

# Apple Blossom Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105825
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 May 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Anne Legge
<b>Setting Address</b>	Honiton Road, Whimble, Exeter, Devon, EX5 2PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01404 822251
<b>E-mail</b>	info@appleblossomdaynursery.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Karen Irene Winson
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Apple Blossom Day Nursery is privately owned. It has been registered since 2000 and operates from a cabin-style building on the outskirts of the village of Whimble in Devon. Children are cared for in three rooms and two age groups. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

A maximum of 29 children, aged under eight years, may attend at any one time and there are currently 78 children on roll, most of whom attend part-time. Of these, 16 are funded three and four-year-olds. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those with English as an additional language are welcomed and supported. The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 on weekdays, for 51 weeks of the year. The manager and nine staff work with the children. Of these, seven staff, including the manager, have relevant child care or teaching qualifications and two are working towards qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery provides a clean environment for children, where staff ensure that all surfaces are maintained in a hygienic condition throughout the day. Tables are disinfected before children eat and floors are kept clean. Nappy changing routines are very hygienic, as staff use gloves and aprons, and disinfect the area after each use. Children wash their hands regularly, but they sometimes sit on the floor after washing and before they eat, which reduces their protection from infection. They sometimes use liquid soap, to reduce risks of cross-infection, but this is not consistent. Children's care is satisfactory when they are unwell or injured. There are sufficient staff with current first aid qualifications and appropriate systems to ensure that these are regularly updated. Records of accidents and medication are not always shared effectively with parents, so children's care lacks consistency when they are unwell or have minor injuries.

Children benefit from mainly healthy eating. They eat fresh fruit at snack times and most cooked lunches include fresh vegetables. However, deserts which are high in fat or sugar, such as chocolate mousse and chocolate pudding, feature regularly on the menu. Children drink water, milk or squash at meals and snacks, but fresh drinking water is not always readily available throughout the day, even in hot weather, so good fluid levels are not consistently promoted. Special dietary needs are recorded and carefully met. Children use the outdoor area for fresh air and physical exercise in all weathers. They run freely, climb and balance or use wheeled toys.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's security has been addressed effectively within the nursery. Doors are locked and staff are able to monitor access to the premises, through glass panels in the doors. The garden is fully enclosed and there is an appropriate policy for managing arrivals and departures. There is sufficient space for children to move around safely inside the nursery. Children choose from an adequate range of toys and resources, most of which are clean and in a good state of repair. There is appropriate equipment for babies, including high chairs and cots.

Nursery routines include risk assessments of all main activities and daily checks on all rooms and areas used by children. Most hazards have been addressed, but children have access to the broken wooden frame on the sand pit and to a loosely fitting barrier in the kitchen, which pose risks to their safety. Evacuation procedures are practised regularly, but not sufficiently often for all children and staff to become familiar with the routine. This compromises children's safety in emergencies. Children are well protected from abuse or neglect, as all staff have received training in safeguarding issues and procedures, and have a good understanding of how to protect children from harm.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children aged under three years have access to a good variety of activities, which effectively promote most aspects of their development. They enjoy using their senses to explore different substances, such as paint, dough, pasta, lentils or bubble wrap. They take part in imaginative role play, such as when using a large cardboard box as a television or speaking to parents on toy telephones. They design and build models, using large blocks, or they post shapes into

sorters. Children enjoy playing active singing games and babies have good opportunities to practise their crawling or walking skills. New planning systems ensure that very young children experience varied play opportunities in each session and that they are purposefully engaged in interesting activities throughout the day.

Planning takes into account the Birth to three matters framework, although not all aspects of the framework are fully addressed. Staff interact skilfully with children, promoting their communication skills, as they chat or sing, encouraging the babies and toddlers to respond. Records show how children are making progress in some areas of their development, but do not systematically track their progress through all aspects of the Birth to three matters framework.

Children attending before and after school have access to a range of suitable activities, including the use of a computer, playing board games or developing their creativity with art and craft materials. They use the outdoor areas for physical play and they have opportunities to relax, using the books and resources in the pre-school room.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Planning systems include all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum over time and the learning intentions of activities are clear. Assessment systems are complex and include reference to the stepping stones, but assessment information is not always used effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning. Children enjoy some choices and free play, but the resources available at any one time are limited. Consequently, they do not experience a broad range of play opportunities at every session, and some activities do not meet their individual needs. For example, children follow a mathematical theme, when they count, match numerals and make repeating patterns. Practical tasks, such as using cubes to make patterns, promote learning effectively. However, younger children soon become bored, when asked to sequence numbered paper fish, as they do not recognise the numerals.

