



Cotton Tails Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 227081

Inspection date 31 January 2006

Inspector Rebecca Trow

Setting Address 1110 Bristol Road South, Northfield, Birmingham, West Midlands, B31 2RE

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Registered person Nicola Jean Cotton

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?

Cotton Tails Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by Cotton Tails Nurseries Limited. It opened in 1996 and operates from four rooms in a converted house. It is situated on a main route into Birmingham city centre. A maximum of 56 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed play area.

There are currently 64 children aged from 4 months to 5 years on roll. Of these 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area as many parents travel to work in the locality or the city centre. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 staff; 12 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well protected from the spread of infection because staff understand and implement good hygiene routines. For example, all children have individual bedding and cups and staff use disposable gloves when changing nappies and administering first aid. Children's good health is maintained as staff make accurate and detailed records of all accidents, which are shared with parents. Children sleep and rest according to their needs in all rooms, supervised by staff at all times to ensure they are safe and healthy.

Children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards food as staff make mealtimes a sociable and enjoyable occasion. Throughout the nursery children's individual dietary requirements are well met and staff have a good understanding of any food allergies and special diets. Older children serve themselves and all children are allowed to eat at their own pace. This means that children are well nourished. Children are well hydrated as they have constant access to drinks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. The nursery is decorated with children's own work and staff prepare rooms by laying toys out before children arrive. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child for as long as they want to. As a result, children settle well. Children throughout the nursery have access to a good range of toys and resources. Staff ensure all equipment is safe and suitable by undertaking regular checks. Some equipment is stored at children's level, enabling them to self-select.

The nursery places good emphasis on maintaining children's safety. All staff are vigilant and take action to minimise potential risks. For example, when staff find that a radiator is too hot they turn it down immediately. Staff ensure that children are safe both inside the nursery, in the outdoor play area and on trips. The registered person is proactive in addressing incidents which may compromise children's safety, following them with a risk assessment and policy review. As a result, children stay safe. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. They understand their individual roles

and responsibilities as well as those of the nursery, in protecting children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a good range of varied activities and play opportunities which they find interesting and enjoyable. Activities in the Baby, Tinie and Tweenie rooms are well planned, with staff making effective use of the "Birth to three matters" framework. Staff throughout the nursery interact well with the children, involving themselves in their play and giving appropriate assistance. Children are well occupied most of the time and learn to make choices between structured activities and free play opportunities. However, due to lack of planning, some children do not have meaningful experiences at certain times of the day, such as after lunch.

Children throughout the nursery approach activities with enthusiasm and concentrate on their chosen task. They share and take turns from an early age, with staff encouraging them to play in small and larger groups, to vary their experiences. Staff make effective use of formal and anecdotal observations, using them to plan the next stage of children's development and learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and early learning goals; they are deployed effectively, working in a different area of the room each day. Good use is made of the space available inside the nursery, giving children enough space to play together at activities and to move around easily. Resources are plentiful and varied enough to sustain children's interest. Staff adapt resources in order to give children a different experience. For example, the messy tray contains something different each day. The nursery has a good range of books, some of which are available for children to self-select, though they do not often choose to look at them. Staff make effective use of time, giving children sufficient opportunity to access a range of activities during each session. Staff have a calm and consistent approach to managing children's behaviour. They place particular emphasis on praising children for their efforts and achievements, which promotes high levels of self-esteem. Staff plan a wide range of activities which are repeated so all children can access them, regardless of their attendance pattern. Written plans focus on activities for the indoor area, leaving outdoor play for mainly physical activities. This means that children do not experience all areas of learning outside. Staff observe children as they play and use their observations to record children's progress and to plan for the next stage in their learning.

Children know and understand their own needs. For example, they help themselves to drinks and snacks when they are hungry or thirsty. This also helps them to develop a high level of independence. Children form good relationships with peers, staff and others; working well as part of a group. Children know and recognise some familiar words and understand that written words have meaning. For example, they recognise their names on the pencils at the writing table and can name the letters in it. Children have ready access to a book rack but do not often choose to use it. Children count

confidently and use mathematical language throughout their play. For example, they compare the size of the nursery computer with their own computer at home. Children use mathematical ideas to solve problems such as when there are too many children playing in one area. Children use a range of resources and equipment, such as serving spoons at lunchtime, with increasing skill and confidence. They express their imagination in the role play area and when using creative materials such as play dough, which they use to make birthday cakes. Children have a good sense of time and place, talking about what they did at home the night before. They make good use of technology, including the computer and tape player.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated and respected as individuals. They develop a good level of self-esteem because staff work hard to teach them how to understand their own needs. For example, drinks are freely available for them to select when they are thirsty. Children show pride in their achievements, telling staff and their peers what they have done. Staff encourage this with regular praise. Staff work alongside parents and other professionals to ensure they meet all children's needs, including those with special needs.

