

Stargazers Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY318145
Inspection date	02 July 2008
Inspector	Mary Anne Henderson

Setting Address	Stargazers Nursery, Unit 8, Sweetlake Business Village, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY3 9EW
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Telephone number	01743 248448
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Registered person	Natalie Jane Tudor
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Full day care
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stargazers Day Nursery opened in 2003 but was taken over by the present owner in 2005. It operates from three rooms in a building on Sweetlake Business Village, Shrewsbury. The setting serves the local area. Children have shared use of the outdoor play areas.

A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00, all year round apart from one week between Christmas and New Year and Bank Holidays.

Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are currently 56 children from birth to five years on roll. Of these 16 receive funding for nursery education.

There are 11 staff working with the children and all staff hold early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about healthy eating. They are provided with a balanced diet of meat, fish, pasta, vegetables and fruit. The children enjoy helping themselves to salad and fruit during their snack times. The nursery gained the Platinum Award for Healthy Eating in March 2008. Children have free access to drinking water throughout the day. The children enjoy social interaction with their peers and the staff during meal times as they talk about their home life.

The children enjoy their time at the nursery. They play in an environment that is well maintained and clean. They know to wash their hands before eating, after messy play and after visiting the toilet and are keen to do this independently. However, staff are not always aware of very young children's need for support with their personal hygiene, thereby possibly compromising children's health. The children's welfare is maintained because the staff have undertaken first aid training and they have sought written parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice for all children on roll.

The children learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a good range of outdoor activities and use a broad range of small and large equipment to develop their muscles. For example, they run around in the fresh air, climb on the outdoor apparatus available to them and ride on their tricycles. They also enjoy ball games with their peers and the staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff welcome parents into the setting during arrivals, ensuring a warm inviting environment for parents and their children. There is an informative notice board in the main entrance which provides information for parents about policies, registration and the complaints procedures. There is also a range of children's art work and photographs of the children on display around the nursery for all to enjoy. Children use a range of equipment and toys suitable to their age and stage of development. The layout of the space ensures children's learning is promoted. For example, resources are low reach and labelled to encourage children to access them freely. This promotes their confidence and independence.

Staff ensure all areas are safe for the children before they arrive and they use a risk assessment format which includes areas, equipment and toys. There are two risk assessment officers on site who ensure risk assessments are undertaken each day and recorded. This maintains children's safety throughout the day. Children learn about personal safety through activities and by having visitors such as the policeman and the fireman. Children are also involved in regular fire evacuation practice with the staff.

There is a comprehensive child protection policy in place to keep parents informed about procedures. The staff have attended child protection training which maintains children's welfare. The staff are aware of what to do and who to contact should they have a concern about a child in their care. They have the current Local Safeguarding Children Board contact numbers at hand at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The younger children and babies are well supported by the staff. Key workers observe the children and use an appropriate development framework to ensure young children are progressing well in all areas of their learning. Younger children are keen to help each other at tidy up time. They are well behaved and they have regard for each other. Young children are involved in a good range of free play and planned activities. For example, they enjoy stories with their key workers, imaginary play and circle time with their older peers. The younger children enjoy access to the outdoor play areas each day weather permitting. All of the younger children enjoy planned and spontaneous messy play activities including corn flour and water play, messy play with coloured spaghetti and exploring their senses using shaving foam.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children access a broad range of resources because they are at low-level thereby encouraging them to be independent. They know where to find resources because the areas are well defined. Children are confident and call out to their peers as they run around the outdoor play space calling out 'come and find me'. The children find out about the world around them as they explore a range of festivals around the calendar year. For example they enjoy making Chinese lanterns and Diwali lamps during creative activities. Children explore imaginary play as they use the small world people, dressing-up clothes and dolls and equipment in the home corner. They also enjoy exploring a range of imaginary play situations such as catching the bus, swimming in the sea and caring for animals at the vets.

Children access books in the book corner where they can relax with their peers on cushions. They sit and concentrate well during circle time. The children explore mathematics by counting the girls and boys as they line up for outdoor play and decide if there are more girls or more boys. Children listen and take it in turns to talk, supported by the staff. They write their name on their work with the younger less able being supported well by the staff. Children enjoy access to a well-resourced writing area where they can use pencils, crayons, stencils, rulers and notebooks. They enjoy joining in with stories during story time with the staff and they know and can predict the story endings. Children explore shape, space and measure as they enjoy playing with sand, water and cooking activities. They look at the concept of time as they plant flowers and vegetables in the garden and watch them grow over time. Children are finding out about the world around them as they explore and investigate their surroundings. They go on local walks to look at the wildlife and trees and bring leaves back to make a collage. The children enjoy regular visits to the Forest Schools. Here, the children collect sticks and learn how to keep safe from fires. Children enjoy using their senses to look at and feel mud and make hand prints on the woodland tree bark. They also listen out for wildlife and play musical instruments within the woodland areas.

The children enjoy painting activities and making three dimensional creations with junk and glue. These resources are freely available to them. Children have begun to look at and identify the uses of everyday technology through planned and spontaneous activities. They look at equipment for weighing and baking and they play with calculators, tills and telephones during imaginary play. However, children do not always have free access to resources such as the computer during their child-initiated play times to extend their knowledge and understanding of information communication technology. This may possibly compromise this area of their learning during these times. The children have a good sense of space as they move around their indoor and outdoor areas. They enjoy their outdoor play times. Children enjoy using the climbing

frame, slide, see-saw and sand activities and they also have access to imaginary play and books during these times. The children extend their small muscle development using a broad range of tools such as knives, cutters, pencils and scissors. They like to dress-up and walk around the play areas with their dolls and chat to other children and the staff as they pass by. Children also enjoy talking to their peers and the staff in French as part of their planned learning.

