



## Apple Tree Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	223186
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 November 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Patricia Bowler
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Apple Tree Day Nursery opened in 1998. It operates from 3 rooms and an open plan area in a purpose built building situated in Markfield, Leicestershire. A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open from 07.15 to 18.00 each weekday all year round and includes Out of school care.

There are currently 34 children aged from birth to under 8 years on roll. Of these 8 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery does not currently

support any children with special educational needs or children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine staff. Six of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment. Robust policies and procedures are consistently followed by staff to prevent their exposure to cross infection. For example, staff wear disposable aprons and use disposable gloves when changing children and wear protective tabards when serving food.

The children are protected from infection because the staff are well informed about children's health care matters. Clear and concise documentation ensures the children's individual needs are discussed and recorded with parents and are vigilantly carried out by staff. Although children know why hand washing is important to remove germs it was observed that not all children use soap to wash their hands after toileting and at meal times. Therefore children need reminding as this prevents them from always following consistent personal hygiene practices.

Children enjoy a range of energetic activities that contribute to a healthy life style. They develop self confidence in their physical skills as they use a range of indoor and outdoor toys and equipment and gain control of their bodies through activities such as climbing and balancing. Children benefit from a healthy diet and take part in activities such as growing and eating their own fruit and vegetables. They really enjoy a variety of meals which are nutritionally balanced and they are introduced to a range of different foods, including traditional cultural foods which they are eager to try. Staff take account of parental wishes to ensure children's dietary requirements are met. Children are offered sufficient drinks to ensure none remain thirsty. Good facilities are provided to enable children to rest and sleep according to their individual needs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

High regard is given to ensure children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Robust systems, including indoor CCTV where all areas can be observed from the office to monitor staff working practices are established. Further CCTV monitors the outside area allowing staff to observe visitors before they are admitted who are escorted at all times. Written documents are vigilantly maintained to record visitors to the nursery and parents assist in good procedures for arrival and departure as they sign their children in and out in addition to base room registers. This ensures staff are fully aware of children's presence to maintain their safety.

Good procedures, and consistent risk assessment, ensures that all areas accessed

by children are safe and any hazards are minimised. They have easy access to a good range of developmentally appropriate resources, many of which are stored at children's height to promote independence and choice. Children are cared for by qualified, and experienced, staff and thorough clearance procedures ensure they are suitably checked and vetted. Health and safety procedures are diligently followed, by all staff, to maintain children's safety.

Children move confidently around the nursery. Furniture is suitably arranged to enable them to move freely, and access play resources in their base areas. They are encouraged to learn about keeping safe by practices such as regular fire drills. Warning cones are used in some circumstances and alert them to dangers such as wet floors. Children talk confidently about their awareness of not accessing these areas and the possible consequences such as slipping.

Imaginative opportunities are used effectively to increase children's knowledge and awareness of safety issues in the wider world. They learnt about their own safety on Bonfire Night by effective use of a persona doll to encourage their knowledge and understanding of holding sparklers away, and the consequences of inappropriate handling. Children eagerly shared safety procedures such as wearing gloves and holding sparklers away from their bodies.

Children are protected from harm because staff understand their role in child protection, and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice, if necessary.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children take part in a range of activities where they develop good skills in most areas. Staff awareness and good use of the Birth to three matters provides a sound framework for the care of younger children within the nursery. Babies enjoy a range of experiences to encourage movement from crawling through to walking and a variety of mobiles, displays and low level wall mounted toys provide attractive visual stimulation. Young children are confident and relate warmly to positive staff interaction. They play happily with each other and staff and enjoy group and individual situations to share books, develop their imaginative skills in small world play and link home and nursery through appropriate role play opportunities. Children are competent communicators asking for appropriate support as they learn to take turns in activities such as the numbered floor game and express their joy and delight in activities including sticking where they use glue spreaders with gaining confidence using a variety of materials to make Christmas tree wall decorations.

### **NURSERY EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a reasonable knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They work well with children in specific group activities. For example, children are beginning to develop an understanding of letter sounds using a recognised phonic system and successfully link these to the beginning of their names. This assists them in recognising their names on coat pegs and meal placemats. Children listen intently to

well narrated stories and enjoy a group activity using a wide variety of musical instruments.

