



Starfish Childrens Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY277515
Inspection date	05 September 2005
Inspector	Louise, Caroline Bonney
Setting Address	Farnham Sixth Form College, Morley Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8LU
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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

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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?

Starfish Children's Day Nursery opened in 2003, and is part of a private chain of three day nurseries. It operates from a self contained unit within Farnham College, which is sub-divided into two rooms. There is a secure outdoor area for the nursery's sole use. The nursery serves families from the local community and surrounding villages.

There are currently 32 children aged from birth to 5 years on roll. Children are

separated into 2 groups, from birth to approximately 2 years old, and from 2 to 5 years old. There are 8 children currently receiving nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs.

The nursery opens 5 days a week. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00 all year round, excluding Christmas and Bank Holidays.

There are 5 full-time and 2 part-time members of staff working with the children. Of these, 5 have early years qualifications at the equivalent of level 3.

The setting receives support from a teacher mentor from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about healthy eating as they enjoy meals and snacks that are organically grown, varied and nutritious. Children's individual dietary needs are carefully met, and those with special needs receive excellent support. Mealtimes are sociable occasions, when staff sit with all the children and sensitively support their developing independence and encourage conversation. Older children freely help themselves to drinking water throughout the day.

Children thrive through the effective hygiene and sickness procedures in place, which protect them from infection. Staff attend additional training to ensure all children's medical needs are met. Babies benefit from the warm and caring staff, who promptly attend to their care needs and maintain their routines. This helps babies feel secure and settle well. Older children learn to look after their personal hygiene as they follow the established routines. For example, they know to wash their hands appropriately, and put on aprons for messy activities.

Children have daily opportunities for exercise. Indoors babies have space to roll and crawl in the safe environment, and are able to pull themselves up on sturdy furniture. Older children play outside daily with a reasonable selection of equipment. For example, they pedal tricycles, balance on tree-stumps, and chase bubbles blown by a member of staff. This contributes to their good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe through the effective procedures in place. They play in premises that are secure, well maintained, and staff minimise hazards through careful risk-assessment. Children can safely and independently access a broad range of equipment, which is in good condition, and suitable for their stages of development.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe, and to use equipment safely. They manage knives carefully at mealtimes or with playdough, and during role-play staff remind them that ovens are hot, and can burn. Children know to walk carefully to the outdoor area, with staff on hand to help them up the steps with no hand-rail. Children practice fire drills occasionally, but identified concerns are not rigorously followed up. Children are protected by staff who have sufficient understanding of child protection policies and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There are differences between the quality of experiences offered to children under three and those provided for children receiving education funding.

Children settle well through the sensitive support given by staff who understand their individual needs. Children develop good relationships with adults and each other, and enjoy participating in a varied programme of activities which reflect their interests and experience. Staff are developing their use of guidance such as Birth to three matters to further improve planning, and provide a stimulating range of activities. The under two's enjoy exploring texture as they paint with their hands, or run sand through their fingers. They respond with pleasure to close interactions with staff, which helps them develop early communication skills.

They are able to practice new physical skills as they explore their environment safely, pulling themselves up on the sturdy furniture. Children over two enjoy accessing the wider range of activities in the main play area, with the older children. Staff are careful to ensure activities and resources reflect their level of understanding and development, so supporting their good progress. All children are able to develop independence well, from the under two's selecting their colours for hand-painting, to the over two's collecting and choosing their snacks and drinks, or selecting their own resources.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning of the funded children is satisfactory, and staff are working hard to develop the provision of nursery education. They use the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to plan a balanced range of activities to cover all areas of the curriculum. This supports children's steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff usually plan a focus activity each day, although it does not always support the main learning goals identified in the weekly plans. Staff maintain achievement records for the children which show their progress against the stepping stones, and are just introducing a system to observe the children to support these assessments. They do not yet clearly identify children's next steps in learning and, together with their developing understanding of the Foundation Stage, this leads to activities not always providing sufficient challenge.

Indoors, children are able to access a wide range of resources independently, and staff set up activities appropriately to support their learning. Children have frequent use of outside areas, which provide basic resources for physical and role play. Staff

present activities enthusiastically, and use open-ended questions to encourage the children to think about their activities and develop language. They provide good support to children with special educational needs, and draw up individual education plans to help promote their continual development.

