



Sandmartins Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400072
Inspection date	27 September 2005
Inspector	Diane Lynn Turner
Setting Address	Central Science Laboratory, DEFRA, Sand Hutton, York, North Yorkshire, YO41 1LZ
Telephone number	01904 462238
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Registered person	Childcare Enterprise 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sandmartins Day Nursery opened in 1996. It operates from a two storey purpose built nursery building at Sand Hutton just off the A64 York road, on the site of the Central Science Laboratory (CSL). The nursery is managed by Childcare Enterprises Ltd and is contracted with the CSL to provide day care for staff employed at the laboratory. Places are offered to other parents for children over two years old. A maximum of 47 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open

each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round with the exception of bank holidays.

There are currently 59 children aged from 0 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 staff. Eleven of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. In addition there are two support staff employed as a cook and a cleaner. The cook also has an early years qualification and occasionally provides supply cover. The nursery receives support from the local authority development workers and is presently working towards the North Yorkshire quality assurance award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are kept healthy because they are cared for in an environment where staff follow effective procedures and practices, which help to prevent the spread of infection. For example, they clean the tables before meals, consistently wear disposable gloves for nappy changing and ensure the toilet areas are kept clean. They provide parents with good information about the nursery's policy for the care of sick children, which includes details of infectious diseases and the time periods children shouldn't attend if they contract these.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines. The older ones know, for example, that they need to wash their hands before eating and after toileting and are encouraged to do so at most times throughout the day. They know why they need to clean their teeth after meals and are encouraged to do so after their afternoon snack. Staff make this a fun activity by singing the "teeth cleaning" song to encourage the children to brush for a certain period of time. Children benefit from a healthy diet. Younger children are offered drinks throughout the day while the older ones help themselves to water as and when they become thirsty. They enjoy varied, well presented and nutritious meals and snacks. These comply with all special dietary requirements to ensure the children remain healthy.

Children explore, test and develop their skills in stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences. Staff have a keen knowledge of Birth to three matters and use this well to provide a good range of physical play experiences for babies and children to age three. The older children develop a very positive attitude to physical exercise. They relish playing in the outdoor area where they use the good range of equipment with confidence and control. For example, they carefully negotiate a pathway as they use wheeled toys and run and chase each other. They show enthusiasm and delight as they join in with organised games such as "traffic lights" and "stick in the mud". All children are able to rest according to their needs. For example, staff follow the youngest children's sleep patterns as discussed with their parents and the older ones are able to sit quietly and rest according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised effectively in the well organised setting, which has good safety and security precautions. Most areas and equipment are maintained to good standards and staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. They have a good understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits and how to involve the children effectively in organising their environment. For example, the older children know they have to wait and line up before accessing the stairs so that they use these safely.

Children use a good range of well maintained toys and resources that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. These are well organised in child-height furniture to encourage independent access. Children learn how to keep themselves safe because staff skilfully explain safe practices to them. For example, why they should sweep up any sand that is spilt on the floor, so that other children do not slip and hurt themselves. They regularly practice the nursery's emergency evacuation procedures so they know what to do in the event of a fire. This helps them learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. Children with special needs are safe and fully included because of the sensitive adult support and good communication with their parents and any outside agencies involved in their care.

Children are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of the nursery's policies and procedures in regard to protecting children from possible abuse. They all attend training in child protection, have a good understanding of their responsibilities and know what to do if they have concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. They achieve well because staff are highly skilled and use their excellent understanding of early years guidance such as Birth to three matters and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to provide high quality care and education.

All children arrive happy and eager to participate. Those who are new to the nursery are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs. Children under two make excellent progress because they develop strong bonds with key members of staff and benefit from routines, which are consistent with their experiences at home. They enjoy excellent opportunities to learn about the textures of both natural and man made materials. For example, they explore a range of objects in treasure baskets and respond to colours and sounds of manufactured toys with delight. They have excellent support to develop their early communication skills as they attract the attention of staff who enthusiastically respond to their sounds during play.