Staff use a range of teaching methods but do not always use these to best effect to promote children's learning in all six areas. Although the system to monitor and evaluate specific activities is thorough with clear identified learning intentions, this does not give sufficient scope to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in free choice activities. Staff make observations and record children's progress to identify specific areas for their next steps in learning.

Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals, but make less progress when plans for activities to cover all six areas of learning are not consistently implemented by all staff. Some free play activities are not supported by staff, for example role play areas to fulfil children's full potential with opportunities to sustain or extend their learning. Most children can count to ten and beyond and are beginning to attach quantity to numbers. However, staff do not engage in table activities such as matching bears to sequence cards to introduce vocabulary and understanding of size such as small, medium and large.

Children are confident and demonstrate a sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff on arrival. They build warm relationships with staff actively seeking support when required and interact appropriately with peers to work well in small and large groups.

Children use their imagination well in role play situations, although these areas are not always sufficiently resourced to fulfil their purpose. They gallantly persisted at play in a Chinese take away area, although there were few resources such as foods, crockery and eating implements to reflect the setting. Staff joined in to choose foods from the Chinese menus available and children engage in mark making as they record orders. Even though there is a permanent writing table nearby with appropriate resources children were not observed accessing these which prevented them working cooperatively to extend this particular activity. Children have some good opportunities to engage in creative activities. This is evident in current plans and in the work displayed within the nursery through pictures including the use of paint, crayons and sticking materials. They have constant access to easel painting and other creative activities which they access as they desire. However, there is an over emphasis to use pre cut shapes to complete pre determined results and this does not enable children to input their own ideas into their creative work.

Children are developing very well in their self help skills. They independently address their personal needs and speak confidently about the importance of washing their hands after using the toilet and at mealtimes. They change from outdoor to indoor shoes and are able to manage buckles, zips and velcro fastenings independently or with minimal support from staff. They put on gloves and hats to go outside to play and talk about additional clothes needed during cold weather. There are missed opportunities to increase their independence and provide greater challenge for older children in spontaneous situations such as pouring their own drinks and assisting in setting tables for meals.

Children are making good progress in their physical skills and have regular access to

outside play and other activities for example, swimming. A range of static equipment provides opportunities for children to gain control of their bodies through climbing and balancing. During an opportunity to play in the snow children were not allowed to access the static equipment for safety reasons but no other equipment was provided. This left children with no option other than running. Staff adopted a supervisory role, giving appropriate reminders to children to take care but missed opportunities to join in their excitement and enhance their awareness of melting effects as the snow thawed.

Children delighted in performing their nativity play which was being performed on both days of the inspection. The play incorporated visiting countries around the world highlighting climate and cultural differences to impact on their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Attractive wall and table displays increase children's awareness of cultural celebrations and interesting outings increase their awareness of the local surrounding area.

Children have regular access to a computer and are progressing appropriately in their use of intermediate communication technology in their play.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents is good. Excellent information is provided about the setting and procedures for discussing and recording information about children ensures their individual needs are met well. Newsletters and open parent sessions provide opportunities for staff to share children's progress and have discussions with parents about the care of their children. Systems are established and are being developed to gain relevant information for all aspects associated with nursery education. These do not currently contain valuable information about what children can do at home, and therefore do not show individual starting points for children's learning and development.

Children's sense of belonging is enhanced through daily contact using both written and verbal communication to ensure staff and parents are kept fully informed. Good procedures and secure relationships help children to settle. Children benefit from the staff's positive awareness of equal opportunities and inclusion of all children. Staff work successfully with other agencies to ensure their individual needs are met.

Children make active choices about their play and use their initiative in most indoor and outdoor activities. However, there are times when staff do not actively support all areas of play and too much adult involvement hinders their creativity and independence. Children have good relationships with peers, developing good strategies to negotiate and take turns and are learning to work harmoniously with others and respect their needs. Children's behaviour is generally very good. They make good use of picture cards depicting simple courtesy rules such as being kind to each other, not running and helping in simple tasks such as tidying away. Children are rewarded with stickers for a range of positive behaviour. This is not always sufficiently monitored by staff to ensure this is used effectively for all children to build on their confidence and self esteem.