Children talk confidently, share stories and write their names on their work, with appropriate adult support. They do not regularly discuss letter sounds or use writing for a variety of purposes, such as in their role play. Children have some opportunities to develop their creativity, as they sometimes use paint, dough and drawing materials. However, these activities are not freely available nor given a high priority in the planning. Children engage in imaginative role play, dressing up and becoming builders or animals, with appropriate adult encouragement. They enjoy singing familiar songs and using musical instruments.

Children develop their sense of time, as they discuss days, dates and weather or respond to the daily routine. They have opportunities to use good construction materials and to explore water channels and systems. They develop good control in their use of small equipment, such as pens and glue spreaders. Outdoors, they use a range of wheeled toys, but climbing equipment is very small and there are limited physical challenges for able children.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery has effective systems for communicating with parents, which generally promote consistency for children. Staff talk regularly to carers, exchanging relevant information. Very young children have daily record books, enabling staff and parents to share details of all aspects

of the child's care. For funded children, the nursery's partnership with parents and carers is good. Newsletters contain clear information about the curriculum and parents receive a termly summary of their child's progress towards the early learning goals. Records are shared at parents' evenings and are always available for parents to see. Parents feel well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and about their child's development.

All children and families are welcomed and included. Those with English as an additional language are encouraged to share aspects of their culture and language. Pictures and signing are used, to help children communicate successfully. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported, as staff work with parents and other professionals, to meet any additional needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn about different festivals and use multi-cultural resources, such as books, dolls and dressing-up clothes, to develop their understanding of diversity. Children are helped to share resources and to take turns. They are encouraged to speak politely, but this is not consistently modelled by staff, who sometimes issue orders, without saying 'please' or 'thank you'. Children's self-esteem is sometimes promoted, through the use of praise and encouragement, but some staff speak harshly to children or use sanctions which are too severe for the age of the child. For example, children of all ages are given 'time out' for relatively minor infringements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by appropriately qualified staff and there is a good commitment to ongoing training, to improve the quality of provision for children. Ratios are adequate and children generally receive the attention they need. Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. There are appropriate systems for appraising staff and identifying training needs. The manager is aware of areas which need to be improved and is committed to taking action to ensure that standards are raised, wherever necessary.

Most aspects of health and safety are at least satisfactory and the available space is used effectively. Children are provided with a variety of activities and younger children choose from a good range of resources. Their care is underpinned by all the required documentation, although the complaints log is not sufficiently detailed and records of accidents and medication are not consistently shared appropriately with parents. Overall, the nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the nursery agreed to develop resources and activities for very young children and to provide a comfortable area for children who attend after school. Staff also agreed to update complaints records and procedures. Since that time, good progress has been made in the planning of activities for children aged under three years, although there is still no consistent provision for developing children's sense of self and sense of belonging. Mats have been provided for older children, to create an area for relaxation. Documentation has been updated, although complaints procedures still lack some necessary details.

At the last nursery education inspection, the nursery was asked to increase opportunities for children to learn about numbers and letter patterns through practical activities, and to extend resources and activities, providing consistent challenges, especially in creative development and exploration of materials. Little progress has been achieved in these areas, as there are still limited opportunities for children to create freely or investigate a range of materials. There is

some challenge for able children in their mathematical development, but there are still too few planned practical tasks, which effectively promote children's understanding of numbers and letters.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection, there has been one complaint made to Ofsted relating to National Standard 1: Suitable person, National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 7: Health, and National Standard 8: Food and drink. Concerns were raised that staff had inadequate behaviour management techniques; that staff may not be suitable to care for children; that staff may not be suitably qualified; that the adult: child ratios were not being met; that hygiene procedures were not being followed and that food portions were not meeting children's individual needs. Ofsted liaised with another agency and conducted an unannounced visit. There was evidence that some National Standards were not being met. As a result actions were set in relation to National Standard 1, National Standard 2, National Standard 3: Care, learning and play, National Standard 7 and National Standard 11: Behaviour. A suitable response was received to these actions and the registered person remains qualified for registration.

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**

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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):

- improve children's health by ensuring that fresh drinking water is always available and that hand washing procedures effectively reduce the spread of infection
- improve children's safety by ensuring that resources and equipment, such as the sand pit and the gate across the kitchen, are always maintained in good condition. Practise evacuation procedures sufficiently often for all staff and children to know the routines
- consistently promote children's self-esteem, through the use of positive behaviour management strategies and good role modelling by all adults
- make sure that children's care is always supported by comprehensive documentation, including a detailed complaints log and records of accidents and medication, which are shared appropriately with parents.

#### **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):

- provide a wide range of activities and resources at each session, ensuring that all children are able to benefit from appropriate play and learning opportunities, especially in their creative and physical development
- continue to develop planning and assessment systems, ensuring that children's individual learning needs are identified and consistently met, through a wide range of practical activities.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)