



The Poplars Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY257438
Inspection date	22 November 2005
Inspector	Diana Pidgeon

Setting Address	Portland Court, Sherwood, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG5 6EX
Telephone number	0115 9676051
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Registered person	The Poplars Nursery 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 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?

The Poplars Nursery Ltd opened in 1993. It operates from a converted detached house situated in a cul-de-sac in Sherwood, Nottingham, close to the City hospital and major roads to Nottingham City centre.

Children are cared for on the ground floor of the property in small groups according to their age. Children aged 0-2 years have access to two rooms. There is a separate room for 2-3 year olds and a transition room for children once they are 3 years old.

This is in preparation for moving to the pre-school room which accommodates older 3 to 6 year olds. Children also use a safely enclosed outdoor soft surface playground and large wooded garden. A floodlit car park is available. Staff have access to a kitchen, laundry, office and a staff room situated on the first floor of the property.

There are currently 48 children on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and 2 children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is open from 07:45 to 18:00, Monday to Friday, closing for bank holidays, 1 week at Christmas and for 2 weeks in the summer.

There are 14 in the staff team, 3 of whom are supernumerary. Of these 9 hold relevant early years qualifications. This includes the director who, as head teacher, develops the curriculum and the nursery manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the nursery. A further 2 staff are currently working towards childcare qualifications. There are also 2 cooks and a qualified business manager.

The setting holds an Investors in People award. It is also a member of Human Scale Education, which promotes smaller learning communities. It receives additional support from an advisory teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment where good hygiene procedures are given high priority. Staff have a very good understanding of the health related policies, including administering medication, treating minor accidents and maintaining good hygiene, and implement these effectively. This ensures the risk of cross-infection is minimised and children's good health promoted. Children learn to maintain good personal hygiene through washing their hands appropriately, for example after using the toilet and before eating. Babies are relaxed and happy during nappy changes due to staff carrying these out in a caring way. Children who become ill at the nursery receive comfort and sensitive care whilst waiting to be collected by parents.

Children's health is promoted through nutritious meals and snacks that are freshly prepared from wholesome ingredients. All children are starting to make healthy choices at snack time as they choose from the variety of fruits offered to them. Their knowledge is extended through tasting sessions that introduce them to unfamiliar foods and regular baking sessions. Children independently help themselves to fresh drinking water throughout the day and are encouraged to drink more when they engage in physical exercise.

Children enjoy regular daily opportunities to play outdoors, which helps them develop a positive attitude towards exercise and aids their physical development. Sessions are thoughtfully planned and provide a balanced range of opportunities for children to

develop co-ordination and control of their bodies as well as specific physical skills. Children run, climb, crawl and play ring games with great enthusiasm. They become increasingly aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies and learn about the importance of warming up and cooling down when they engage in vigorous exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given high priority throughout the nursery. Staff are vigilant in their supervision of the children and use regular risk assessments to identify and then minimise any potential hazards. This ensures children are cared for in a safe and welcoming environment. Children's safety is enhanced because they are cared for in small groups where there is a high ratio of adults to children present, ensuring children are always well supervised. Rooms are made welcoming through the use of attractive displays of the children's own work and the accessibility of appropriate resources. Children use an extensive range of good quality toys and equipment that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Children move freely and access activities and toys independently, making choices in their play.

Children learn about safety by being encouraged to handle items such as scissors and cutlery with care. Through topic work they learn important safety messages, such as how to use a telephone in an emergency. All children develop an awareness of fire safety as they regularly practice the emergency evacuation procedures. Access to the building is carefully monitored and children's safety outdoors is promoted through the playground having a safety surface which minimises injuries to children when they are active. All members of staff have a secure knowledge of the child protection procedures. As a result, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, happy and settled throughout the nursery. Staff know the children well and are sensitive to their individual needs and feelings. Children's development is maximised through the effective planning of activities and monitoring of children's progress in all areas of the nursery. Staff working with the younger children are developing a sound awareness of how the 'Birth to three matters' framework supports this age range. Babies and toddlers use a good range of play equipment that engages their interest and meets their developmental needs. They enjoy many first hand practical activities that encourage sensory exploration, such as finger painting and handling a range of tactile materials. Toddlers enjoy an activity with safety mirrors that helps them identify their features and expressions. This helps them focus on their individuality and raises their self awareness. All children experience a balanced routine that includes times for them to join in group activities, such as singing and playing musical instruments, as well as time to make independent choices within their free play. Older children enthusiastically attempt to make telephones from a range of recycled materials, following their own ideas and seeking help or support when needed. Staff develop warm and caring relationships

with the children. Babies are regularly cuddled and comforted to help them feel secure. Transition between rooms in the nursery is well supported so that children remain settled and secure. Opportunities for children to meet together, such as during some sessions of outdoor play and mealtimes, means children become familiar with children other than those in their base rooms.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children achieve well as a result of effective planning and assessment systems, combined with teaching methods that engage all children. Staff are fully aware of their role within planned activities and support children through skilled questioning and adapting activities to meet individual needs. This ensures that all children continue to be challenged and therefore remain interested and engaged. Effective use of evaluation, observation and assessment means staff are clearly aware of what children know and can do and use this information to set new targets for their learning. Daily and weekly routines offer a balanced curriculum where all areas of learning receive due attention. Staff provide a well organised environment where children can independently access a good range of resources. Although a computer is used for set activities, its use is not maximised to support all areas of children's learning. Children are encouraged to make choices from those activities planned by staff or to select their own, thereby fostering independence and enjoyment. Staff are confident to allow children to follow their own ideas. For example, when some children want gold coloured glue for their models they are helped to find the raw materials they need and allowed to mix and experiment to achieve their goal. This successfully promotes children's thinking and harnesses their enthusiasm.

