



The Old School House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300911
Inspection date	16 November 2005
Inspector	Trudy Scott
Setting Address	Benty Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S10 5NF
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Registered person	Stephanie Connelly
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Old School House Nursery opened in 1990. The nursery operates from two converted buildings on the same site and has use of a scout hut next door to supplement the out of school provision. Fully enclosed areas are available for outdoor play. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 134 children under 8 years. Of these, 24 places are reserved for children using the out of school club. Children aged from 4 to 11 years use the out of school provision.

There are currently 239 children from 3 months to 11 years on roll. Children attend for variety of sessions. Nursery education funding is received for 65 children. The setting currently supports a small number of children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery school opens on Monday to Friday throughout the year, with the exception of public holidays. Opening times are from 07.30 to 18.30.

There are 42 staff who are employed to work with the children. Of these, 29 hold recognised early years qualifications and 13 are working towards a qualification. The setting has received the Investors in People Award and is currently working towards 'Quality Counts', the quality assurance award of the National Day Nurseries Association. The setting receives support from an early years teacher from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy as staff follow effective hygiene routines, such as consistently wearing disposable gloves and aprons when changing children. They are well-protected from the spread of infection because staff and parents co-operate to make sure children with infectious illnesses do not attend nursery. For example, the sickness policy is shared with parents and information regarding instances of infectious illnesses is displayed. Children are moving towards independence and share some responsibility for decisions about their care. For instance, older children manage personal hygiene independently, while children aged 2 to 3 years are escorted to the bathroom.

Children enjoy nutritious snacks and meals, which include a variety of fruit and vegetables. Meal times are pleasant, social occasions where staff sit and converse with children, although they do not always encourage them to demonstrate their preferences and independence. Staff work closely with parents to make sure they find out about children's individual care, such as dietary needs and eating and sleeping routines. They use the information well to make sure children eat, rest and sleep according to their needs. This means children are well-rested and alert and so enjoy their play.

Children are enthusiastic about physical activity and enjoy regular outdoor play. This contributes to their overall good health. They develop co-ordination and control of their bodies as they use the fixed climbing equipment with skill and confidence and successfully negotiate space and obstacles when running around. However, older children are not consistently challenged when playing outside, for example with opportunities to construct with large materials. Although, there are good plans in place to address this. Hand eye co-ordination is effectively fostered in many activities, such as using small construction kits, cutting with scissors and filling and emptying containers in the sand and water.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in welcoming, secure premises by staff who fully understand their role in keeping children safe. Staff regularly assess all areas of provision and take action to minimise potential hazards. Details of risk assessments are displayed within the nursery and this provides reassurance for parents. Other effective safety measures include a secure, controlled entry system, vigilantly monitored by staff, and clear procedures for the safe collection of children. Children learn to avoid accidental injury as staff talk to them about safe practice and plan activities to raise their awareness of dangers. For example, children play road safety games in the outdoor play area.

A varied range of good quality toys and play materials are provided. Many resources are placed where children can reach and so they make some choices about their play. Babies and toddlers are well-supported as they become mobile because staff arrange furniture to enable children to pull themselves up. Staff reassure and encourage children by staying close and applauding their achievements. For instance, they smile and clap as babies crawl around the floor and make their way towards them.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have secure knowledge of child protection procedures and there are several staff with current first aid certificates.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and content in nursery because staff take time to get to know them and build trusting relationships. They form a strong bond with staff, who are kind and affectionate and give them lots of attention. Children who are a little hesitant on arrival soon become involved in the events of the day as staff give them sensitive support and encouragement. Staff engage playfully with babies and younger children, making frequent eye contact, smiling and playing games, such as peek-a-boo. Their early attempts at communication are well-supported by staff as they echo the sounds that babies and toddlers make and put words to their actions.

Children enthusiastically participate in a broad range of activities, which help them progress in all areas of their development. For example, babies explore sounds as they bang a selection of pots together and children under 2 years play sociably in the role play area, 'cleaning' the nursery with feather dusters. Children over 2 years express and represent their creative ideas well in free play sessions, but do not always have enough time and access to resources to fully develop and extend their play. Using books for pleasure is well-promoted throughout the nursery and this encourages children to develop a love of reading. For instance, younger children snuggle up contentedly as they look at books with adults, while older children choose books independently, telling themselves stories from the pictures. Children who use the out of school provision enjoy many stimulating experiences, such as physical play and craft activities, which take account of their interests and preferences.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff have secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan for and teach the content of the six areas of learning. This ensures children make good progress through the stepping stones. Children are motivated to learn through well-planned focused and directed activities, which capture their enthusiasm and sustain their interest. For example, in a music and movement session, children are thoroughly absorbed as they shuffle around, pretending to be penguins and show pleasure and skill as they explore sounds with musical instruments. Children are encouraged to think and demonstrate what they know and understand in many adult-led activities, such as correctly matching shapes in the environment to picture cards. Staff intervene well in children's activities, often taking cues from the children, to introduce new knowledge and pose questions to make them think.

