



Railway Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY256193
Inspection date	05 December 2005
Inspector	Fler Wright

Setting Address	Eastside Social Centre, Norton Terrace, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 0BT
Telephone number	01273 510777
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Registered person	Nicole Webster
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 satisfactory. 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?

Railway Nursery registered in 2003. It is privately owned and operates from a local hall in Newhaven, East Sussex. The nursery have sole use of the premises during opening hours. There is a secure outdoor play area available.

The Nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year, and is closed on bank holidays. Children attend on a sessional or full-time basis.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 39 children aged from 0 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 7 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery support children with special needs although there is none on roll at present, but do currently offer support for those who speak English as an additional language.

The Nursery employ six staff plus one volunteer. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Established hygiene routines increase children's understanding of the importance of keeping healthy. Children have access to a low level soap dispenser and independently wash their hands and visit the toilet helping them to learn about their personal needs. There are effective procedures in place to prevent the spread of infection as the environment is relatively clean and tidy and staff take appropriate precautions when changing nappies.

Children eat lunches supplied by parents, and most enjoy healthy snacks such as apples, raisins and bananas which helps to encourage them to develop healthy eating practices. However, children that do not like the snacks on offer are not always offered an appropriate alternative. Snack times are generally well organised, and children use lunch times as an opportunity to socialise with each other. However, the organisation of this time means that children's independence is not always promoted. Everything is laid out for children before they sit down for lunch, drinks are poured for them, and many staff stand and watch children eating and do not always sit with them and encourage communication. Supervision is not always effective as some staff are engaged in other tasks and do not always notice children eating food that they have dropped on the floor. However, staff do try to actively educate children about the risks of doing this during cooking activities, as they state that 'things on the floor get germs on them'. Drinking water is freely available to the younger children throughout the day, although there are currently no routines in place for the over 2's to access a drink outside of meal times.

Children enjoy a range of activities that develop their physical skills and contribute to keeping them healthy. Babies and toddlers are encouraged to crawl, use the push along toys and climbing frame available, and are able to freely explore their environment, helping to promote their physical development.

Children move confidently and in a variety of ways. They are competent when using sit and ride toys and show co-ordination when jumping and running. They respond and move enthusiastically during music and movement sessions. Children's fine motor skills are developing well, and they are gaining confidence when selecting and using small equipment such as scissors, glue sticks, play dough tools and paintbrushes although there are limited opportunities for them to use pens and

pencils during everyday play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a warm and welcoming environment that allows them to move around relatively safely. Most areas are clean and well maintained. However, the sinks in the toilet areas are stained, although staff are now working to help ensure they are made more inviting for staff and children. The nursery is split into three partitioned areas that are each used by a different age group. Children are able to roam freely between the areas during free play or circle time, giving them a sense of independence and choice. The designated book corner has soft carpeting and cushions to help to create a cosy atmosphere. The baby area contains a range of toys and equipment, although there are no appropriate chairs available for staff to hold and feed babies comfortably for extended periods of time.

Children have access to a good range of developmentally appropriate resources appropriate for their developmental needs. Equipment is in good condition and staff check items regularly to ensure they are safe and suitable for use.

Staff have an adequate understanding of safety issues and potential hazards, as there are effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and departure of children, and parental consents are gained for unusual or different activities. Children and staff practice the fire emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis, which helps them to become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. However, the fire extinguisher in the baby area and the exposed drain outside both pose a slight risk to the children being cared for. Staff are generally well deployed, although during lunch times and isolated play sessions, supervision levels of the children are minimal as staff are engaged in other tasks, putting children at a slight risk of harm.

Staff have an understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and know what action to take should they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures they quickly recognise when a child is in danger. The child protection policy contains all of the required information, and staff are aware of the procedure should an allegation be made against them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, confident and enjoy their play. They relate well to staff, and confidently approach them for support indicating trusting relationships are built. Children are keen to learn and benefit from an interesting range of activities and experiences that help to encourage learning and development, for example; feeling fresh fish and learning to cross the road safely. However, some of these activities, along with lunch and circle times are not always organised effectively. They are either too adult directed, or do not meet the abilities of the children participating, meaning that children do not always get the most out of them.

Children have access to good quality, stimulating toys that provide balance and challenge. Free play is well organised as the resources that are put out by staff help to ensure children can easily extend activities themselves, for example; shells and magnifying glasses are put out for children to look at, although children decide to devise their own game of searching for clues around the room. Staff support this, and hide things for the children to find, helping to increase their sense of enjoyment. Babies are able to join older children for music and movement sessions helping them to feel involved, whilst ensuring they are enjoying the experiences on offer.

Staff are enthusiastic and spend time playing with children, helping them to develop new skills and make progress in their learning. They increase children's self-esteem by the regular use of positive interaction and generally use effective questioning in order to promote children's learning and development. The Birth to three matters framework is being implemented, and planned activities help incorporate this into children's daily activities. Staff in the baby area respond well to children's individual needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making sufficient progress towards the early learning goals as the activities and experiences on offer cover each area of learning on a daily basis. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage which helps to ensure children learn from a variety of meaningful activities and opportunities. Staff are enthusiastic in their interaction with children, and listen with interest to what they have to say. They ask open ended questions to encourage thought processes, but they miss some opportunities to question children further, slightly hindering their learning potential. Staff complete regular observations of children, but these are done during free play and not on focussed activities so some developmental progress goes unnoticed. The observations are occasionally transferred into the "stepping forward profiles", but due to the limited number of entries, they are not effectively used to plan the next steps in children's learning. Although children enjoy the activities on offer, they have no input into planning; activities are often adult-led, are not well organised, and do not always meet the abilities of the children participating.

