

Russell Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY355211
Inspection date	22 April 2008
Inspector	Adelaide Griffith
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Registered person	Russell Nursery School Ltd
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?

Russell Nursery School is one of two nurseries run by the provider. It opened in 2007 and operates from purpose built premises. It is situated in a residential suburb of Birmingham. A maximum of 46 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 bank holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 34 children aged from eight months to under five years on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for early education. Children come mainly from the local community. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from a teacher/mentor and also from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are clearly learning about personal hygiene as part of the daily routine and they wash hands in relation to activities. They are adequately protected against infection. For example, food is stored and prepared according to Environmental Health guidelines. However, staff use their hands to serve some foods eaten by children. Additionally, a policy relating to sickness is not available for inspection. Consequently, children's health may be compromised. Parental consent is obtained for procedures including the administration of medication and records are signed as appropriate. Staff hold current first aid qualifications and first aid boxes are accessible.

Children are learning about healthy options primarily through balanced meals which are freshly cooked daily. Snacks consist of a mixture of fresh fruit and plain biscuits. Babies are served with milk feeds as supplied by parents and water is available throughout the day.

All children have access to outside play. Weather permitting, babies are taken outdoors in the fresh air. In spite of access to a limited range of resources, toddlers have daily experiences of running around. Babies and toddlers sleep according to a pattern agreed with parents.

Children receiving early education engage in some physical activity. They run around in the available space and kick large balls. They are mainly developing spatial awareness by moving between cones and their precision skills are growing through hitting at small balls.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which is bright and cheerful. The rooms are maintained at an adequate temperature and there is sufficient space for all children to move around freely. Outdoors, children are safe at all times due to bolted gates and they play with toys chosen for age-appropriateness and developmental benefits. There are some safety measures in place, for instance, high door handles and radiator covers. However, trailing leads and overhead storage in some rooms pose a potential hazard to children's safety.

Children are kept secure due to controlled access to the premises. They are adequately supervised during activities and whilst asleep. Most fire precautions are taken. For instance, signs and notices are clearly displayed. Furthermore, fire drills carried out regularly help children to gain some understanding of the procedure. Nevertheless, one fire exit is partially blocked and this may hinder evacuation in the event of an emergency. Consequently, children's safety is put at risk.

Children's welfare is principally safeguarded due to staff's sound knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. They are clearly informed about recording and reporting procedures. Also, there is an awareness of procedures to be followed in the event of allegations against staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities that promote the development of babies and toddlers. Observations are carried out frequently and the information gained is used for further planning. Children's overall development is effectively promoted. Their hand-eye coordination is growing through assembling jigsaws and creativity is encouraged as they draw pictures with primary colours. Children's imaginative skills are suitably promoted through play with dressing up clothes. Fine muscle skills are applied in mixing ingredients and they play with malleable materials such as play dough or clay.

Children's sensory development is promoted through different methods. They have opportunities to engage in experiences such as tasting a selection of fruit including mangoes and raisins. Their sense of touch is enhanced through the feel of corn flour. Owing to a selection of instruments their appreciation of music is significantly encouraged. Staff talk to children and this helps to promote their language skills effectively. Children's confidence is growing due to choice with regard to a selection of activities, for example, singing or listening to stories.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and this is reflected in the planning of activities which include all areas of learning. Observations are carried out regularly and the information gained is used to move on to the next level of the stepping stones. For children who speak English as an additional language, some key words are used to encourage communication and to support their learning.

Staff use appropriate teaching methods to help children learn. They talk and listen to children's communication about home experiences but they do not use open questions effectively to stimulate children's thinking. Staff demonstrate how to use equipment including hoops during outside play and some routine activities are used to promote learning, for instance, counting the number of children at dinner time. On the other hand, when playing at the soil tray there is no discussion relating to the texture or colour of the soil. Consequently, children's learning is not consistently extended.