Children are sociable and confident in the setting. They can play well on their own or with other children. Behaviour is very good and reflects the high expectations of staff. This helps create a calm atmosphere where learning takes place. Children are skilful communicators and use language confidently for a variety of purposes, such as initiating conversations, asking questions, describing and recalling previous experiences. Language development and social skills are effectively nurtured by staff who plan opportunities for children to talk together, take turns in conversation and share information such as at meal and group times. Many children confidently count beyond nine and are using their mathematical knowledge to solve simple number problems in real situations. For example, at snack time children spontaneously count the raisins and work out who has the most, correctly using language such as 'less than' and 'more than'. Children's curiosity is effectively stimulated as staff make the most of everyday opportunities to encourage children to develop observational skills. For example, children have a lively discussion about the weather when the teacher says "I've noticed the sky," after the day has suddenly turned dull.

Staff regularly observe and assess children and record their progress toward the early learning goals. They identify and plan to address gaps in children's experience by monitoring and evaluating the impact of activities. However, they do not yet use the information consistently to plan further challenge for children. Children's development records are regularly shared with parents which gives them a clear picture of their children's progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have a strong sense of belonging and feel at ease in the nursery environment. They feel at home as they see their art work and photographs displayed attractively around the nursery and understand the order of the day. For instance, older children know that after free play, they help to tidy away and play outside. Staff help children feel good about themselves by finding real things to praise them for, such as the way they have drawn a zebra's stripes. Children know they are valued as staff listen attentively to what they say and ask questions about

their interests and experiences. For example, staff greet children individually on arrival and talk to them about what they have been doing at home or what they have seen on the way to nursery. This helps develop confidence and self-esteem.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered in nursery. Children play harmoniously together and follow the good example of staff in showing courtesy and consideration for others. For example, children working side by side in a collage activity say to each other "Can I have the glue after you?" and "Will you pass the lid please?" They are learning successfully to manage their own behaviour as staff provide them with clear and consistent boundaries. Children are learning to appreciate their own community and the lives of others in daily activities, planned topics and outings. Staff work well with parents to find out about children's individual needs and interests to make sure all children, including those with special needs, are fully included in the provision.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good quality information about what their children are doing and learning in a variety of ways. For example, photographs of children involved in activities are displayed with descriptions of the learning that is taking place. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children on entry to nursery and regularly comment in writing about their children's progress. This ensures parents and staff work together effectively to best meet children's needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's feelings of security and wellbeing are increased by the effective deployment of staff. Staff spend much of their time in direct work with children as there are very good staffing levels throughout the nursery, particularly with children under 2 years. Effective recruitment and selection procedures and high numbers of qualified staff, ensure there are always suitable staff to care for the children. The accommodation is well organised to make sure children have space to rest or be active, and to provide other enjoyable experiences, such as music and movement and French lessons. However, best possible use is not made of all children's play areas to maximise opportunities for independent learning, particularly in creative and imaginative development.

There is a comprehensive collection of policies and procedures in place which promote children's welfare, care and learning and underpin the day to day running of the nursery. These are shared successfully with parents and contribute to continuity in the children's care. Children benefit from staff who fully understand their roles and responsibilities through good induction training and regular appraisal. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Leadership and management of the educational provision is good. Clear aims for children's care and education are effectively shared with staff and parents. Staff are well-supported with regular opportunities to meet together, contribute their views and attend further training. Management work with staff and the early years teacher to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and to identify and plan for further

development. This approach supports the professional development of staff and ensures the continuing development of the educational provision.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection, the nursery has increased opportunities for parents to become familiar with nursery policies and procedures. A policy file is clearly displayed in the reception area for parents to access as they wish. There is also policy information, pertinent to particular areas, displayed within nursery rooms. A variety of other effective ways of sharing information have also been successfully introduced. For example, a very good response was received to questionnaires recently sent out to parents requesting their views on how the nursery operates.

The nursery management team continue to evaluate and review the provision and there are good plans in place for further improvements. The provision for children under 3 years is good and there are firm plans to further improve this area by making more use of the Birth to three framework. Older children have more opportunities to make their own ideas using a variety of tools and materials during free play sessions. The management and staff team are working with the early years teacher to further improve this. The use of observations to guide planning and teaching has improved, although is not yet used consistently to increase challenge for children. Staff use observations particularly well to identify and plan for children's particular learning needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint relating to Standard 3: Care, learning and Play. The concerns were discussed with the provider, who provided a full report. Ofsted are satisfied that the provision is complying with the National Standards. 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):

- consider further ways to encourage children to demonstrate their preferences and support their developing independence
- consider more effective use of time, resources and accommodation to further encourage children's imagination and creativity (also applies to education)

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):

- continue to develop the use of observation and assessment to guide planning and teaching, in particular to increase challenge within the environment.

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