



Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110039
Inspection date	12 October 2005
Inspector	Sheila Collins / Mandy Gannon
Setting Address	The Crescent, Aldermaston Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 9NJ
Telephone number	01256 474442
E-mail	alison@j114.fsnet.co.uk
Registered person	Just Learning 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Just Learning Nursery is part of a national chain of nurseries run by Just Learning Ltd. It opened in 1992 and operates from 10 rooms in purpose built premises in the grounds of Basingstoke Hospital. There is access to secure gardens for outside play. The nursery serves a large area of the community.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round, from 07.00 to 18.00. A maximum

of 100 children may attend at any one time and of these, not more than 42 may be under 2 years of age. There are currently 132 children under 5 years on roll. This includes 23 children in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

Thirty staff work with the children. Of these staff, twenty one have early years qualifications; fifteen to National Vocational Qualification Level 3 or equivalent and six to National Vocational Qualification level 3. There are four staff members working directly with the funded children. The nursery receives support from within the Just Learning organisation and the local authority development workers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are developing an understanding of the need to follow good hygiene practices, such as washing their hands after using the toilet or before snack. The older, more able children are becoming independent in their self-care skills, for example taking themselves to the toilet and cleaning their teeth after lunch. Staff follow good hygiene practices when caring for babies and younger children. Children, at an early age learn about the need to wash hands after visiting the toilet.

Staff discuss with parents of babies, their individual routines for eating and sleeping. These are followed, for example, sleep patterns and positions, which reassures the babies and makes them feel secure.

Children's health is maintained because staff have good knowledge of the children's health and dietary needs. There are staff trained in first aid on duty at all times and only senior staff administer medication. All the relevant documentation is in place, to support the children's well being.

Children enjoy good healthy, nutritious meals and snacks, which encourages them to develop healthy eating habits. Both the staff and the cook are aware of children's individual dietary needs, so meet these. Meal times in some rooms are social occasions, but not in all. The organisation of breakfast for the children over the age of two is not sufficiently planned to allow for all children to sit at the same time or for older more able children to select their own meal. Children arriving for breakfast do not wash their hands. At snack time, children have healthy snacks, for example bananas and oranges but there are missed opportunities for older children to help prepare and serve the snack or generally help at mealtimes by laying the table.

Children have opportunities for outdoor activities; however, the outside area is not used to its full potential. Children enjoy playing outdoors and have large play equipment where they practise skills for example, balancing, climbing, riding bikes, running and jumping. Children are becoming confident when using equipment.

Babies have very limited opportunities to enjoy the fresh air. However, they learn

about their own body and what they can do. They roll, crawl and sit as they gradually develop new skills as they play in their base rooms.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Effective systems to monitor the safe arrival and departure of children help keep them safe. Details of adults authorised to collect children are in place and the entrance to the setting is monitored to ensure security. All areas of the nursery are colourful and welcoming. Children's safety is generally maintained as staff show a basic awareness of safety issues. Staff conduct risk assessments daily, which ensures that any potential hazards are quickly identified and minimised. However not all staff are vigilant in this process and do not observe the children sufficiently when they are outside, which compromises children's safety.

Children in all areas have access to a wide range of resources. Staff check these regularly to ensure that they are clean and safe. Resources in the rooms where older children meet are stored at child height, but children have limited opportunities for self-selection in the two to three year old rooms. The rooms are appropriately furnished but some of the rooms where under twos meet, do not have a cosy feel, which would benefit the children. Staff check sleeping children regularly to ensure their well-being.

Several staff have completed child protection training and all staff have a basic knowledge of child protection issues and procedures. Management are clear on the routes of referral, which contributes to keeping the children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are involved in a variety of activities during the day. Babies receive a lot of individual attention and support in their play. The interaction between staff and children under three varies in different rooms although staff appear confident in their knowledge of Birth to three matters. Some activities observed are adult led and there are missed opportunities in some rooms to extend children's enjoyment and learning. Children in all areas enjoy listening to stories and taking part in singing sessions.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is inadequate. The quality of the children's experiences varies dependent on their room. Some children participate in activities with enthusiasm and staff are sensitive to their needs and are aware of their stage of development. Some children are involved and interested in worthwhile, appropriate activities. Other children have limited inappropriate activities are bored and uninterested. Some staff are unclear and have limited knowledge of the child's stage of development and the next steps in their progress. Children's independence is limited and children are not involved in the preparation of snack or in tasks such as

pouring their own drink. Some children develop their own play and some staff encourage and support where needed. Some staff ask children questions to make them think. For example, children are sharing a book with a member of staff, it is a book about animals and the theme is 'jungle'. The staff member gives children clues 'I am hairy, I live in the trees, I have hands and feet, what am I?' child replies 'is your favourite food bananas?' you are a monkey' 'I have four legs and spots?' a tiger' another child says 'tigers have stripes not spots.

Children respond well to routine, some follow clear procedures helping to tidy up and get themselves and the room ready for lunch. Other children are unclear and not encouraged to be involved. Children develop a good awareness of their own needs and that of others; they negotiate taking turns, play well together and have good respect for the needs of others. Children are aware of right from wrong.