There are very good opportunities provided for children to become aware of the world around them. They engage in outings to increase their awareness of local surroundings and learn about diversity through practical activities.

Staff interact positively to build warm, caring relationships with children in an environment where they develop respect and awareness of the needs of others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the staff's understanding of the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures to protect children and promote their well-being. Staff have good opportunities to attend additional training to enhance the quality of care given to children who are grouped sensibly to ensure they receive care appropriate to their age and developmental stages. Good procedures are established to maintain appropriate staffing levels. A good balance of indoor and outdoor activities extend children's play and learning opportunities.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Children are cared for in a well organised environment where the owner and manager are focused on continuous improvement and oversee the care and education of the children. However, this is not always fully consolidated by those staff involved in the provision of nursery education to ensure children make appropriate progress in all areas of their learning and development. The owner takes an active role in being with children and spends time in individual rooms. She uses this opportunity to monitor staff's working practices, which is then followed through at regular appraisal meetings. Evaluation and monitoring from parents is sought and strengths and areas for improvement are identified and acted upon. The nursery meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection systems have been introduced to ensure staffing levels are maintained at all times of the day by employing additional staff to ensure children are cared for appropriately. Clear procedures and management direction ensures staff are suitably deployed to provide effective care for all children. Tiles in the toddler room have been replaced to make this area safe for children.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received six complaints.

Concerns were raised regarding the person in charge, staffing and cleaning levels, supervision of babies and outdoor play in hot weather. These relate to National Standards 1 Suitable person, 2 Organisation, 6 Safety and 7 Health. The nursery investigated and informed Ofsted of the outcome. The person in charge remains

suitable, hygiene and safety is maintained, regular checks are made of sleeping children in the baby room and measures are taken so children are not at risk from adverse weather conditions.

Further concerns were raised regarding the qualification, experience and coping strategies of the person-in -charge, staffing levels and the suitability of all staff. These relate to National Standards 1 Suitable person, 2 Organisation, 6 Safety and 8 Food and drink. An action was raised to ensure suitably qualified and experienced staff are present at all times. There were also concerns that visitors were not being checked into the nursery and about the quality and nutritional content of the meals provided. A recommendation was raised regarding these issues.

Ofsted then received a concern about unsuitable language used by staff, ineffective methods used to manage complaints made by parents and procedures for collecting children from school. These relate to National Standards 1 Suitable person and 12 Working in partnership with parents and carers. Ofsted contacted the provider who investigated satisfactorily.

Further allegations were made in two separate complaints regarding the suitability of all staff and adult:child ratios. These relate to National Standard 1 Suitable person and 2 Organisation. Ofsted wrote to the provider regarding this issue. This was investigated by the nursery. Staff remain suitable.

A recent complaint was made about low staffing levels and the impact this has on the care of the children relating to National Standard 2 Organisation. A visit was made by an Ofsted inspector where documentation was checked and found to be in order.

In five of the six complaints there was no breach of the National Standards. An action was raised in one of the complaints. Following appropriate investigation for all complaints the evidence obtained demonstrates that the nursery continues to meet the National Standards and the provider remained 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.

## **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 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 all children are encouraged to learn about personal hygiene through the daily routines
- ensure adult handling of behaviour is consistent and developmentally appropriate, respecting individual children's level of understanding and maturity

### **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):

- make more effective use of child initiated play to extend and secure their curriculum knowledge, including the use of practical and spontaneous opportunities to promote independence and challenge to build on what they can already do.
- improve opportunities for children to input their own ideas into creative work and provide a wider range of materials to choose from to steer their own creations
- devise a method to evaluate some key activities to ascertain what children have learnt or if they have learnt what was intended. Ensure this information is used for future planning and to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching
- continue to develop the initial assessments to ascertain what children can already do and use these as a starting point to plan for children's individual learning.

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