



Sarratt Ducklings

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130613
Inspection date	14 October 2005
Inspector	Maura Pigram
Setting Address	Sarratt JMI School, The Green, Sarratt, RICKMANSWORTH, Hertfordshire, WD3 6AS
Telephone number	01923 266 694
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Registered person	Sarratt Ducklings
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Sarratt Ducklings opened in 1992 and operates in a classroom within the separate foundation stage building that is part of the village school. It serves the local village and surrounding rural areas close to Watford, a major town in Hertfordshire.

A maximum of 26 children may attend in the morning and 12 children may attend in the afternoon.

The group opens five days a week school term time only. Sessions are from 09:00 to 12:00, 12:00 to 13:00 for the lunch club and 13:00 to 15:00 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for the younger children.

There are currently 43 children aged from 2 to 4 years on roll. This includes 20 funded 3 year olds and 8 funded 4-year-olds. Younger children attend in the afternoon sessions and children who attend morning sessions may also attend the lunch club. The pre-school currently supports 2 children with special needs. The setting has systems in place to support children who have English as an additional language.

Eight staff work with the children. Three have early years qualifications to NVQ level 3 and two have NVQ level 2 qualification in early years education. The pre-school receives qualified teacher support from the Foundation stage teacher in the adjoining classroom.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and welcoming environment making children and their families feel welcome. Children's allergies and dietary needs are effectively adhered to by the staff as they have sound procedures in place to ensure they are aware of dietary needs. All children are able to rest and be active according to their needs and they understand good health and hygiene practices. They are encouraged to develop effective personal care skills, they independently wash hands using running water following craft sessions and painting. They use suitable wipes prior to snack time. They know that washing their hands and using suitable wipes will 'wash nasty germs off'.

Children learn about healthy living and are well nourished through the generous portions of fruit and a choice of milk or water at snack time. The pre-school is part of the schools 'five a day strategy' which encourages children's awareness of healthy eating. Attractive posters are displayed linked to this are displayed in the foyer and information is also given in the parents' newsletter.

The children have ample opportunity to enjoy physical activity by using the outside play area every day. They can confidently pedal the tricycles following the path and are aware of the pre-school rule to cycle safely around other children. This means that they can change direction or speed to avoid obstacles which they do with ease and confidence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where the layout is adapted to suit the needs of the children and staff. This means they are able to move

around safely, freely and independently. The children understand safety rules such as taking turns to use the slide and are able to negotiate their space when playing on bikes.

Children learn about safety through the play leaders initiating imaginative play following a visit from the road safety officer. Here they learn about how to cross the road safely using the zebra crossing and pretend they are police and traffic wardens. They also learn about travelling safely in cars through the use of relevant stories. The children eagerly join in with the story and are able to relate it to their everyday lives saying 'if you don't wear your seat belt you could fall out' and 'I tell my Daddy to wear his seatbelt'.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded. For example, the staff quickly and effectively deal with any accidents. Children are well protected from the risk of harm because they are neither left alone with people who have not been vetted or released to adults unless the nursery has parental consent. Risk assessments are carried out although these are brief.

Children are well protected from abuse or neglect. The staff regularly update their knowledge on child protection issues and are aware of policies and procedures to follow should they have any concerns. All of the staff hold first aid certificates although these are the short course certificates.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem as they are encouraged to show staff members their completed pieces of work. They are encouraged to persevere with construction models and are offered skilful support and guidance. The children are confident and happily join in with adult determined activities. They have some opportunities to choose and initiate their own play indoors. They particularly enjoy exploring play dough and making shapes with the dough. They are able to link their shapes to the favourite children's song 'Twinkle twinkle little star' referring to the diamond in the sky. Outside they love initiating their own play such as hide and seek, organising bike games and chasing.

All children acquire new knowledge and skills and respond to challenges because staff show an interest in what they do, talk and listen to them and ask questions to make them think. For example, they had an in-depth conversation about the recent power cut enabling the children to think about items which would not work without electricity. The home area is periodically changed to suit the children's interests. A hairdressers and a baby clinic have been some of the changes made promoting the children's thinking and language. Independence is promoted as children are encouraged to put on their own aprons and tidy up. Overall the children benefit from the experienced staff who know the children well and offer effective support. The manager has recently attended 'Birth to three matters' framework training and is organising training for all staff.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are progressing well, supported by staff who are very experienced and have some knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Valuable home visits and initial assessments are used to inform planning. Children's progress is observed by the staff who work very well together ensuring key workers are aware of the children's achievements and developmental needs. However, plans and children's assessments do not link closely to the stepping stones and early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. The level of challenge is sufficient to interest most children, however more able children's learning is not always fully extended. Children who have special educational needs are helped to participate through established and sound support mechanisms. Allocation through a designated member of staff helps children participate and enjoy activities.

