



Shaping Futures

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Cheryl Wilson

Setting Address Mansfield I Centre, Hamilton Way, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire,
NG18 5BR
Telephone number 01623 600638
E-mail
Registered person Shaping Futures 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 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?

Shaping Futures Day Nursery is one of four local nurseries owned by the owner. It opened in 2002 and operates from a purpose built unit on one level. It is situated in the Mansfield I Centre at Oakham business park in Mansfield. A maximum of 67 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open six days a week Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings with flexible opening times. It is open all year round and children attend a variety of sessions. There are two outdoor play

areas, one which is specific for the pre-school group. The 'Shaping Futures Bus' takes children on short trips and picks children up from local schools.

There are currently 59 children from 4 months to 6 years on roll. Of these 12 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery employs 12 staff who work with the children, of these, eight staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Some staff are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment. Their good health is protected as staff follow suitable hygiene procedures during the daily routines. For example, they wear protective clothing such as gloves and aprons for nappy changing and wipe surfaces with antibacterial spray before and after use. Young children receive appropriate explanations from staff to help them understand the importance of hand washing. The older children, who use the bathroom facilities independently, are sometimes unsure of the processes to follow. As a result they fail to wash their hands and are subsequently at risk from infections. Occasionally appropriate hand drying equipment is not readily available for all children causing them to be uncomfortable. A sickness exclusion policy is shared with parents to ensure children only attend the setting when they are well enough to do so. This prevents illnesses being passed on to others. Children stay suitably protected if they have an accident or become poorly as staff are knowledgeable of current first aid practice and the procedures to follow when giving medication. However, blank medication and accident forms are kept centrally which means they are not readily available to staff when required.

Children enjoy being active at the setting. They all benefit from regularly playing outdoors in the fresh air. The pre-school age children understand the positive effects of physical exercise on their health and well-being. They enjoy using the two playground areas to practise their climbing, balance, coordination and general physical skills. Children show a good sense of space as they run around each other as they play a bear game. They easily negotiate the space and obstacles as they steer the cosy coupe cars, scooters and tricycles. Children confidently climb on the small frames and across the tunnel. They control their bouncing well when using the small trampoline. However, most equipment is more suited to the toddler age group and is currently providing insufficient challenge for older children. Younger children show great enthusiasm at playing outside on the good range of equipment suited to their needs. Toddlers are keen to use the cars, tricycles, tractors and climbing frames. They respond well to music and are developing a sense of rhythm through their dancing. Babies love to play with and chase the balls spread around their room. They are supported in their early movements and enjoy swaying to the background music.

All children enjoy good portions at meals and snack times. Food is freshly prepared and cooked on site each day and includes a selection of fruit and vegetables to enhance children's health. Children receive drinks on a regular basis through the daily snack and meal routines and additional drinks are offered to the younger children. Pre-school children have less opportunities to access drinks independently as the water jug is often empty and clean cups are not always available.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a bright, attractive and welcoming environment. Good systems are in place to ensure children stay secure in the nursery as entrances are monitored and the outside play areas are fully fenced. Children stay satisfactorily safe on the premises as staff undertake risk assessments to minimise hazards. Clear policies and procedures are in place to guide staff's practice but these are not always followed appropriately. For example, practitioners do not always ensure the room safety checklists are completed on a daily basis. As a result electrical sockets are accessible to very young children.

All ages of children begin to take responsibility for their own safety as they regularly take part in fire drills so they know what to do in the event of an emergency. Children stay safe on trips, journeys to and from other settings, and visits as all the required documentation is completed and kept on the nursery premises. All children stay suitably protected as practitioners are aware of their responsibilities with regard to child protection and know the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns.

