

Wren House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY360412
Inspection date	03 June 2008
Inspector	Alison Weaver
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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 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?

Wren House Nursery School opened in 2007 under new ownership. It operates from a number of rooms in a building in Eastbourne. The setting is near to schools, parks and shops. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The group opens five days a week for 47 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 08.30 until 17.15. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children from one to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs five staff, three of whom, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two staff working towards a recognised qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by staff ensuring that they play in a clean environment. There are good hygiene practices in place, including wearing disposable gloves for the changing of nappies and keeping the changing area clean. Tables are cleaned before they are used for food. Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene through the daily routines, such as washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. At times, staff help children to begin to understand why they need to wash their hands by talking to them about the fact they need to get rid of all the germs.

Sufficient staff are trained in first aid to ensure children are cared for appropriately in the case of an emergency or injury. There are clear procedures in place for sick children and these are shared with all parents in the setting. Staff obtain all the necessary information about children's individual health and dietary needs from parents so that they can care for the child appropriately.

The staff plan and provide topics and activities to help promote children's understanding of healthy eating and the need for good personal hygiene. Children eat healthy snacks, such as crackers with cheese, fruit and raisins. However, staff do not always sit with the children at snack times to take advantage of the learning opportunity to discuss what is good to eat and to develop their social skills.

Children can help themselves to a drink whenever they get thirsty as they have drinks easily accessible to them. Staff encourage children to take regular drinks, particularly after exercise. This helps prevent dehydration in the children. Children show a developing awareness of their own personal needs, for example, as they take their tops off when they get hot.

Children enjoy plenty of opportunities to develop their physical skills. They show good coordination, moving confidently and safely indoors and outdoors. They enjoy playing outside on the trikes and cars. They enthusiastically take part in movement activities and learn to use their bodies in different ways. Children's fine motor skills develop as they use a range of tools and smaller equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff create a welcoming and attractive environment for children and parents with the use of a variety of colourful posters and pictures. They display children's work well and provide named coat pegs to give children a sense of belonging. The premises are kept secure and only authorised persons have access to the children. Staff supervise the children appropriately at all times so that they stay safe. There is a wide range of toys and equipment that are safe and suitable for the age and stage of development of the children. These resources are kept clean and in good condition. However, children are not always given sufficient choices of toys and equipment to play with.

Staff carry out basic daily safety checks and some risk assessments to help ensure that the environment is safe for children. However, some of the formal safety monitoring lacks helpful detail and not all safety aspects are covered. The necessary safety equipment is in place, including socket covers and high door catches. The organisation and use of the space is a safety

concern at certain times as there is insufficient space made available for the children. The setting is not well organised at these times to meet children's needs and the space ratios.

Children learn about how to stay safe in the event of a fire as they regularly practise emergency evacuation with staff. They stay safe when they go on outings as staff carry out a risk assessment before they go. Staff also ensure they have a first aid kit and contact details for each child with them. Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff are aware of the possible signs of abuse and know the correct procedures if they have a concern about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily and confidently leave their parents to settle at activities. Staff give the less confident children the attention and care that they need to help them settle. Children enjoy their time in the group and play well together. Staff are warm, caring and friendly. They build good relationships with the children. This enables children to feel at ease when approaching adults to chat or seek help. Staff interact effectively with children to support their play and promote their development.

Overall, children are interested and involved in the activities. The younger children have opportunities to make choices from a variety of toys and activities. This group makes basic use of the Birth to three matters framework to plan and provide activities for younger children. However, the planning for this group is not fully developed. Observations are carried out on the younger children but these are not clearly linked to the framework, nor are they used effectively to inform the planning to ensure that all children are developing.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff plan a curriculum that includes all six areas of learning. However, the planning is basic and lacks helpful detail to aid and support staff carrying out activities. There are no clear learning intentions identified for activities. In practice, staff do generally manage group activities so that they help extend children's learning, although this is not identified in the written plans. However, the organisation of the day does not always help staff meet children's needs. There is often insufficient choice of toys and activities for the children and the sessions are overly structured. This results in children having limited opportunities to initiate their own play and to enjoy a balance of daily activities that promote their development in all six areas.

Staff regularly observe the children and record what they can do. They use these observations to monitor children's progress and complete the profiles. Staff tend to use these records of children's progress on an informal basis to inform future planning. The staff discuss any gaps in the profiles and identify the next steps for learning.