Children become very involved in the adult led activities, they are given time to persevere with their construction models and are offered purposeful support and praise. Their understanding of the weekly themes such as 'hot and cold' and 'in and out' are effectively reinforced by the staff during the adult led play such as play dough, craft and magnet play. Opportunities for the children to freely access materials for model making, practising scissors control and expression of feelings through music are limited. Children spontaneously choose books from the well resourced book area, they cuddle up on the sofa and 'read' each other stories. They join in with story time and 'show and tell' during the large group session although some children find it difficult to concentrate in a large group. They can find their names when they arrive at the setting and some are able to write their own names. There are valuable and interesting opportunities for writing for a purpose whilst outside. The children freely help themselves to clipboards, paper, pencils and pens taking orders for the outdoor imaginative café.

Children develop their counting skills as they readily count cups during snack time or their 'biscuits' they have made from play dough. They are beginning to extend their mathematical language through the cutting of fruit into halves and quarters although there are missed opportunities to develop children's calculation, weighing and measurement skills. Children are finding out about their local environment and talk about the weather when getting ready for outdoor play and blowing bubbles. They are finding out about the wider world through story sessions, visitors such as a Mum from a Greek culture and 'cooking' play food from around the world. They move confidently and with ease when riding their bikes and during music and movement sessions. Children's hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills are developed using mark making equipment, construction from straws and puzzles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel a strong sense of belonging as they regularly use the facilities of the school. They use the hall for music and movement sessions and join in with the school celebrations such as Harvest festival. Older children visit the classroom next door spending valuable time with the class teacher ensuring the transition from

pre-school to reception class runs smoothly and effectively. All children receive a warm welcome and adaptations to the layout of the environment are made to ensure everyone can easily take part in the pre-school. Children with special needs receive purposeful support enabling them to benefit from the activities on offer.

Children's backgrounds are acknowledged and staff talk to parents about promoting the children's awareness of their own identity. They are encouraged to talk about their families including siblings and family events such as weddings, visitors, holidays and starting school. Children have some opportunities to learn about the wider world through relevant stories and exploring play food in the home area. Staff are aware of the need to develop their awareness and understanding of actively promoting knowledge of the wider world and diversity in all areas of the children's play.

Children work harmoniously together, they share and take turns. Children behave well and show consideration to each other. Younger children are encouraged to do this by the supportive and caring staff who are good role models. There are few opportunities for children to develop their negotiation skills through resolving their own disputes, most disagreements are resolved by staff intervention.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is good.

All children benefit from the positive partnership which starts at the initial home visit carried out by the manager and the deputy. This ensures all families feel valued and welcome. Parents receive a prospectus which contains brief information on the Foundation Stage and policies of the pre-school. They are informed about current topics through regular newsletters and parent information boards in the foyer. Parents and carers are welcomed into the nursery to help with the children's day or to share information such as a special interest or how festivals are celebrated in their families. Information regarding the children's progress and achievement is informally received by parents through general discussion and consultation evenings. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning by bringing in topic related items from home. All necessary information about the children is exchanged by the friendly and experienced staff. This ensures the children's welfare is promoted and their individual needs can be met. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from thorough recruitment, vetting and induction procedures provided by the management and the committee which ensure they are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Some policies and procedures are in place to allow the effective running of the nursery and to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. These are in the process of being updated. Children enjoy whole group times, such as snack and story times, when they join in an experience together. Some group activities such as the large story time and 'show and tell' are not so well organised and on some occasions result in the older and more able children being insufficiently challenged. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom

it provides.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Home visits and initial assessments ensure the children's progress towards the early learning goals is fostered. All the staff attend relevant training courses. The manager has attended training relating to the 'Birth to three maters' framework and all other staff will be attending in the near future. Regular meetings are held and the staff actively contribute to the planning of the curriculum. The manager monitors and evaluates the curriculum and makes necessary changes with the staff's input. The deputy is taking over the management of the pre-school and is aware of the changes to her role this will bring and the steps which need to be taken to bring the provision forward such as Foundation Stage training. She is a very experienced deputy and will be supported by the existing manager, the pre-school team, the teaching staff and the committee. This will ensure the children have continuity of care and education. Children benefit from an organised setting because the manager and her dedicated staff team work effectively together. They have developed positive working relationships and are committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

Improvements since the last inspection

In the previous care inspection the provision were asked to ensure the uncollected child procedure is known by all staff. This is now in place and staff are aware of it ensuring they know procedures to follow in the event of a lost child. This ensures the safety and the welfare of the children.

Staff are beginning to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. The manager has been providing staff with some information on the Foundation Stage including the areas of learning and early learning goals. Some staff have attended training within the school although this was directed towards older children.

Children have opportunities to take part in the planned creative sessions although free access is still required for spontaneous modelling. Play food and utensils reflecting various cultures have been purchased which the children enjoying 'cooking' and offering the food to their friends. Staff effectively discuss the utensils used raising the children's awareness of different cultural needs. Books acquired have been used to address diversity at story time.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints about this provision.

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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):

- make sure that at least one member of staff with a suitable 12 hour first aid certificate is on the premises or on outings at any one time

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):

- improve knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and review plans to include outcomes, challenges and the areas of learning
- review the routine of the day so that children have opportunities to initiate their own play indoors such as spontaneous model making with free access to materials including scissors and opportunities for children to express themselves through music
- review staff deployment and time management to ensure needs of children are met during circle and story time.

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