Children receiving funding settle well to their activities, and are keen to participate. They are friendly, learn to help the younger children during their activities, and share and take turns well. They develop independence well as they put on their boots for outdoor play, select their resources and activities, collect their snacks and drinks, and look after their personal care. They develop confidence as they share news during circle time, or look at books together and join in a discussion about the pictures. Children enjoy participating in music activities provided by an external organisation, when they sing familiar songs, play to the beat of the music, and experiment with various percussion instruments.

Children develop creativity as they paint, model with dough, and role-play. They show awareness of technology as they use the paint programme on the computer to design and print colourful pictures, or use the music programme to write and play simple music scores. Children develop physical skills as they manipulate dough, use cutters and knives to model with, and build with construction kits. Children have good opportunities to mark-make and are able to recognise their printed names, but they do not sufficiently use writing for a purpose, such as by labelling their work or during role-play inside and outside.

Children count confidently up to five and use language to describe size. They learn about patterns as they run cars through paint or sand, and about shape as they use construction kits and puzzles. However, they do not routinely use numbers or solve simple problems during daily activities. Outside, children are fascinated by the insects they find, and check how their bean plants are growing. They enjoy physical activity as they run, balance and pedal, and develop spatial awareness as they fit into the playhouse or pretend to be a train together. However, resourcing of outdoor areas does not extend the development of children's physical skills sufficiently.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good. All children and parents receive a warm welcome on arrival. Parents develop friendly relationships with staff, which contribute significantly to the way in which children settle. Staff liaise with parents to discover children's needs when they join the nursery, and settling-in arrangements are flexible. This partnership continues to develop with parents contributing to children's learning by supporting themes and sharing their expertise. Parents are kept up-to-date with their children's progress. They have informal discussions with staff during handover, see work children take home, and attend biannual open evenings when staff share their children's achievement records with them.

Children behave well, and follow the established routines of the nursery which help them settle and feel secure. They help at tidy-up time, are attentive during group

times, and share and take turns well. Older children support younger children during activities, such as when using the computer. Children develop confidence as staff encourage them to contribute their ideas, and praise their efforts. They learn to take care of small insects as they handle them, and have time to reflect as they rest and listen quietly to soft music. Staff plan activities to reflect social diversity. This fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children have equal access to activities and age-appropriate resources. Staff are careful to ensure the activities set out in the main playroom reflect the different ages and levels of development of the children. The designated special needs co-ordinator works well with parents, outside agencies and the local authority teacher to meet children's specific care and educational needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of the leadership and management of the nursery education is good, and is committed to the continual development of the nursery education. Children benefit from the good organisation of the provision. They enjoy playing in well laid-out rooms, and have balanced opportunities to play indoors and outside. They can easily access many of their resources independently, and are familiar with the routines which help them settle and feel secure. Staff support the safety and care of the children through maintaining and reviewing the comprehensive documentation, policies and procedures in place.

Children benefit from having qualified staff, who work collaboratively and are effectively inducted. Senior managers carry out staff appraisals, identify training needs, and are developing more effective ways to secure training for staff. With support from the directors, the manager carries out regular in-depth evaluations of the provision. She identifies areas for improvement and together with staff implements action plans to ensure the continual development of the provision for nursery education. For instance, the successful introduction of new planning systems for the under three's, and regular opportunities for staff to plan the nursery education activities together. The manager monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching, although this is currently informal. She seeks and acts upon external advice from the local authority teacher mentor, and promptly acts upon parents' suggestions following a recent survey. This helps to further develop the care and education of the children, and the provision meets the needs of the range of children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the provider was recommended to display the insurance policy, regularly practice the fire drill, and extend the range of equipment to reflect positive images of social diversity.

The nursery has made improvements in all these areas. Parents are able to see the insurance certificate easily, as it is now on display on the main playroom wall. Staff have bought more books which reflect social diversity, and now plan a wider variety of activities to raise children's awareness. Children practice fire drills more frequently,

although these remain irregular.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

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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 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):

- follow the fire safety officer's recommendations as to the frequency of drills, and follow up any concerns identified during the evaluation of drills rigorously

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):

- increase staff's understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to enable them to further develop activities to increase children's learning
- use observations and assessment records to identify children's next steps in learning and link these to planning to provide suitable levels of challenge.

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