



Sunflower Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221564
Inspection date	04 October 2005
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe
Setting Address	2a Stretten Avenue, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB4 3EP
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Registered person	Cambridge Housing Society
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sunflower Nursery is owned and managed by the Cambridge Housing Society. It is part of a residential development in Cambridge. The nursery serves the local area including the housing society tenants. The nursery is registered to accept up to 33 children aged 0 to 5 years at any one time. Children are housed in interconnecting ground floor rooms with a separate baby unit. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 44 children on roll 10 of whom are 3 year olds receiving nursery education funding. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens from 08:30 to 18:00 Monday to Friday with the exception of some bank holidays and between Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

Including the nursery managers there are 12 staff working with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn good hygiene because staff have developed rigorous routines that minimise the risk of cross-infection. All areas are kept clean and tidy and staff maintain strict procedures when changing nappies or preparing tables for meal times. Children wash their hands before meals or after using the toilet because they know it prevents germs. Children are safeguarded by simple and effective methods for recording accidents and medication, which ensure records are clear and consistent.

Children enjoy a good range of fresh cooked, healthy meals and are well-nourished. Meals are appetising and well presented so children enjoy their food and eat well. Staff and children sit together in small family groups, which enables children to develop good eating habits and learn good manners in a relaxed and comfortable environment. Although some children are able to help themselves to water, this is not available throughout the day and children are not always offered water or reminded to drink.

Children in all areas of the nursery are confident movers, they enjoy daily exercise in the garden and learn about space when they go for walks or visit the park. Older children enjoy daily vigorous exercise using climbing equipment at the park or when they take part in active team games, such as on 'sports day'. They develop co-ordination when they use bikes or scooters and bounce on the trampoline. Children's physical control is well developed as they use tools like scissors and paint brushes or make three dimensional models from construction, such as Lego.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe because there are sound systems to keep the premises secure, visitors ring a bell for entry and a visitors' log is maintained. Rooms are kept clear and children are encouraged to help tidy away so they move around safely. Children practise the fire drill with staff regularly, which ensures they are confident and knowledgeable about the procedures that keep them safe in an emergency. Accessible toys and resources are organised in low level shelving or boxes so

children make safe and independent selections.

When on outings children are carefully monitored by vigilant staff, who follow strict procedures and show a very good awareness of the balance between children's need to run and explore and acceptable risk. Generally, risks in the nursery garden are minimised, the garden is secure and the equipment is well-maintained. However, staff deployment sometimes leads to insufficient supervision of some activities, such as the trampoline.

Children are safeguarded because staff and management have a sound understanding of policies and procedures for child protection that comply with the local Area Child Protection Committee guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children in all areas of the nursery are happy and confident. Most enter the nursery eagerly and settle to their activities without distress. Staff support children who are settling in with warmth and affection so they are comforted and feel secure. Younger children, particularly in the baby room, benefit from flexible routines that reflect their home lives, for example, they sleep or rest according to their own needs.

Children are well cared for and enjoy a good range of free-flow activities that are interesting and well-organised. Older children in particular benefit from open ended activities, which as they are not time limited give children the opportunity to concentrate and extend their own learning. Most resources are accessible so that children have choices and are free to follow their own interests. Children enjoy good relationships with staff and each other, staff are responsive and kind and encourage children with praise so they participate confidently in new activities, such as the water painting outside. So that younger children's experiences can be enhanced staff have recently implemented the Birth to three matters framework.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are eager to learn and enjoy the wide range of activities and resources, joining in with confidence and excitement. They socialise happily, enjoying close relationships with staff and each other. To enhance children's sense of belonging they help each other celebrate events, such as birthdays or the arrival of a new sister or brother. They learn about festivals from other lands, which extends their understanding of each other's differences and similarities and benefit from a range of resources that reflect their backgrounds.

Children share stories with their friends and confidently select books to read by themselves throughout the sessions. Most happily attempt to write their own names on their artwork and independently access their name cards, which they copy with care. Writing materials are diverse and accessible and as a result children develop their skills independently. Children have good imaginations, they enjoy role play, pretending to be princes and princesses or caring for their 'babies', washing and dressing them before putting them to bed.