Children are developing effective relationships. They get on well with peers and staff and are able to take turns and show regard for each other. They are encouraged to be independent throughout the day and confidently do things for themselves, although these opportunities are significantly reduced at lunch times. They show a great interest in books and listen enthusiastically during story time. However, there are limited opportunities for children to mark make on a daily basis as staff write names on work, painting is not offered frequently and pens and pencils are generally only on offer as part of free play.

Many children are confident in counting numerals 1-10 and above, and thanks to staff questioning, most are able to recognise numbers, calculate and use subtraction in everyday situations, although these opportunities are scant at lunch times. Children have access to a computer and are able to use this regularly in order to help increase their confidence when using information technology. They are beginning to understand past and present, and discuss people, places and events in their lives.

Activities and resources help children to learn about the world around them, but staff's limited knowledge of equality restricts the ways children can learn about different cultures. Children enjoy music and movement activities and respond enthusiastically as they move their bodies to the rhythm of songs. Children have some opportunities to express themselves creatively through various mediums such as paint, play dough, glue and oats during free play sessions, although they have limited access to pens and pencils, slightly restricting their development in this area. Overall, children are motivated, keen to learn and enthusiastically participate in the activities on offer.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are treated with respect and are made to feel good about themselves. Photographs and low-level displays of their work help to give them an important sense of belonging. Staff encourage all children to participate in the activities provided which ensures they have an equal opportunity to maximise their enjoyment and potential. There is a sufficient range of resources and activities available that help to develop children's knowledge of disability and the wider world. However, staff have only a basic understanding of this topic, and although the group cater for children with English as an additional language, staff have a limited knowledge of cultural backgrounds and first languages, which impacts upon how all children are included at the nursery.

The designated special educational needs co-ordinator has an understanding of her role and responsibilities, although the nursery's policy is basic and does not contain all of the necessary information. Children are well behaved and benefit from some basic ground rules that are consistently applied. Parents are informed of behavioural incidents, although they are not recorded which limits the opportunities available to establish any patterns that may occur. Children show some understanding of working co-operatively and of each other's needs as they are starting to share popular resources such as sit and ride toys, and take turns to speak during circle time. Staff offer regular praise and encouragement to children to help increase their confidence and self-esteem.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff try to encourage a communicative relationship with parents through verbal discussion, regular newsletters, termly parents evenings and questionnaires. Parents are very happy with the care provided, and particularly like the friendly staff and the activities on offer. Personalised daily reports for the under two's detail what they been doing during the day ensuring that children receive individual care and attention. However, parents of older children are not aware of topics, and have a limited understanding of the Foundation Stage and the developmental progress of their children. This is because few parents attend parents evening, and there are no formal procedures in place to enable parents and staff to exchange information on a regular basis, limiting the opportunities for them to be involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The vast majority of mandatory records are in place, and are well maintained. This helps ensure the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. However, a number of the policies and procedures either require updating or do not yet contain the necessary information in order to meet current guidance and legislation. The medication record is completed sufficiently, although it does not maintain confidentiality as there are two entries per page. The attendance register has been amended in order to ensure it is an accurate reflection of those present at any given time.

Children usually receive appropriate adult support to help them feel secure and confident. There are a high number of qualified and experienced staff helping to meet the needs of children. Staff are generally well deployed, although supervision levels of the children are minimal during lunch times and isolated play sessions, meaning that they are sometimes at a slight risk of harm and do not always gain the most from the experiences on offer. The lack of organisation of lunch times, circle times and some activities means that opportunities are regularly missed to further children's learning potential.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Clear aims reflect a commitment to improving the quality of care and education. Staff work well as a team and have regular meetings helping to ensure consistency of care. Staff have a sufficient knowledge of their roles and responsibilities, although they have a limited understanding of equalities. Regular staff observations and appraisals help to ensure training needs are identified. Staff are receptive, and have a desire to improve the quality of care they offer to children. Overall, staff meet the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the nursery were asked to: develop written guidance on behaviour management procedures; improve the nutrition of the snacks and food provided; increase resources and activities to reflect diversity; and revise accident and medication records.

An additional visit was made to the nursery in order to agree a variation to increase numbers, and at the visit two actions were set as it became apparent that the setting were breaching the conditions of their registration and had not informed Ofsted of relevant changes to staff.

Since the group were last visited, a behaviour management policy has been devised and implemented to ensure consistent strategies and positive reinforcement are used; a healthy range of snacks has been introduced to help encourage children to learn about healthy eating; the range of resources and activities available to reflect diversity has been broadened to ensure children are given the opportunity to learn about the wider world; and the accident and medication records have been revised in

order to meet current guidance. The nursery took immediate steps to ensure they were operating within their conditions of registration and they have kept Ofsted informed of all relevant events. This helps to safeguard the children in attendance.

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

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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 the drain in the garden and the fire extinguisher in the baby area are made safe or inaccessible to children
- improve staff understanding of equal opportunities in order to promote inclusion of children with English as an additional language
- ensure all incidents are recorded, and policies and procedures are updated in line with current guidance and legislation
- ensure group times and activities are organised effectively so that children gain the most from the experiences on offer
- ensure staff are deployed effectively so that children are well supervised at all times.

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):

- ensure there is a balance of adult and child led activities, children have an input into planning, and structured activities cater for children's individual needs

- use observations and assessments effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning
- increase the opportunities in everyday situations to enable children to practice their mark making skills
- continue to develop the partnership with parents to ensure they are able to play an active part in their child's learning.

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