Staff use clear strategies to manage children's behaviour. The approach is implemented consistently throughout the nursery so children know and understand what is expected of them. They respond well to staff and their behaviour is good. The nursery places good emphasis on working closely with parents to ensure children are cared for in accordance with their wishes. For example, parents complete a form, including all relevant information about their child, before they start. This means that staff get to know children quickly, helping them to settle. Communication between staff and parents is maintained through daily conversation and more formal parents evenings. The nursery maintains a detailed complaints log and addresses any concerns quickly and efficiently.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff encourage parents to be involved in their child's life at nursery through schemes such as the "special person" project. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's progress with staff regularly and plans are displayed so they are informed about future activities. Parents can access "Time Together" packs which include activities in line with current topics so children's learning is enhanced at home. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

A robust recruitment, selection and induction process means that children are cared for by suitable staff. Their ongoing suitability is monitored as they complete health declarations every six months. All staff are encouraged to attend training, the need for which is identified through annual appraisals. Staff are deployed effectively and

children are grouped according to age and ability, after consultation with parents. There are effective contingency arrangements to ensure the nursery is adequately staffed. For example, the manager is supernumerary. All required documentation is maintained and stored securely, in order to maintain confidentiality. Paperwork is reviewed and updated as necessary and at least annually. Overall the needs of the children are met.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from good staffing levels in the School Room. Staff are encouraged to undertake training to support their understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They share any knowledge gained with the staff team, so that everyone's practice is enhanced. Good communication systems within the nursery mean that staff work well together which creates a positive learning environment for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection of care the setting agreed to ensure children have privacy when using the toilet facilities and to ensure that there are enough serving dishes, to avoid children waiting for long periods of time. They also agreed to ensure that staff are organised and have planned for children's individual needs at all times and plan a range of activities and play opportunities for children's overall development. A door has now been fitted to the toilets in the School Room, which means children's privacy is maintained. At mealtimes each table now has a serving bowl so children do not wait for their food. Staff ensure that children's individual needs are met by discussing them, in detail, with parents before children start and on an ongoing basis. All plans are made in line with the "Birth to three matters" framework and Foundation Stage curriculum, which means that all play opportunities are suitable for children's overall development.

At the previous inspection of education the setting agreed to provide opportunities for children to count and problem solve in relation to numbers during practical activities and to provide increased opportunities for children to develop their questioning and listening skills. Children regularly use mathematical ideas and language to problem solve during everyday activities and develop good questioning and listening skills as they communicate with peers, staff and others throughout their nursery day. The setting also agreed to ensure that staff management of behaviour is consistent so that children can learn right from wrong and to provide sufficient challenges for older and more able children to extend their learning. Children know and understand right from wrong because staff have a consistent approach to behaviour management, in line with the written procedure. Older children have sufficient challenges because staff adapt activities to ensure they are appropriate. They may also access an area of the room dedicated to extending their learning, with a varied range of resources and equipment.

Complaints 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.

Concerns were raised when a child was left outside unsupervised in the play area of the nursery. This concern relates to National Standard 6: Safety.

The registered person had reported the incident to Ofsted after it had occurred, as required within the National Standards, and therefore before the concern was raised by the complainant. Ofsted asked the registered persons to provide further details of the incident and any subsequent action taken following their investigation into the incident. The registered persons provided copies of all staff statements and reported that the staff concerned have been disciplined. They also reported that revised procedures regarding the counting of children have been implemented and that a keypad lock and security camera will be fitted in the outdoor area. Ofsted is satisfied and the registered persons remain qualified for registration.

The details of the complaint are recorded in the complaints log.

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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):

- maintain children's wellbeing by ensuring heating appliances are safe
- ensure time and resources are used effectively to occupy children throughout the day.

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 children have access to a varied range of activities in the outdoor area
- encourage children to use and enjoy books.

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