The staff are very good role models for children. They praise the children as they tidy up or help each other with jobs and they encourage children to take turns at listening and talking. The staff spend much of their time directly with the children joining in with their play and asking them open-ended questions to extend and consolidate their learning. The staff team have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and they are suitably experienced and qualified. They know that children learn through play and they provide sufficient time, resources and equipment to extend children's learning and promote progression. However, the staff do not ensure children have free access to the resources to extend children's learning in information communication technology such as the computer during child-initiated play times. This may possibly compromise this area of children's learning during these times.

Staff work well as a team and meet regularly to discuss issues about the curriculum and the children attending. Planning and assessment is good and the plans include what the children will get out of the activities. The planning is informed by what children can already do and the areas the children need to develop further. Observations link in to planning the next steps for children's learning and development. There are good strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language. The staff have experience of caring for children who may need further support in these areas and they seek the support of parents and other professionals to ensure consistency and the inclusion of all children on roll.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example the staff work closely with parents and with the parents permission seek further support from other professionals to ensure consistency and the inclusion of all children on roll. The children are well behaved and respond positively to strategies used by the staff. For example, they are praised for their efforts as they undertake their activities and when they help each other at tidy up time. This promotes their self-esteem and gives children a good sense of belonging. The children explore festivals through creative activities. For example, they make cards and paint and draw pictures as they learn about Christmas, Easter and Diwali. Children explore a range of toys, resources and activities that reflect positive images of diversity. This includes toys and activities that reflect people of various cultures and those with disabilities. For example, the children access balti dishes during imaginary play, try foods from around the world at snack time and dress up in Sari's and other traditional dress during role play. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There are positive relationships between the parents and the staff. Parents can stay and settle their child in at the start of the session. The parents are involved in the nursery through fundraising events. Parents are encouraged to spend time with their child's key worker to ensure all parties are aware of the child's continued development. All parents have access to the policies and procedures of the setting which are kept in the nursery entrance hall.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The staff keep the parents informed about their child's developmental progression through discussion, meetings with the key worker and through free access to their child's development files. All parents receive the group's prospectus which outlines their aims and objectives. Parents also receive a regular newsletter to keep them up to date with issues including current themes and fundraising events. Parents provided Ofsted with a range of positive comments about the care and education of their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and accepting environment where the staff are qualified and experienced. Procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are sound thereby ensuring children's welfare is well-maintained. All documentation is available for inspection, kept up-to-date and signed by both parties. This includes accident, incident and medication records. The register shows attendance of children and the staff and all visitors are recorded in the visitors book after their identity has been thoroughly checked. This maintains children's welfare and safety. Policies of the setting are regularly updated and available to the parents.

Leadership and management is good. The management and staff team are clear about the overview of the provision for nursery education and aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Staff attend regular training as supported by the management. This has a positive impact on the children's care and education. The provision for education is monitored well. Staff talk to parents on an ongoing basis and especially at the time of entry. Staff observe children at play and forward plan for children's individual needs to ensure good progression throughout each child's pre-school years. All staff and the management have a good understanding of the concept of equality of opportunity and they work well together to ensure the inclusion of all children. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection, the nursery was asked to address a number of recommendations. They were asked to undertake regular risk assessments, ensure there is a procedure in place should a child become lost and to ensure that all staff record their times of arrival and departure. The group addressed the risk assessment recommendation by identifying two members of staff ensuring they attended risk assessment training. Risk assessment is now undertaken and recorded by two nominated health and safety officers at the setting. The group now also record actual times of staff arrivals and departures at the setting. Also, a policy was discussed and agreed at a team meeting with regard to procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost. This was drawn up and implemented and is known by all staff and shared with the parents. Children's health and safety is now well-maintained at all times.

The group was also asked to ensure there are opportunities for children to access an attractive book and writing area. They addressed this by providing the children with a large colourful mat and a range of comfortable cushions in the children's book corner. They also extended the range of resources available at the writing area. For example, children can help themselves to paper, pencils, crayons, notebooks and diaries to scribble on. The writing area was extended to include two large tables and is now easily accessible to the children. Children's enjoyment of the book and writing areas are now extended, ensuring they can sit and be comfortable and access a broad range of resources for writing.

Finally, the group was asked to ensure that observations and assessments link in to planning the next steps in children's learning. The group addressed this recommendation by ensuring key workers attended training workshops such as 'Assessment and Reflective Practice'. The staff worked together to re-design their planning sheets. They were guided and supported by staff from the local authority and had follow up visits to ensure the new planning was well implemented. Children's observations and assessments are now linked in to planning the next steps in each child's learning and development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Concern was raised with Ofsted that staff had not been deployed effectively; that a key worker had failed to ensure a child's well being; that minimum staff to child ratios had not been maintained; that a child had been able to leave the premises unsupervised and that records of accidents, signed by parents, had not been maintained.

We carried out an unannounced visit to investigate and National Standards 2 (Organisation), 6 (Safety) and 7 (Health) were investigated.

There was no evidence to suggest a breach of standard 7; however, there was evidence to suggest breaches of standards 2 and 6 and actions were agreed as a result.

The provider remains qualified for registration.

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 good.

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 promote the good health of children taking positive steps to prevent the spread of infection.

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):

- provide children with further opportunities to explore information communication technology during child-initiated play times.

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