ensure a stimulating environment throughout the day
- update the written complaints procedure in line with the National Standards.

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