

Stramongate Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY357864
Inspection date	11 July 2008
Inspector	Diane Roberts
Setting Address	Stramongate School, Blackhall Road, KENDAL, Cumbria, LA9 4BT
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Registered person	QKS Meadowview Nursery 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?

Stramongate Nursery is managed by the committee of QKS Meadowview Nursery Limited. It opened in 2007 under new ownership. It operates from purpose-built premises situated within the grounds of Stramongate School in the centre of Kendal. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 15.15 during term time. Children attend for a variety of sessions. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 48 children aged from three to under five years on roll. All of these children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are no children with English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven staff. All of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted as staff consistently encourage them to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. The children's main toilets are kept clean and fully stocked with paper towels and liquid soap throughout the day to further promote children's health. However, the toilet used for nappy changing and for people with a disability is cluttered and used for storage. This means the room is not kept to the same hygienic standard as the main toilets and is not consistently used to protect children's privacy.

Children take part in regular physical play, both indoors and outside, encouraging a positive attitude to exercise. They happily play outdoors with a range of different size bats and balls or play running games. Children can freely access time in the fresh air, whatever the weather, throughout the session. They confidently put on their own Wellingtons and outdoor wear, such as coats and waterproof trousers, thereby their independence is promoted. Children sit together at mealtimes, thereby promoting their social skills. Abilities needed for independence are encouraged as children pour their own drinks, put their lunchboxes away and move their own plates. However, the healthy fruit snacks offered to children are prepared beforehand by staff. This means that children's independence is not routinely promoted.

Parents give prior written permission to administer any medication and written records are kept of all medicines administered to children. However, there is very little written information with regard to children's specific health conditions. This means that children's welfare is not fully promoted. Children's health is not always given high priority. For example, in some instances, staff are not suitably trained to administer certain medication or vital medication is out of its expiry date. Accident records are generally maintained and signed by parents of any accidents. However, a number of these are poorly completed. This means that children's health could be compromised.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an attractive, safe and secure environment where they have space to play indoors and outside. Thoughtful consideration is given to the layout of the room, providing children with somewhere to be quiet and still as well as to take part in more energetic activities. Low tables and storage means that children are able to access most activities readily.

Toys and play resources are age appropriate and well maintained. Good supervision of activities helps to limit accidents and teach children how to begin to take responsibility for their own safety. For instance, during a baking activity, one child reminds another about being careful when using a knife. Children are confident because of the good balance between freedom to move around, both indoors and outside, and the supervision to protect them. Good systems are in place to limit hazards. For example, the outdoor play area is routinely checked by staff for hazards before children go out to play.

Children's security is given high priority, thereby children cannot leave the playroom unsupervised. For instance, at the end of the session, when children are being collected, staff stand at both exit doors to make sure each child is signed out and leaves with their appropriate

adult. Staff regularly count how many children there are, especially following arrival and departure times.

Children are safeguarded because the setting has a child protection procedure and a designated member of staff has attended up-to-date child protection training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children happily enter the setting, greeting each other and staff. Adults are attentive to the children, constantly interacting with them without stifling their independence. Children are familiar with the daily routines and wait in anticipation as staff explain what activities are on offer throughout the session. A good range of worthwhile activities are rotated to stimulate children and maintain their interest. Story times and group activities are mainly well planned, taking into account children's concentration spans. Children are occupied throughout the session and respond enthusiastically when involved in conversations about subjects, such as the weather or their home life.

Children enjoy using their imagination as they dress up and play in the role play area. On the day of the inspection the role play area presented as a hospital. This was well resourced with medical outfits and bandages. Children are able to express themselves imaginatively and represent their feelings in small or large group situations, such as at story time or share and tell. They have established good relationships with each other and interact well with staff and other adults. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good.

Lots of photographs of nursery children involved in activities adorn the walls at children's height helping them to feel included in the setting. Children's free art creations attractively displayed around the room further help to create a bright, eye-catching environment. Inviting displays are arranged on tables easily accessible to children. A display about wild animals with African artefacts was of particular interest to children. On the day of the inspection, children demonstrated their pleasure as they spent time arranging and rearranging the display. They smiled contentedly as they straightened things on the table, enjoying the sensations of the different textures, such as the fur material and the wooden mask.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The manager has a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and is aware of the learning intentions of most activities and how they help children progress toward the early learning goals. However, this understanding is not consistent throughout the staff team. Children benefit from a strong learning environment that is well planned and a programme of activities that covers the six areas of learning and early learning goals. However, there is little monitoring of how each child spends their time at each session. This means that some children may not be taking advantage of the opportunities the setting offers. Children's progress is recorded by means of regular assessment. However, most observations are not fully evaluated. This means that children's next steps in learning are not consistently identified or are being used for planning.

