



Griffin School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	161965
Inspection date	08 December 2005
Inspector	Carole Argles / Doreen Forsyth
Setting Address	154 Castle Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 3SA
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Registered person	Chris Hind, Sarah Sneesby, Gill Taylor
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Griffin School was registered in 2001. It operates from premises on the edge of Salisbury and serves the families over a wide area. A maximum of 56 children may attend the setting at any one time. The school is open each weekday from 08:00 until 18:30, for 51 weeks of the year. It offers nursery sessions in addition to before and after school care and a holiday club.

There are currently 135 children aged from 2 to 11 years on roll, including 56 children

who attend the nursery. Of these, 32 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The school currently supports a number of children who have special educational needs.

The school employs 14 staff to work with the children. Of these, 7 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and 6 staff are extending or working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children eat nutritious snacks and meals, which include a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables, and most children eat well. Staff respect children's dietary requirements, for example, by providing a vegetarian option when required. Drinking water is readily available for children to take when thirsty. However, children receive conflicting messages about the importance of a healthy diet because sweets are available daily for some older children. There are suitable measures in place to minimise the spread of infection between children. The premises and equipment are clean. Children learn about the importance of good hygiene and always wash their hands before eating. Satisfactory nappy changing procedures are in place. However, the changing area is not well organised and does not provide a comfortable environment for changing children. There are appropriate procedures in place for the safe administration of medicines and the recording of accidents to children and parents are kept appropriately informed.

Children have many opportunities for exercise and this promotes a healthy life-style. Most days children play outside where they practise their climbing and balancing skills and use wheeled toys. They take part in activities such as ring games and music and movement and this helps them develop a sense of their own and other's space. Each week all nursery children go swimming and this provides most children with challenge, good physical exercise and enjoyment. However, some younger children do not enjoy this activity and become distressed. Children use a wide range of tools, equipment and materials that help develop their small muscle control. They thread beads, use spades in the sand, scissors and glue sticks; they control pencils with skill when mark making and writing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are suitably maintained, warm and bright. There is ample clear space for children to move around and play in safety. Children use a wide range of good quality toys and equipment, which are safe and suitable for them. The staff complete regular risk assessments of the premises and for the safe conduct of outings and take suitable action to minimise the risk of accidental injury to children. They carry out daily checks on the premises and equipment and these usually identify any potential

hazards. There are suitable procedures to ensure that children are transported safely on the many outings and staff check that their seat belts are adjusted correctly. The premises are kept secure and staff monitor entry to ensure that only authorised people have access. Children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe as staff remind them to take care when out near roads and how to move safely within the premises. They have regular opportunities to practise the fire evacuation procedure.

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and many have attended relevant training. This contributes towards protecting children from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are settled and happy and have a relaxed and friendly relationship with the staff. The younger children go readily to staff for comfort or reassurance. There is a good level of interaction and conversation between most staff and the children and this supports young children's language development well. Children receive encouragement and praise for their achievements and this helps them to develop good self-esteem. All children frequently go on interesting outings and this broadens their knowledge and gives them many first hand experiences. There is a wide range of toys and equipment to support the development and learning of children of all ages. Many items are stored on low shelves and children are able to access them independently, making decisions about their play and following their own interests.

Staff monitor and record the younger children's development and use this information to plan a wide range of activities which generally support their learning effectively. The children enjoy circle times; they listen attentively and many confidently offer their ideas; they join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. There are frequent creative art activities and most allow the children to explore materials freely and try out their own ideas. Usually the children are interested in the activities, eager to take part and are well occupied. However, children waiting their turn at the weekly swimming sessions and those who are not able to take part have no other activities or toys to keep them meaningfully occupied and they can become bored while waiting long periods for the others.

There is a suitable routine for children who attend the provision out of school hours. A member of staff plans some adult-led activities, for example craft projects, for them. On occasions, these activities do not take place as information is not shared effectively between staff. At times, there is limited conversation and interaction between some staff and the children. However, the children are content and either busily occupied with self-chosen activities, for example with drawing, pretend play or construction toys, or relaxing while watching television or playing electronic games.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Class teachers have a good understanding of the early learning goals and how children learn. Children are learning appropriately in all areas of the Foundation Stage. Staff plan very well. The

planning is firmly based on the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, and includes individual learning targets for all children. The planning shows clearly what children should learn from the daily adult led activities.

Children's progress is recorded, monitored and assessed well, using a local authority assessment scheme. Staff liaise well with parents to ensure they understand what children know as they begin their learning in the foundation stage. Staff use information gleaned from the children's assessments to plan for each child's individual learning needs. Staff are skilled at ensuring the activities presented are appropriate to the children's age and stage of development.

Children behave appropriately while learning and playing. They enjoy their activities and concentrate well. However, they sometimes wait longer than necessary in circle times or for the next part of the daily routine to begin. Children's achievements are valued and acknowledged.

Children learn to be independent while at the nursery. They pour their own drinks at snack time and learn to dress and undress themselves for swimming. They enjoy the responsibility of taking a message to another part of the setting. Children begin to learn about the wider community. They use resources that portray different cultures and have celebrated different festivals, but their opportunities to learn about disabilities are more limited.

Most children are able to express their thoughts through words very well; they excitedly talked about their preparations for Christmas. Children have good opportunities to write and mark make in their play. Many children can write their own names and some can write other words; they are learning to link sounds to letters well. Children count and explore numbers in their play. They enjoyed counting and sorting dolly mixture sweets as part of the 'Hansel and Gretel' topic. Children explore shape and size when playing with construction toys or the train tracks; they enjoyed measuring in their 'Bob the Builder' play activities.