Children are at ease in the setting and are forming relationships with peers and adults and some are sufficiently confident to initiate conversation. Younger children engage in mark making and older ones are beginning to write several letters of their name. They investigate construction materials and build several objects with bricks. They know how to operate simple equipment such as the mouse for completing information technology programmes. Children engage in creative play such as bubble painting and they use one handed tools including spades and scoops with increasing control.

Children are generally well behaved and comply appropriately with requests, for example, to refrain from rocking on the chairs. Children are praised consistently for effort and achievement. Consequently, their self-esteem is raised positively. Children's social and interpersonal skills are growing through interaction with staff during meal times. Children are clearly aware of boundaries of behaviour. For example, they explain the requirement to listen when others are talking.

Staff work directly with children much of the time and they have some scope for free play. However, most of the activities are led by staff and children are not frequently invited to take a lead. Staff provide an environment that is organised to help children to be fairly independent.

For instance, they put on outdoor clothes with minimal assistance. Staff make reasonable use of the accommodation. The rooms are colourful due to a selection of posters and an adequate range of resources is provided. However, the rooms are not set up to promote all areas of learning at all times and children do not have spontaneous access to creative materials. Generally, children are making progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and their individual care needs met as agreed with parents. Children are largely gaining an awareness of other cultures through resources and activities such as the celebration of festivals. Children are gaining an understanding of the local community mainly through visits to the library and shops. Currently there are no children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the setting. Notwithstanding, staff understand the need to discuss children's requirements with parents and to liaise with external agencies as appropriate in order to meet children's additional needs effectively.

Children are well behaved due to strategies that encourage good behaviour. They are praised consistently and this raises their self-esteem. Staff constantly talk and listen to children. Additionally, they are learning to share and they consistently participate in tidying away following activities. This means that their interpersonal skills are growing and they are clearly learning to take responsibility for their environment. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There is a positive relationship with parents. There is a settling-in period for children and copies of policies are available. Information is shared daily about children's experiences and routines. Newsletters are provided with information about changes and planned activities. A firm agreement is in place for the collection of children in the event of emergencies, for example, passwords are used. This ensures that children's welfare is maintained.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Before children start at the nursery, parents are provided with information about the curriculum. Parents are kept informed about children's progress through parents' evening and examples of their child's work. Parents are invited to contribute to their child's learning through planned activities and children take 'Billy Bear' home in order to implement activities which can be shared with others. Children's learning benefits from the partnership with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are largely protected due to suitability procedures which ensures that all staff are vetted and students work under supervision. All new staff undergo an induction programme that includes mandatory components such as health and safety. A key worker system is in place with required adult to child ratios. There are adequate contingency arrangements to cover unforeseen emergencies. These measures contribute primarily to maintaining children's welfare. However, this is not reinforced as there is not a named deputy to take charge in the absence of the manager.

Most documentation is available. Children's records are stored securely and updated regularly. Staff are clearly informed about the procedures for the retention of records and for notifying Ofsted about significant changes. Most records, policies and procedures which are required for

the efficient and safe management of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children, are maintained.

The leadership and management of funded children is satisfactory. The providers aim to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Foundation Stage in order to help children learn. Also, there is the vision to establish links with local schools. Staff attend courses to promote their understanding of the curriculum and they receive relevant guidance with regard to procedures. However, this is not consistently reflected in the teaching methods. Consequently, children's learning is not always delivered effectively.

The strengths of the setting include the pleasant atmosphere and staff's enthusiasm in supporting children's learning generally. On the other hand, owing to the outside play area and the paucity of related resources, children do not benefit from activities that help them to develop a wide range of large muscle skills. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints 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

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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 procedures to prevent the spread of infection in relation to the serving of meals and ensure that policies about infectious illnesses are always available for inspection
- improve risk assessments within the setting with regard to leads and overhead storage and ensure fire doors are not obstructed
- take positive steps to ensure that there is a named deputy who is able to take charge in the absence of the manager.

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 facilities and resources to promote children's learning consistently with regard to creative activities
- improve staff's knowledge and understanding to ensure that teaching methods are delivered consistently in order to promote children's learning
- improve outdoor facilities and resources in order to provide a wide variety of play experiences.

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