Children are interested and often inspired by the activities and topics provided. For example, the current topic based around a well known children's book captures all of the children's imagination and inspires their imaginative and creative play. Children learn to work co-operatively together, sharing resources and ideas. Their independence develops rapidly as they take responsibility for their own needs such as putting on aprons before messy activities and pouring their own drinks. Children are becoming confident and skilled speakers. They use words effectively to convey their experiences both real and imaginary during group times and in their play. Most children listen attentively to staff and each other at group times and take turns to voice their ideas. They enjoy playing word games that help them link sounds and letters. All children enjoy looking at books for pleasure and understand how they can be used to locate information. Children show confidence in mark making, with many children writing purposefully within their play and labelling their work. They use mathematical language accurately within play, for example to describe the shape of objects when playing a game. Interesting activities, such as sequencing photographs of a recent trip, help children develop important mathematical concepts. Children use numbers to count for practical purposes and to solve simple problems. Children enjoy exploring and finding out about the natural world. They care for crocus bulbs and watch the changes as they grow. They talk with interest about their own lives and through a wide variety of planned outings and topics gain an understanding of the local and wider community. Children use some simple equipment such as calculators and battery operated items during play. Their imagination is developing through a wide range of creative activities that encourages them to follow their own ideas. For

example, children act out scenarios in the well resourced role play police station and build a jail from recycled materials or commercial construction sets. Children create displays and pictures relating to their topic work, with some children recreating in paint and collage their favourite characters from a book. Children explore sound through listening to a diverse range of music, singing and playing instruments. Younger children attempt to recognise and match sounds to instruments in a group activity. Children become skilled in the use of small tools, such as scissors, writing implements and cutlery, as these are regularly used and staff teach children the appropriate skills needed. For example, one child traces round a box, shaped like a maple leaf, onto paper and then accurately cuts it out to form a lid for his model. Other children use brushes to mix powder paint and water and knives to cut their food at lunch. This ensures they have the appropriate skills to support their independence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children make positive relationships with familiar adults and other children. They are kind and considerate to each other, for example sharing toys and taking turns during activities. Older children work co-operatively together to complete puzzles or to build models. Younger children are helped to deal with their strong emotions, as staff are calm and sensitive to their needs. Good behaviour is promoted through praise and reward systems. Children have clear boundaries and staff help children to understand the consequences of their actions. Their awareness of the local community and wider world is developed through going on outings, celebrating different festivals and using play materials that reflect diversity. Children's individual needs are well known to staff, who ensure these are met in their care routines as well as play and learning. For example, babies sleep and are fed according to their own patterns, which ensures their care is consistent with their home routines. All children are valued as individuals and staff demonstrate genuine care and affection for them. This ensures children develop self-esteem and are confident and settled in the nursery. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the close and trusting relationships developed between staff and parents. Arrangements for settling children and the transition between rooms ensures parents are fully involved and well informed. As a result children quickly develop a sense of belonging. Their ongoing care needs are met as staff regularly verbally communicate with parents and supplement these with daily diary sheets for the younger children and babies. Parents are kept generally well-informed about the policies and procedures in the setting. Their views are sought and used to monitor and evaluate their satisfaction with the service provided. Any concerns raised are thoroughly investigated. Whilst the nursery has a complaint procedure this does not currently reflect the latest requirements and is not made readily available to parents. This means they may not clearly understand how any concerns are dealt with by the provision. The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is good. Parents receive good information about the nursery and the curriculum followed by their children through notices, newsletters and meetings. They are fully aware of what their children are learning and how this can be

supported at home. For example, children take part in a shared reading scheme when they are developmentally ready. Key workers regularly talk with parents to share their assessments of the children and to agree targets for their future learning. Parents have opportunities to share their own observations of their child's learning at home. As a result they are fully involved in their child's educational development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the effective organisation and management of the nursery. The management team have a clear sense of purpose and commitment to continual improvement. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure suitable adults work with the children. Induction and staff monitoring procedures are well established. High priority is given to staff training and development to enhance their knowledge and understanding of relevant issues, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff retention is very good and ensures children are cared for by familiar adults. This means children feel secure and confident with their carers. Staffing levels are high so that children are well supported to join in activities. Children are cared for in small groups which allows staff to build effective relationships and meet their individual needs. Documentation is used well to support children's care and to comply with regulations. Current systems of recording accidents to children and sharing these with parents lack confidentiality.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. High priority is given to the personal development and achievement of all children. The management team effectively support the staff working with the children through training, resources and ideas. Clear evaluation systems identify areas for development which lead to plans for continuous improvement. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the nursery improved the organisation and presentation of resources and activities to enable children to make their own choices. At this inspection children in all areas have a good choice of activities available, with many older children able to independently access additional items of their choice from low storage units. This ensures their independence is promoted and that they remain interested and engaged at all times.

At the last inspection it was recommended that children in receipt of funded nursery education had more time to use their imaginations and to independently explore and experiment. Creativity has been prioritised in staff development and they have used this training well to provide a wealth of practical, exciting opportunities for children to follow their own ideas. This now offers children opportunities to express their ideas in a stimulating environment where creativity and originality are valued.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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.

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 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):

- update the complaint policy and ensure this is shared with parents
- review the recording of accidents to children to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

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):

- develop the use of the computer to support all areas of learning.

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