

Imagine at the John Radcliffe

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY345412
Inspection date	18 July 2008
Inspector	Rosemary Davies
Setting Address	John Radcliffe Hospital, Headley Way, Headington, OXFORD, OX3 9DU
Telephone number	01865 762402
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Registered person	The Midcounties Co-Operative Limited
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Imagine at the John Radcliffe opened in 2007. It is one of six provisions run by Midcounties Co-operative Society Limited. It operates from the ground floor of the new children's hospital on the John Radcliffe Hospital site. The nursery has five playrooms, with children accommodated mainly according to age. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 until 18.00 all year around. There is an enclosed area for outdoor play. The setting provides places for families employed by the hospital trust, the staff of the John Radcliffe Hospital and members of the public.

A maximum of 96 children may attend the provision at any one time. There are currently 104 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children learning English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 21 members of staff to work directly with the children. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications at Level 3. The manager holds a relevant foundation degree. Regular support is received from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A wide range of well thought out measures help maintain children's good health. The potential dangers of cross-infection are minimised as staff follow stipulated procedures carefully. They wear different coloured disposable aprons for serving food and cleaning chores, for example. Kitchen hygiene is good, with advice from outside agencies, such as Environmental Health, implemented fully. Children learn good personal hygiene routines, washing their hands thoroughly when needed and clean their teeth after meals. All required medical and accident records are kept appropriately and sufficient staff have appropriate qualifications in first aid. A first aid box is kept in each room.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious meals. These are freshly cooked on the premises and menus planned to offer a 'five a day' selection of fresh fruit and vegetables. Menus are shared with parents and children, all of whom contribute to them. Foods from a range of cultural backgrounds are offered to widen children's tastes. Children's individual dietary requirements are met well. They tuck in to mid-morning snacks of fresh fruit, enjoying a good selection. However, staff fail to give clear explanations about the names of fruits or discuss why eating them is a healthy thing to do, in order to help children learn more about healthy lifestyles. Older children help themselves to fresh water when they wish, whilst younger children are offered additional drinks regularly, so all take fluids according to their individual requirements.

Children benefit from going outside in the nursery grounds at least twice a day to have fresh air and exercise. Older children make appropriate progress in their physical development, such as in developing ball control skills. There are no challenging climbing facilities available on a daily basis for the more athletic children, but regular visits to nearby parks where different equipment is available, help overcome this disadvantage. A varied range of activities and experiences helps older children develop their hand and finger dexterity, such as making puzzles, threading and using a variety of tools and implements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is paramount in this nursery. Effective systems ensure the nursery is secure and that visitors cannot enter unless invited. Staff identify potential hazards to children's safety well and risk assessment is effective. Staff follow procedures closely to maintain children's safety, such as conducting required checklists diligently, indoors and outside. Children learn how to keep themselves safe, hearing why it is unwise to tip chairs when sitting on them or the dangers of throwing sand. Good fire prevention precautions are in place. Emergency evacuation procedures work effectively in practice. Staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard children's welfare. They know the procedures to be followed should they have concerns for children's wellbeing. An effective password system is used if children become unwell and have to leave the nursery with someone other than their main carers.

Children use modern, spacious, air-conditioned premises. Equipment, resources and toys are plentiful and of high quality. Although the babies' room lacks natural light, staff make sure they go outside several times a day. Babies have plenty of room in which to try moving around and attempt to walk. All rooms provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, with toys readily accessible in transparent containers and bright displays of children's work, posters and pictures.

Full use is made of the outdoor area, although the older children do not have ready access to this, so cannot make their own decisions about when to play outside.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff make effective use of the Birth to three matters guidance to plan a good range of activities for children under the age of three years. Children throughout the nursery enjoy their experiences and learn through practical, exploratory play, using all their senses. All have high levels of choice over what they will do and for how long. This supports their independence as learners well, as does the layout of rooms.

Staff provide helpful support to babies as they start to find their voices. They make good eye contact with them and often repeat babies' babble to encourage them. Toddlers revel in exploring different materials, such as sand and jelly, whilst two and three year olds enjoy beginning to make marks with chalks whilst outside. All receive good levels of support from staff who encourage all areas of children's development well, including their ability to play happily alongside each other. Good daily routines support children's individual welfare needs well. Staff follow parental wishes for sleep, feeding and weaning babies. Throughout the nursery, children use cosy cushioned corners when wanting to rest or simply sit quietly and look at a book.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals of this Foundation Stage of their education. This is because staff have a secure understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Stage and plan an interesting range of experiences that cover all six areas of learning. However, some aspects of these areas are not covered effectively. Children enjoy mark making, for example, and make use of the special writing area but sometimes there is insufficient paper provided and pencils are blunt, which discourages children's intentions. Additionally, writing materials are not provided in the imaginative play corners, so that children are not prompted to mark make as part of their pretend play. Staff do not intentionally model writing on a daily basis, so children can watch how letters are formed properly. Nevertheless, the wealth of opportunities to support children's hand control means they develop an effective grip, which underpins their potential writing skills well.