Children learn about their local environment during walks to the local park or the river, where they collect conkers, talk about autumn colours or watch swans and ducks. They listen to sounds as they walk, identifying people talking or rooks 'cawing'. They enjoy songs and rhymes and happily join in with the group and ask for their favourite song to be sung next. Children explore textures, materials and colour in a variety of well planned activities, such as gluing with coloured rice or playing with sand and water. Although they initiate and create some original artwork, most is produced for the end result. Most artwork displayed is adult generated, some using pre-cut shapes and templates and does not encourage children to value their own creations, nor demonstrate that adults value their efforts.

Children make good progress in all the areas of learning because staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and have a sound understanding of the early learning goals. Planning shows a balanced range of age-appropriate activities that are practical and stimulating and encourage children to learn. Staff are adept at effective questioning, which encourages children to speculate and wonder and therefore enhance their own learning experiences. Key workers know children well and this enables them to extend activities that hold children's interest, such as the 'Teddy bear's picnic' where children brought in their own bears from home to join in.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their home backgrounds valued and understood because staff pro-actively obtain knowledge from parents so children feel settled and at home. Routines for babies are based around their home routines so they sleep or feed according to their individual needs. Resources such as pictures and posters generally reflect children's own ethnic origins and children who have English as an additional language benefit from books, songs and games.

Children's behaviour in all areas is good. The relaxed family atmosphere at the nursery ensures children socialise and staff offer good role models that develop their good manners and sense of responsibility. Older children are encouraged to help younger children, which makes them feel valued. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Relationships with parents and carers are strong and this means children feel secure and develop a good sense of belonging. Parents enjoy good levels of communication, such as the daily exchanges of information with staff and frequent written reports. To ensure younger children's needs are met a daily communication sheet is shared with parents. Regular newsletters and a notice board keeps parents informed of day to day activities and any changes that may affect their children's care or education.

The partnership with the parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive good information about the early learning goals and have regular opportunities to review their child's progress, both informally through daily conversation and in termly written reports. So that children's individual needs are met parents are invited to contribute what they know about their child although this

system is not always focussed enough to provide useful information when assessing children's next steps.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from warm and caring relationships in all areas of the nursery. Staff work well as a team, providing effective support for children and ensuring both indoor and outdoor space is well-organised and welcoming. To enhance children's well-being a rigorous system is in place to ensure staff are suitable and have appropriate skills and experience. The good recruitment procedures are followed up by appraisals and regular meetings so staff continue to develop their skills.

Policies and procedures and other legally required documentation are in place to support practice, these are shared with parents and are regularly reviewed. This contributes to children's health, safety and welfare. The provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Children progress well as they are supported by able and experienced staff who have a sound knowledge of how children learn. The senior staff team monitor the practice and identify areas for development that will benefit children's care and education. Appraisals and regular meetings enable staff to identify their own strengths and contribute their ideas, which enhances experiences for children. Development of planning is on-going in partnership with the local authority early years mentor. Staff know children well, which means they are able to provide a broad range of appropriate activities. However assessments do not utilise the stepping stones effectively, which could lead to some inconsistencies when identifying children's next steps.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to improve the procedures for ensuring agency staff had been vetted. To help to ensure children's safety all agency staff now have to show their enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosures before they work with the children.

To protect children from harm the nursery was asked to improve the child protection policy to include what to do if allegations are made against a member of staff. The policy has been revised and implemented as required and is shared with parents.

The nursery was asked to improve the use of the outdoor area to meet children's needs. Children enjoy a variety of activities in the outdoor area and plans have been implemented to allow free-flow play for the older children. Generally children make good use of the play area.

The curriculum planning for nursery education is still under review with the help of the early years mentor. Key activities, including evaluation, are being improved to ensure

activities meet the needs of all of the children. The nursery managers monitor the effectiveness of the teaching programme and help staff to identify areas for professional development. Activities, including outdoor play, meet the needs of the children effectively.

Complaints since the last inspection

The setting informed Ofsted that an unauthorised person had gained access to the building on 27 October 2004. This raised concerns under Standard 6: Safety. Ofsted investigated by visiting the nursery. Inspectors noted that adequate security procedures were in place and raised a recommendation under Standard 6 to continue to improve systems that ensure the security of the nursery. The nursery remains qualified for registration.

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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 are offered fresh drinking water frequently
- ensure children are kept safe when using large equipment in the garden, such as the trampoline
- further improve children's opportunities to create their own original artwork for its own sake and not for the end result and ensure examples of such work are displayed to enhance children's self-esteem.

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):

- continue to develop the assessment of children's learning, using the stepping stones effectively to ensure children's progress is consistently monitored.

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