



Stables Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY298761
Inspection date	19 October 2005
Inspector	Joanne Wade Barnett
Setting Address	Mountains Stables, Noble Tree Road, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 8ND
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Stables Daycare Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stables Day Care Nursery and Stables Out of School opened in 2004. It operates from six rooms in a converted stable block in the grounds of Mountains, Tonbridge. A maximum of 56 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 70 children from 3 months to 8 years on roll. This includes 3 and

4 year old funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions each week. The setting currently supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employ thirteen staff. Over half the staff, including the manager hold an appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have a good awareness of keeping themselves healthy from illness and infection as staff provide a clean and well organised environment. Children understand the importance of personal hygiene, for example discussing with staff how and why they must wash their hands before eating or preparing food. Whilst children must be escorted to the toilets, they confidently recognise the needs of their own bodies and therefore children lack more opportunities to be independent. There is a high level of first aid qualified staff, which ensures children could be appropriately cared for should an emergency arise.

Children actively enjoy eating healthy fresh or dried fruit snacks and meals, they are encouraged to try healthy alternatives such as olives, new fruits and enthusiastically participate in the whole experience. Children confidently recognise the names of a number of fruit and vegetables, as a result children are developing a strong awareness of healthy eating patterns.

Children enjoy opportunities to develop their physical skills though well planned and meaningful activities. These include regular outdoor play, where children can access the area in all weathers. They recognise the effects of activities on their bodies, and are beginning to understand that exercise plays an important part in a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe environment, which provides them with room for all areas of play and opportunities to learn and explore. The different rooms have been considered with the children in mind to allow the maximum space for children to play. Most rooms children are able to view their work at low level and make free and independent choices from a range of toys and resources, which are organised at child height. However systems for storage is poorly designed and in some areas cluttered which encroaches on children's space at times. Staff have considered how to make use of the outdoor space effectively and children use this independently throughout the day. Although children may harm themselves as some aspects of the outdoor area is overgrown and in need of attention.

Children's safety is promoted in practice by staff and they have clear systems to keep them safe indoors, outdoors and when on outings. They offer clear and fair explanations to help them understand safety and why keeping themselves safe is important.

There are clear risk assessments in place, which help ensure children are cared for in a safe and child friendly environment. There are security precaution in place such as an intercom system, however there are no back up measures when the intercom system fails to operate and therefore children's safety could be compromised.

Staff are aware of child protection policies and understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Staff receive clear information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse coupled with recent training. This supports children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop and achieve well in the supportive and nurturing atmosphere created by the staff. Staff take time to build a close and trusting relationship with each child and family. They offer a great deal of individual care and attention to help children feel valued. They are particularly effective at taking time to ensure children become familiar with the nursery and allowing parents flexible times to start and finish. They tell children regularly and clearly what is expected of them and what will happen next. As a result children feel secure and relaxed, settling readily into the familiar rhythms of nursery.

Children are eager to engage adults in conversation, for example as they explain who lives in their family. They learn to listen to each other because staff have realistic expectations and group children appropriately.

Conversations between staff and children, and photographs of previous activities, effectively encourage children to discuss past and present events in their lives. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very good and activities and resources encourage them to explore and investigate. They talk in detail about themselves and the world around them. Some staff are very skilful in helping children effective techniques to manage their own coats and shoes and children gain a sense of achievement as they develop their skills. However, staff sometimes offer assistance too quickly and this does not encourage children to persevere independently.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They plan interesting activities which are planned to cover all areas of learning. They use their knowledge of individual children effectively to meet their differing needs. However the pre-school room lacks key areas. For example, no designated home corner for imaginative play. There is no clear defined book corner and toys which are available for children to choose independently were confusing and poorly organised. Children listen

attentively to well-read stories and demonstrate their understanding of reading conventions as they share books with each other. They express their own views clearly and take those of other children into consideration as they plan and organise their play and resolve disagreements.

Staff display children's work attractively showing them that it is valued. They encourage children to express their own ideas and children show confidence in experiment with paint, sand and water. Children join in singing times with enjoyment and sing musically; they move expressively to their own instrumental accompaniment, however, the activity was too long and children become distracted and uninterested. Children count confidently because staff use opportunities well to discuss numbers and counting for real purposes with the children during song time. Staff work closely with individuals using structural apparatus such as glove puppet in 'five current buns' effectively to develop their understanding of calculation. Children explore weight, size, shape and capacity through a range of planned activities and as they experiment with wet and dry sand or at the water tray. Although staff plan activities such as using information technology and they have access to a wide range of computer programmes children were given no opportunities to do so which limits their learning.

Staff meet regularly to discuss children's progress and to plan for their future learning. Plans are linked closely to the stepping stones and enable staff to adapt activities well to meet the needs of all the children. Staff monitor what children do and keep records of their observations. However, some of these are purely descriptive and fail to identify what children have learned or understand, which limits their usefulness in planning what they need to do next.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to understand their own needs and those of other people because staff create a positive and inclusive environment. They show children that they are valued by encouraging them to express their own ideas and opinions and by displaying their work attractively. They provide a range of books reflecting positive images of cultural diversity. They help children feel at ease by learning key phrases in their home languages and displaying examples of words and numbers in those scripts. They have good arrangements for ensuring staff know how to meet any cultural dietary requirements.

Arrangements to support children with special educational needs are very good. Staff have a good understanding of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and work closely with parents and other agencies to make sure that children with additional needs are fully included and thrive.

Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff provide very good guidance to children; they explain clearly how and why they need to tidy up and what will happen next so children understand what is expected of them. Children reflect the courtesy and respect shown towards them by the staff in their dealings with each other and any disagreements while sharing resources amicably. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive detailed and written information about the nursery before children attend. Staff provide clear information and display plans and objectives to help parents understand how their children learn through play. Parents receive information about the setting through newsletters , however this has not developed further due to the length of time the group has been operating. Parents receive information about Birth to three matters and the foundation stage. Staff will endeavour to ensure that parents know how their children are progressing and developing. This sharing of information between staff and parents enhances children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All mandatory records are in place, on the whole confidential and well maintained. This guarantees the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. An extremely organised and accessible set of documentation is in place, which is clear, easily accessed and stored confidentially. However the recording of some documentation lacks detail. The manager understands her responsibilities and ensures appropriate checks are undertaken with all staff.

There are regular appraisals that identify training needs and staff are encouraged to enrol on relevant course and sometimes cascade these. This supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available. Staff maintain excellent ratios, supervise and support children in a well organised, child-friendly environment where children feel at ease. Most staff are qualified or working towards completion of NVQ level two or above.

Leadership and management is good. The manager understands her responsibilities and ensures appropriate checks are made to confirm staff suitability. She maintains good communication with staff, however has not introduced a system for assessing strengths and weaknesses, which staff could use to help them make progress and develop.

The setting has a clear vision and staff are enthusiastic and committed to their roles. Most children receive good support from a staff group that enjoy their company and know them well helping them feel secure and confident. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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):

- ensure that there is adequate storage space for equipment

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):

- provide challenging opportunities for children to develop independency and to acquire a realistic awareness of their own abilities and limitations in order develop their physical skills
- introduce a system to monitor the quality of teaching so that areas for improvement are identified and quickly addressed

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