Children concentrate well when involved in self-chosen play. They persevere to finish puzzles, build models and complete computer games. Children show their developing understanding of early mathematical language as they count spontaneously in their play. They enjoy number rhymes that help them learn to count.

Children clearly enjoy books, listening well to stories and choosing to browse through their favourites individually. Children's creative work is developing well through use of a varied selection of materials and media. Some children already begin to make up imaginary stories for themselves. These often reflect their interest in chosen topics. They make full use of a good range of resources provided to support their play, such as when 'packing our suitcase to go on holiday'. However, group times are not always focussed on things that interest children or organised to take account of their level of understanding. They do not understand 'months' or 'what year it is' for example, so valuable group time is not used fully effectively to support learning.

Staff make useful observations of children's learning. They note children's progress during adult-led activities and what interests them, being well aware of the learning intentions at these times. Written planning provides effective guidance for questioning children during conversations, as part of their assessment. Records are kept up-to-date and the information gained is used well to inform future planning of activities, so that learning is progressive.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued and included in this nursery and its activities. The diverse cultural backgrounds of the children are acknowledged and celebrated, consequently they begin to learn that families differ and have different special days and festivals. The nursery supports children learning English as an additional language well. Rooms offer many visual clues to help such children understand what is expected of them. The special educational needs coordinator works effectively with families and outside professionals to provide appropriately for children who have additional learning needs.

Relationships throughout the nursery are good. Staff are caring and kind towards the children, who happily approach them for help, a cuddle or comfort. Children behave well overall, owing to staff adopting a consistent and positive approach towards them. Staff value children's work, displaying pictures and praising their efforts to do and make things, which boosts their self-esteem. Children learn to share and staff intervene quickly to settle any minor disagreements. The attention of older children sometimes drifts during 'circle time', if activities are not closely matched to their interests. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. All parents and carers receive much useful information about the nursery and what it provides for their children. They are involved in assessments of their children's progress. Parents of older children receive interesting suggestions of how they might support children's nursery education at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by staff who are cleared as suitable to be with them, owing to the robust procedures in place for their appointment. Effective induction procedures ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff appraisals pinpoint staff development needs and staff are appreciative of the nursery's support in helping them acquire new skills and knowledge.

Policies and procedures are reviewed and, whilst many are corporate ones for this small chain of nurseries, other are 'site specific' and stipulated procedures are followed well by staff. These contribute to an effective operational plan that keeps the nursery running smoothly on a day to day basis and ensures that children are kept safe, in good health and are well stimulated. All required records, documentation and parental permissions are in place, kept confidentially, securely and are ready for inspection.

The quality leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Staff work together well to support the range of activities offered, both indoors and outside. They receive clear direction on their individual roles for adult led activities. However, there is insufficient monitoring to check that all aspects of the areas of learning are implemented effectively in practice and

to make good use of group times. Staff take advice from local authority advisors. A clear plan for the development of nursery education is in place, such as installing doors from the playroom directly to the outside area, so that children can play indoors or outdoors as they wish.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was judged as providing inadequate care. Two actions were set for improvement relating to children's safety and the deployment of staff. The nursery drew up a detailed action plan to address the issues raised and has implemented effective measures to raise the standard of care provided. Additionally, the nursery has acted to address all other issues mentioned in that report and has gone beyond these to instigate further changes. The end result is to substantially improve the standard of care offered since the last inspection.

Following the last inspection, two recommendations were raised to improve the standard of nursery education. These related to children's assessment, together with both the planning and monitoring of the activities offered, and to the partnership with parents. The staff now make effective use of assessment to plan what they will offer the children next and assessments are monitored effectively to ensure records are updated regularly. However, some aspects of the curriculum are not covered fully and this part of the monitoring process remains as a recommendation from this inspection. The partnership with parents and carers has improved considerably.

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.

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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):

- further develop children's understanding of healthy eating by discussing the foods children eat during snack and meal times

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 group times are managed so as to reflect children's interests and maintain their attention
- ensure children have a variety of opportunities daily to practise their mark making and to see staff model writing clearly.

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