Everyday situations, such as having a snack or getting dressed for outdoor play, provide rich contexts to encourage conversations. During story time, children eagerly join in with the words 'squash' and 'squeeze' and wiggle and giggle as staff read their favourite book. A listening tape is played at the same time as the book is read. This further enhances the story with realistic

sound effects and encourages children to listen. Children like the repetition in the story and join in with 'splish, splash', 'vroom, vroom' and 'chuffity chuff' at the appropriate times. Good questioning challenges children and makes them think. For instance, during the baking session, staff ask the children what a sieve is used for. At lunch time, staff use good questioning techniques to encourage children to use language. For instance, staff ask why an item is freezing cold. They go on to ask whether it would be freezing if it had been in an oven. During a baking activity, children talk about 'beating' the margarine until soft and then 'creaming' the mixture until light and fluffy. Staff talk about it being easier to stand when baking rather than sitting on a chair. In this way children are given the opportunity to link language with physical movement. Good use of a recipe book with different text and pictures helps to reflect the importance of language through books.

Children generally have a good grasp of mathematical concepts. They recognise numerals and are able to count groups of items with accuracy. Children have opportunities to share mathematical language in respect of weighing and measuring the ingredients during a baking session. However, staff usually refer to imperial terms rather than metric and, in general, children have limited access to numeral text. Children competently generate pictures on the computer and print their creations. However, as the printer is restricted from view of the children they are not able to connect the action of printing with the action of pressing the print key. Thereby children are struggling to succeed with the computer program.

Outdoors, the garden gives children somewhere to investigate different aspects of the natural world and enjoy activities, such as planting and growing. Here children grow items from seed, such as sunflowers, mint, beans and carrots. This is evident from the many flourishing pots outside.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children behave well as they learn to consider others and what is expected of them. They spontaneously thank staff for their turn in an activity and are given extra praise and attention when they have helped others during the session. During story time, or at other times when they are sitting together, they are encouraged to listen to one another. Staff refer to the children as 'friends' and reward children with stickers for a caring behaviour. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children learn about the wider world in which they live. For instance, they listen intently to a book about visiting a hospital. The book tells the story of a child who did not want to go to hospital. Children had the opportunity to express their own emotions in the resulting discussion about the story. They join in with their own experiences, such as saying they did not like the hospital when they 'smelled it' during a visit.

Children are learning about other people in the community who serve and help. For instance, they have recently benefited from visits from a firefighter and a police officer. The children talk with excitement about the visit from the police officer. They describe the police van enclosing a special cage for the police dog. They are animated as they talk about trying on real police uniforms.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents clearly find the staff friendly and approachable and they are warmly welcomed into the setting. Newsletters keep parents informed about any planned themes, topics and activities. A complaints procedure is in place

and the contact number of Ofsted as the regulator is clearly displayed. Parents attend regular meetings where they are able to see evidence of their child's progress. Records of achievement give a chronological story of child's time in the pre-school, charting progress through. Parents are encouraged to extend their child's learning at home and are kept informed via the designated noticeboard.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Staff are committed to providing a child friendly environment. Appropriate employment and induction processes are in place to make sure that staff are suitable and thereby children are protected.

There is an effective system in place for registering children and staff attendance on a daily basis. Records are generally maintained and appropriately stored on the premises with an awareness of confidentiality. However, important care and education information for individual children is often vague and, in some instances, incomplete.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The manager has a clear vision for the nursery education. However, this information is not sufficiently and routinely shared with the rest of the staff. Policies and procedures are in place and are regularly reviewed, but the group does not consistently work together as a team. This means that staff are not always aware of the most effective ways to deliver the curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

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 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):

- review children's health and accident records to make sure full details are recorded of any specific health and care requirements and the recording of accidents is accurate and contains the relevant information
- review procedures for the administration of any medication to make sure it is always within expiry date and where technical knowledge is required for the administration of any medication review procedures to ensure staff are given training from a qualified health professional
- review procedures for keeping the designated toilet for people and children with disabilities clean and free from clutter

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):

- review arrangements for identifying clear learning intentions for individual children to make sure plans for the Foundation Stage are informed by observations and based on the early learning goals. Make sure practitioners understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements
- review the position of the printer to the computer and accessibility for children to ensure they can successfully and independently complete a program.

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