Children between the ages of two and three are extremely confident in their relationships with the staff. They play happily together and with adults as they delight in using resources such as small world toys, imaginative play and outdoor equipment. Staff's excellent use of the Birth to three matters framework provides them with an exciting range of experiences which enables them to make sense of the world and express their ideas. For example, they explore paint, water and sand, help to care for the nursery animals and grow vegetables and flowers in the garden. Musical activities such as singing, stories and rhymes all contribute significantly to their developing communication skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are captivated and often inspired by a range of very well planned and stimulating activities. They access an excellent range of well chosen resources, which support their learning across all areas. All children are extremely eager to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. For example, they willingly sing a song on their own as they use a cassette player to learn about recording their voices. They listen intently to stories and demonstrate excellent language skills as they recall the names of musical instruments and the components of an orchestra. All children use marks readily to represent their ideas. For example they confidently help to complete the register as they put a tick against their name to show they are present. The older children are adept at writing their own names and do so readily to identify their work. Children are extremely imaginative. They make sense of the world around them in the stimulating outdoor area and create exciting individual art work such as using clay to make models of musical notes. They are inquisitive and fascinated by how things work. For example, they listen intently as staff explain how the cassette player works and talk knowledgably about the seasonal changes they observe in the nursery garden.

Children work very well together. For example, the younger ones learn how to operate the computer equipment following the guidance of the older children. They gain confidence in using numbers in their play and respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills during daily routines. For example, they confidently and reliably count how many are present each day and correctly sequence the days of the week and identify what comes next in patterns. Their physical skills are excellent. They skilfully use a range of equipment such as wheeled toys in the outdoor area and confidently use a range of cutlery at lunch time when they serve their own food.

Right from the start, staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. They plan activities very well and an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows the children to learn at their own pace. Staff present activities in an exciting way, which inspires the children to take part. They are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and language skills. They use highly effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and plan experiences that help children take the next steps in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the nursery. Staff value each child's individuality and meet their needs well. Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff support the youngest ones very well in sharing and turn taking. They have high expectations and set consistent boundaries for the three to five-year-olds which helps them to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children's understanding of right and wrong is increased as they respond to gentle reminders to care for their environment, the nursery resources and each other.

Children have good opportunities to learn about the wider world and their local environment through a range of activities. For example, they learn about festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese new year and take part in local events such as a potato growing competition. They benefit greatly from visitors to the nursery such as musicians and artists who share their skills with them. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Children under three benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with their parents. Babies settle well because staff work closely with parents to ensure they follow their home routine. Staff share important information about the children's care needs and the activities they have been involved in each day. The partnership with parents of the children who receive nursery education is outstanding. Staff ensure parents know how their child is progressing and developing. For example, they are invited to regular reviews to discuss their child's records of progress with their key worker. Children benefit greatly from the involvement of their parents in their learning through projects and the sharing of books to read together at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the good organisation and the outstanding leadership and management of the nursery education.

The premises are well organised with indoor and outdoor space laid out to maximise play opportunities for the children. All legally required documentation, which contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed.

Children benefit from well qualified and experienced staff who are effectively inducted. The very good appraisal system ensures that the nursery's comprehensive policies and procedures are implemented consistently. All staff show a commitment to improvement and development. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of the care and education through staff meetings, nursery forum meetings that the parents attend and as part of an accredited quality assurance scheme. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care and nursery education inspections recommended that the nursery improve documentation and improve the planning of morning routines for the three and four-year-olds and their access to books.

Staff now record children's sleep details, ask parents to acknowledge and sign any records of medication given to their child and include children's times of arrival and departure on the records of attendance. Individual planning sheets for each child are now put in the key worker's personal folder to enable them to plan for the children's individual learning. These are then shared with parents at the child's six monthly review. Staff's efforts to improve the morning routines for the three and four-year-olds and their access to books have been very successful. As a result, children are able to freely access a range of appropriate activities in the annexe area and use a good range of books in the comfortable area in the main play room. The improvements made have added significantly to the safe and efficient management of the children's care, well being and development.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- ensure children consistently wash their hands before eating
- ensure all floor coverings and furnishings are maintained in a clean condition and good state of repair.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk