

Once Upon A Time Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY355999
Inspection date	05 June 2008
Inspector	Christine Eglinton
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Registered person	Once Upon A Time 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?

Once Upon a Time Nursery School opened in 2007. It is privately owned and operates from the ground floor of a newly converted and extended house on the outskirts of Norwich, Norfolk. A maximum of 34 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 55 children on roll of these, 14 receive funding for early education. The nursery has experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year excluding bank holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications and the manager and deputy are working towards a higher qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from playing in a clean environment where staff follow effective health and hygiene practices. For instance, staff clean toys and equipment frequently and use good hygiene practices when changing babies. This ensures children benefit from playing in a clean environment where the risk of contamination is minimised. From an early age children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through effective daily routines. For example, children wash their hands before they eat their snacks and after visiting the toilet. They are encouraged to clean their teeth after lunch which helps to establish good personal hygiene practices.

The setting follows appropriate exclusion procedures for specific infectious illnesses which help to prevent the spread of infection. All staff hold a current first aid certificate which enables children to be given appropriate care if there is an accident. Appropriate systems for the administration of medication are in place which ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. However, recording of accidents shows that on some occasions, parents are not being informed of accidents occurring while their child is attending the setting. Consequently, this does not help to promote children's welfare and does not support effective management of the setting.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy nutritious and healthy home cooked meals prepared on the premises which includes home grown produce from the nursery garden. For instance, children have sampled rhubarb from the garden. Children grow runner beans and tomatoes and make healthy pizzas which helps them to develop healthy eating practices. Children freely access water from their own drinking bottles during the day which ensures they remain well hydrated improving their overall good health.

Opportunities for children to be active, learn control of their bodies and develop their physical skills are good. Babies and toddlers are given appropriate resources which encourage their physical development. For example, toddlers enjoy using push along toys to encourage their walking skills and peek-a-boo games helping young children connect ideas and actions through movement. Older children have great fun jumping off crates and enjoy moving their bodies in a variety of ways such as crawling, and hopping while pretending to be a variety of insects.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from playing in a bright, welcoming and well-organised environment which enables them to move around safely and freely. Staff have displayed children's creative work attractively which helps to establish a child-friendly and inviting environment. Children use a wide range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development, which is generally in good supply. Staff set up a variety of continuous provision in all of the rooms, which helps to support children's overall development. Children are able to independently help themselves to the equipment because it is stored at low-levels. This helps young children develop self-assurance because they are helped to trust their own abilities, and are given good opportunities to begin activities independently. However, older children do not have access to a sufficient range of resources that enable them to relax and rest when needed during the day. This sometimes results in children becoming overtired which affects their concentration levels, and impacts on their learning and development.

Children are able to play in a safe and secure environment because staff use regular risk assessments in each room and outside to minimise hazards. Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. Staff use simple explanations to help children develop an understanding of how to keep safe. For instance, staff explain the dangers of jumping off the crates where other children are playing.

Staff have good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what action to take if they have any concerns about a child in their care. They are generally aware of the setting's procedures which ensure that children's welfare is fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and they arrive happy and confident. Appropriate individual settling-in routines help children quickly settle into the nursery environment. For example, they are able to bring special comforters from home which helps them settle more easily. Staff ensure they find out about children's individual needs such as their favourite toys and activities. This helps to offer children familiar experiences and helps staff to build on children's starting points to further their development.

Babies and toddlers enjoy lots of individual attention and being physically close to other children and adults where lots of communication takes place. They have good opportunities of learning through movement and active interaction with their environment. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan a good range of sensory experiences for children under three years. For example, toddlers explore a good variety of different textures including custard and baked beans. They have great fun playing with cooked spaghetti and are encouraged to talk about how it feels, while observing the changes when water is added. Staff have formed positive relationships with the children and are very caring. Children ask after staff who are absent and often approach them for support during their play. This demonstrates that trusting relationships have been formed. Children take part in a generally well-balanced selection of activities which includes physical activities. However, some periods of the day, for example, lunch time for the older children results in children remaining inactive for a considerable length of time. Consequently, this causes some of them to become very restless which does not enhance the learning opportunities during this key period of the session.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage, the stepping stones and how children learn. Children are given appropriate opportunities of taking part in first hand experiences such as making a spider pizza and exploring snow and rain. Teaching allows children time for repetition so that they are able to consolidate what they have learned. However, sometimes there is not a sufficient balance of child initiated activities that reflects children's current interests. This does not ensure that activities are being used to motivate individual learning. Staff plan a broad range of activities that cover the key areas of learning, and they regularly observe and record children's progress. However, current systems do not always demonstrate how information from assessments is used to help inform planning and move children on to the next stage in their learning.