Staff interact effectively with children and use good questioning to help children express their thoughts and ideas. The children enjoy the planned activities and become absorbed in their play. Children are secure, confident and behave well. They play well on their own but also seek out their friends to join them in activities. They develop their independence in everyday routines such as helping to put out packed lunches and getting their own drinks. However, the overly structured play limits the opportunities for children to self select resources.

Children speak confidently, both in circle times and with individuals. They chat readily about their families and events at home. Many children show a developing awareness of the link between sounds and letters. They show an enjoyment in letter sounds as they think up words that begin with the same letter. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. Children have plenty of opportunities to practise mark making. Children have fun 'writing letters' and forming the letters in their names and other words. Staff use labelling around the rooms to help children begin to understand that printed words have meaning.

Children count competently and happily join in number activities. They enjoy forming the number symbols using chalks and blackboards. They correctly find and name number symbols. Children learn to recognise shapes and sizes. They learn about simple calculation through everyday activities and play.

Children explore and investigate using their senses. They use different tools and equipment, such as binoculars, magnifiers and magnets. They find out about the natural world as they visit the local park and explore topics on mini beasts. They enjoy visits from zoo staff where they can see and touch different animals and creatures. Children learn about growth as they plant flowers and herbs. They have access to different forms of technology, such as a computer, calculators and toy tills. They learn about other countries and festivals. They welcome visitors into the group, such as police and fire officers, so that they can learn what they do.

Children learn to express themselves creatively in a variety of different ways. They enjoy free painting and collage activities but these are not always readily available. They thoroughly enjoy drawing and use their imagination well as they spend time creating very detailed pictures. However, the use of colouring sheets restricts their creativity. Children enjoy making music and singing. They enthusiastically play with the musical instruments. They have some opportunities to take part in role play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff work closely with parents to ensure they respect their wishes and care for each child appropriately. They obtain information about each child's individual needs and home backgrounds so that they can be fully included. Children learn to consider and value diversity through a variety of activities and topics. For example, they find out about different festivals, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. They have fun making lamps and lanterns, and dressing up in different costumes. Children have access to a satisfactory range of resources that reflect diversity.

There are satisfactory arrangements in place to care for children with additional needs. The trained Inclusion Coordinator (INCO) has recently left the group so the owner has been proactive in addressing this concern. She has put in place appropriate measures so they will have access to a trained INCO when needed whilst another member of staff is being trained. This helps ensure that any children with additional needs will get the support needed. The setting works with parents and outside agencies to meet children's needs.

Children behave well in the setting. The praise and encouragement from staff helps build children's confidence and self-esteem. Children learn to show care and concern for others. They are encouraged to share their feelings as they use the 'Feelings' hanging with staff. Staff have appropriate strategies in place for dealing with any inappropriate behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. The lobby area is used to display information to keep parents informed about general childcare issues, as well as giving access to the group's policies and photographs of staff. Staff display some of the plans, although these are not always in an easily understandable format. Parents are welcome to settle their children into the group and encouraged to share any concerns they have with staff. Staff use communication books to keep parents informed about their child's time in the group. The staff also use the books to give parents an outline of what children will be learning about and enjoying during the week.

The group is in the process of planning regular meetings with parents to discuss children's progress and to give them an opportunity to look at the profiles and records. The group has further plans to develop the opportunities for parents to be kept informed and contribute to children's learning and assessment but these have not yet been implemented. There are some opportunities for parents to contribute to children's learning by extending activities at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The setting is generally organised satisfactorily. However, for some short periods in the morning the group does not meet the required space ratios and this results in there being limited space for children to play. The grouping of children and the session planning is not always effective as at times there are insufficient activities and free choices available.

All of the required documentation is in place, meets regulations and contributes to children's health, safety and well-being. There are satisfactory recruitment and induction procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. The policies and procedures help support staff and inform parents.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are keen, well motivated and work effectively as a team. Staff development is promoted through yearly formal appraisals. Staff enhance their knowledge and skills by attending short courses on childcare issues to help develop the nursery education provision. There is no formal system in place to evaluate the curriculum and the planned activities to identify areas for improvement.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable: this is the first inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration, 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.

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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):

- implement more rigorous risk assessments to fully ensure the safety of children at all times
- make more effective use of the space and organisation of the groups of children to ensure their needs are met throughout the day (also applies to nursery education).

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):

- ensure that there is sufficient variety of activities and choices for children to enable them to initiate their own play and develop fully in all areas of learning
- continue to develop the planning to include sufficient detail that includes clear learning intentions, and to show how activities can be adapted and extended to challenge all children appropriately (also applies to care).

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