Children have opportunities to develop their physical development, although the outside area is not used to its full potential. Some children participate in a weekly stretch and grow programme, which is organised at an extra cost. They climb up to, and use the slide, they ride bikes and kick and throw balls.

Teaching is inadequate; some staff have a limited knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They are unclear of children's progress and some staff provide insufficient, inappropriate activities. The assessment and monitoring is inconsistent, making the tracking of children's individual progress difficult.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily and settle quickly. Staff meet and greet the parents and children individually, which gives them a sense of belonging. Staff know children's individual needs and routines. Children with special educational needs are supported well and included in all activities.

Children in all rooms have equal access to all activities. They are encouraged to take turns and share. They help to clear away toys and receive praise from staff for helping. Children are beginning to understand what is expected from them in the way of behaviour. Most of them behave well and respond to praise and encouragement from staff, which promotes their self-esteem and self-confidence and makes them feel good about themselves. However, not all staff within the rooms are consistent with behaviour management. Two members of staff in the same room were inconsistent in their dealings with a child, which meant that he was confused as to what was expected of him. When dealing with the children, some staff say no, without explanation while others explain to children why their behaviour is unacceptable.

Children have access to a full range of activities covering all areas of learning; however, activities are not always appropriate or worthwhile. Some staff are unclear of children's progress and developmental stage and therefore have difficulty in supporting their progress and informing future planning. Older children's independence is encouraged as they self register. However, their independence is not encouraged in all areas, for example self-selection, preparation of snack and

pouring of drinks.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Regular parents' evenings take place and staff share information regarding the Foundation Stage. However, information is not consistent involving parents of forthcoming topics.

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

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are good procedures in place for appointing new staff, with robust procedures for recruiting and checking sent down by the head office. This ensures that the staff working with the children are appropriately vetted, so safeguarding the children. Management are aware that the deployment of staff is not always effective, as unqualified staff do not always work with qualified staff, particularly with the older children.

The children are grouped mainly according to age but with younger groups this also depends on their stage of development; for example, if a child is still crawling they spend time in the room with children at the same developmental stage even if they are younger or older. This is discussed with the parents and ensures the environment is suited to the child.

The provision for the quality of leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are enthusiastic and wanting to access training. The management team have identified weaknesses and are putting in place a programme of cascading training, staff support and overseeing activities, planning and assessments. Procedures to inform parents are in the process of being improved.

Some staff have a good understanding of children's development and provide worthwhile activities in all areas. However, this is not consistent and some staff have limited knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children progress towards the early learning goals. Staff's observations, assessments and evaluations are insufficient. Therefore, it is difficult for staff to have sufficient detail to inform planning of the next steps in children's learning. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, recommendations for improvement of safety and hygiene practices were identified. These have been implemented and ongoing monitoring and staff training is in place, which benefits all the children.

At the last nursery education inspection five areas were identified to improve. These related to children's independence, beneficial use of time between activities, staff's ability to recognise learning opportunities, deployment of staff to ensure each room has the same learning opportunities and information to parents. The majority of these

issues have not been addressed and have become actions at this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2005, Ofsted have received 2 complaints regarding the provision.

In the first, concerns were raised relating to National Standard 1 - Suitable person in that non-vetted staff were left unsupervised with children, National Standard 2 - Organisation in that adult: child ratios were not being met, National Standard 4 - Physical Environment in that nappies were changed on the floor in front of other children, National Standard 5 - Equipment in that toys and fixtures were left un-repaired, National Standard 6 - Safety in that risk assessments were not conducted and potentially harmful plants were growing in the garden, National Standard 7 - Health in that snacks were eaten directly off of the floor and toys and utensils were not adequately cleaned and National Standard 8 - Food and drink in that children's dietary requirements were not followed. In the first instance we asked the provider to conduct an internal investigation into these concerns and report back to Ofsted within 10 days. Following receipt of this report and an action plan, an unannounced visit was conducted on 21st July 2005 when the issues were discussed with the provider. Ofsted is satisfied that the provider has taken steps to address the concerns raised. As a result of the Inspector's observations during the visit of 21st July unrelated recommendations were made relating to Standards 6 and 7. The provider remains qualified for registration.

In the second complaint, concerns raised related to National Standard 2-Organisation.

We investigated this concern by carrying out an unannounced Inspection on 4/8/2005. As a result of the visit, an action was set with regard to National Standard 2-Ensure that registers are maintained accurately, including the times of arrival and leaving of the children. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- increase staff's knowledge and understanding of stimulation and interaction with the younger children
- ensure ongoing training takes place for all staff, particularly in the areas of safety and behaviour management
- review the organisation of mealtimes to ensure that good hygiene practices are followed and that these are social times for the children

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- increase staff's knowledge of the Foundation stage, planning and assessments
- ensure that all children receiving nursery education have similar experiences and opportunities to progress and flourish in the Foundation Stage
- improve all staff's understanding of recognising learning opportunities in everyday activities
- improve opportunities for children to further develop independence skills.

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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