Children have very good opportunities to learn about their local environment and to explore the world they live in. They enjoy many outings including visits to the theatre, farms and parks, to activities centres and for local walks. They use some technology to support their learning, although their computer is not working at present. They do not have many good opportunities to explore why things happen and how things work.

Children's creative development is encouraged well; children explore a wide range of materials, such as paint, sand, play dough and clay. They have good opportunities for role play and dressing up. They really enjoy the weekly drama sessions when they can express themselves through imagination. Children also have a music session each week, and have frequent opportunities to sing and use musical instruments; they use instruments very competently in their Christmas plays.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children behave well and play cooperatively together, sharing and taking turns. Most staff are good role models for the children and use positive strategies to manage their behaviour. They give them praise and careful explanations to help them understand what is expected of them and why. This helps children learn to manage their own behaviour. However, some staff do not consistently follow this good practice and, on occasions, speak abruptly to the children.

The parents and staff work closely together, sharing information about the children through informal discussions and planned meetings and this contributes towards ensuring that children's individual needs are met. For example, children can follow their own routines by having an afternoon sleep, or bring comforters from home so they feel more secure. There is plenty of information readily available for parents to keep them well informed about the activities and the policies and procedures of the provision. A satisfactory settling in procedure includes preliminary visits so children are familiar with the staff and their surroundings. This helps most become more confident and relaxed so that they settle quickly. Children begin to understand about others in society as they use a satisfactory range of resources portraying positive images of diversity. Older children begin to learn about festivals of their own and other cultures. This helps children begin to develop an accepting attitude towards others.

There is good support for children who have special needs. The staff work closely with their parents and others to ensure that they plan and provide appropriate activities to support children's development effectively. Staff maintain suitable records, which they review regularly with parents to ensure children are making good progress.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good information about the setting, and have opportunities to attend meetings that explain the Foundation Stage of learning. They receive newsletters and termly diaries that explain the topics that children are learning about. They are able to see their child's assessment records at any time, and have reports and termly meetings with the staff. This keeps them well informed about their children's progress. Children take home reading and library books, and, when they are ready, they can do homework with their parents, which may include number or sound work. Children also enjoy taking home the 'class bears', who sometimes accompany them on holidays or to the hospital.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The premises are bright and welcoming to children and their parents, having many displays, posters and notice boards. Toys and activities are stored on low units making them readily accessible to the children who can make decisions about their play. Staff make appropriate use of the premises to support the children's development, for example by having a dedicated area for the older after school children and providing a well equipped outside area.

There is a positive attitude towards development of the provision and staff regularly review their practice and are, for example, currently implementing the Birth to three framework with the youngest children. Most of the records, policies and procedures required to support the children's care and welfare are in place but information is not always easily found. Some procedures, including the recruitment and complaints procedures, have not been updated in line with current legislation. The proprietors ensure that appropriate staff to child ratios are maintained. However, at times, they do not ensure that all staff are deployed to work effectively with the children.

The leadership and management with regard to the nursery education is good. The class teachers are well qualified and skilled; all staff are encouraged to train and develop in their understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. Staff attend regular meetings when they share their knowledge and exchange ideas. Senior staff spend time in the classrooms monitoring the provision offered. They are able to identify the setting's strengths and weaknesses and are planning to use an outside accreditation scheme to help evaluate the provision provided. The managers have a clear vision of how they can provide and improve the provision of nursery education.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the providers agreed to ensure that the minimum adult to child ratios are met at all times; to carry out a rigorous risk assessment on all areas used by the children; and to keep a record, signed by parents of all medicines given to children. They also agreed to ensure that all adults and children are treated with equal concern and that anti-discriminatory good practice is reflected at all times.

Since then the provider has made sure that there are always sufficient staff members on duty to meet the required ratios. They have carried out risk assessments on all areas of the nursery and for the safe conduct of outings. They regularly review these assessments as they vary the use of the rooms, for example, if rooms are used to accommodate older children attending the holiday care. Following this, the provider has taken action to minimise risks to the children's safety posed by sharp concrete edges in the playground. Staff implement revised procedures to ensure the safety of children before boarding the minibuses when away from the premises. Staff implement a suitable procedure for the safe administration of medication to children and ensure that they obtain all required parental signatures. This action contributes effectively towards protecting the children's safety and welfare.

Children receiving nursery education are all treated with equal concern, their differences valued and special educational needs met as far as possible. The setting has a suitable equal opportunities policy in place. Equal opportunities and the children's well being was seen to be promoted at this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection in May 2005, there have been two occasions when

concerns have been raised.

Concerns were raised on 3 August 2005 in relation to National Standards 2 and 6, regarding the safety and supervision of children, and National Standard 12, working in partnership with parents and carers. We wrote to the provider who investigated the concerns and provided a report on their findings. As a result of the investigation, there was no evidence that the National Standards are not being maintained and we took no further action against the registration.

Concerns were raised on 10 November 2005 in relation to National Standards 2, that staff ratios were not consistently met and that students were not used appropriately, and to National Standard 3, that staff take nursery children on the minibus when collecting older children from school. We made an unannounced visit to the provision. As a result of the investigation, one recommendation was made under National Standard 2, relating to records of staff attendance. No action was taken in relation to National Standard 3.

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 the organisation of the administration and the policies and procedures to ensure they meet current legislation and promote the safety and welfare of the children
- review the organisation of some activities and the deployment of staff to ensure that children make good use of their time and are well supported
- review the nappy facilities
- ensure that the behaviour management procedures are consistently applied by all staff.

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):

- ensure children have good opportunities to learn about the wider community by using more resources that positively portray people with disabilities
- provide children with more opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world by finding out how things happen and why things work.

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