Children are confident learners and staff provide time for the children ensuring they are listened to while offering them praise and encouragement. Consequently, children are confident to

share their ideas and are developing their communication skills well. They talk openly about themselves and their families and recall familiar experiences. For instance, two children talk about their recent trip to a local farm centre and compare their views of the animals. Children are becoming aware of sounds and letters such as 'g for goat'. There are appropriate opportunities for children to recognise well known signs within the local and wider community enabling them to learn that print carries meaning and they enjoy listening to their favourite stories. Children count confidently such as counting the toy spider legs and are helped to recognise numerals when they play on the number mats. Children are able to recognise shapes in every day situations such as a pizza being 'round' and topics such as the 'three bears' helps them learn about size and measure. However, there are missed opportunities during practical activities to help children develop early calculation skills.

Children use a range of tools and equipment to explore their surroundings such as using magnifying glasses to examine mini beasts. They actively explore changes in the seasons when they experience rain and snow and learn about changes in ingredients during cooking activities. They are confident in using information and technology and have access to computer programmes to assist their learning. Children learn about a sense of time through appropriate topic work. They express themselves creatively through using a range of mediums enabling them to paint, draw and make collages that represent their experiences. There are frequent opportunities to use their senses because they regularly explore natural, and manufactured materials with contrasting textures. Children are developing their imagination well and enjoy rhyming songs and taking part in music sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff encourage and support all children so they can maximise the experiences and enjoyment of the activities on offer. Planned topics teach children about different cultures and sufficient resources help children to develop a positive attitude towards others. Staff make expectations of behaviour clear and give reasons for request, ensuring children understand why certain behaviour is not acceptable. For instance they talk to the children about being kind towards their friends and children use equipment such as egg timers, which help them recognise when they are able to take turns on the bikes. Consequently, children show consideration towards each other and they are learning important social skills such as sharing and taking turns.

There are appropriate systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensure all children's needs are well planned for and met. Staff are secure in their knowledge of the code of practice, which means they are able to plan for children's individual needs. Therefore, children are able to experience a range of stimulating activities appropriate to their level of ability.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Children benefit from positive partnerships developed with parents, and parents speak warmly of staff's positive and welcoming approach. Parents provide appropriate and relevant information about their child to staff which helps to ensure children receive individual care and attention. A brochure covering all relevant information regarding the setting is given to every parent and copies of the settings policies and procedures are made freely available. Positive comments from some of the parents are included on the nursery's web site. Information regarding the six areas of learning are contained within the parent brochure. Parents can speak to their child's key worker about their child's progress at any time. However, currently there are limited opportunities of

involving parents in their children's assessment records and encouraging them in supporting their child's learning at home in meaningful ways.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting implements robust recruitment procedures which means that children benefit from being cared for by suitable, experienced and qualified staff. Staff are committed to attending further childcare training and development courses. This helps them to reflect and improve the quality of care and education they offer to all children. The day is generally balanced allowing children time for quiet and active play. However, staff ratios are sometimes not being met when new children are present during settling-in sessions. This does not ensure that staff are able to offer children appropriate support particularly when young children are distressed and require individual attention. The premises layout is well-organised and enables children to play freely. Information kept about the children is relevant and helps to promote their welfare. All mandatory records are in place, confidential and generally appropriately maintained. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. Staff are supported by management through regular meetings and receive sufficient support from outside agencies, to help them improve the educational provision. The setting's aims are positive with emphasis on developing positive relationships with parents and children and building a strong staff team. This is being achieved through staff coming together collectively as a group to discuss the ethos of the setting. However, the group is still relatively new and although the manager and senior staff recognise areas of weakness in respect of monitoring and assessment, they are still working towards addressing these areas. Consequently, this sometimes impacts on the quality of learning and teaching. The manager and deputy are positive role models to staff in relation to furthering their own professional development through attending higher level training. This shows a good commitment towards improving the quality and care, and education the setting offers to all the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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 the 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):

- improve accident recording systems to ensure parents are kept fully aware of any injuries occurring to their children whilst attending the setting
- ensure older children are given sufficient opportunities to relax and rest during the day by providing appropriate resources
- make sure daily routines do not result in the older children having to remain inactive for considerable periods of time
- ensure staff ratios are adhered to at all times including when new children are being settled in.

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):

- make sure there is a balanced range of adult-led and child-led activities for the older children to enable them to take the initiative in their play and learning which is based on children's current interests
- ensure assessments of children's progress clearly identifies the next steps in their learning and use this information to inform planning which is monitored to ensure learning objectives are being met
- improve opportunities for children to develop simple calculation skills during practical situations
- continue to develop opportunities to help parents take an active role in their child's learning at home.

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