Children play in bright and airy rooms. Young children benefit from attractively decorated and well organised rooms. They have plenty of space to play on the floor or at low tables. At times, older children do not benefit from the same space and the occasionally cramped conditions do not promote children's positive behaviour. Children enjoy peace and quiet as they rest and sleep in a separate room that is away from children who are playing. However, many babies and toddlers sleep in pushchairs, as agreed with parents, whilst comfortable cots are filled with nursery equipment. All children play with toys and equipment that are in good condition and mostly developmentally appropriate. Children easily access play materials from the low storage containers. Pre-school children are actively encouraged to take toys from the shelves to develop their independent learning. However, some equipment is stored in another room limiting the choices available.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and settled at the setting. They display quiet confidence and most work well independently, beside others or as part of a group. They are beginning to develop negotiation skills and younger children play cooperatively with their peers. Children show natural curiosity and keenly ask questions of known and less familiar adults. Babies and toddlers relate well to staff and form close bonds that

support their emotional well-being in the setting. Babies reach out to adults to receive comfort and cuddles. All ages of children thrive on making choices in their play and enjoy the time they spend outdoors. Toddlers are particularly keen to play outside and enthusiastically tell visitors about their favourite equipment. Younger children's concentration is developing well as they participate in self-chosen activities and small group times. The baby and toddler age groups enjoy listening to the background music and respond actively through swaying, dancing and jiggling rhythmically. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to improve the learning opportunities for young children. Activity planning is well organised identifying the learning intentions for each aspect of the framework. Regular observations are made and sometimes recorded in children's development records. Some of the children's records clearly show their progress as written observations support the identified attainment and the information is used to plan the next steps in each child's learning. However, this is not consistent across the nursery.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. Children have opportunities to access a curriculum that incorporates the six areas of learning. Currently, the pre-school staff do not plan together as a team or share their ideas. As a result some activities lack sufficient challenge for children and staff are not always clear of the intended learning objective. Some learning intentions for activities are identified on the weekly planning form but these are not sufficiently matched to what many of the children already know and can do. This hinders children's learning and progress.

When taking part in the good variety of play activities children learn incidentally. Their progress is more rapid when staff role model new vocabulary and skills. For example, when a new role play area is created staff involve children in identifying and organising the equipment needed so they take ownership and behave responsibly. Other staff ask open-ended questions to encourage children to talk about their role as a medic or to describe their injury as a patient. Children's behaviour is generally good during free play times enabling learning to take place. However, some group times and certain routines throughout the day, impact on children's ability to maintain their concentration and positive behaviour. For example, during one story time children are crammed into a small space and use their elbows and knees to nudge their peers to make more space for themselves. This creates a lot of tension and many children struggle to listen and concentrate. During a more successful music session children are well spaced out in a larger area and staff set out the rules in advance so all children are aware of the expectations for their behaviour.

Children speak confidently to their peers during play activities and enjoy sharing their experiences with staff or visitors. The opportunities for making marks encourages children to attempt writing skills and many are beginning to have a go at writing their own name. More able children often recognise letters in their name, name other letter sounds and are beginning to recognise some simple words. Children enjoy choosing books from the mobile library; sharing books with their peers and staff; and listening to stories. Children use mathematical language in their play and many confidently recognise numbers to ten and beyond in group times. More able children are not always extended as opportunities for them to recognise and use larger numbers are

not regularly included in the daily activities.

Children show interest in exploring media and malleable materials such as cornflour, water and paint. They regularly create pictures to support topics and sometimes use their own ideas. For instance, children use their observational skills to draw pictures of themselves. Children are developing a repertoire of songs and regularly listen to rhymes. They have less opportunities to listen to and respond to a broader range of music. Children use everyday technology and knowledgeably use buttons on pretend phones, tills and computer keyboards. However, the nursery has a limited range of programmes to extend children's knowledge and skills in information technology further. Children readily talk about their home lives and discuss past events. Consequently, they begin to develop their sense of time and belonging.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed into the setting. On the whole children are settled, happy and confident in staff's care. Most children have their individual needs identified and met as detailed records are shared with all practitioners. Occasionally children experience curiosity from their peers due to their family circumstances. Although topics around family life supports the children's understanding that we all come from different backgrounds with a variety of beliefs, staff are less confident in discussing children's feelings, anxieties and fears. As a result some children and families feel less appreciated and valued. Through posters, books and planned activities children begin to know about the similarities and differences in the wider world. They know about different festival celebrations as they participate in craft activities around Chinese New Year, Christmas and Diwali. Staff have a practical awareness of how to include and appropriately care for children with additional needs. The majority of children form positive relationships with adults. They generally play cooperatively with their friends and behave fairly well. At times, older nursery children become disruptive at group times and during routines such as queuing to go to the toilet or waiting to wash their hands. Most staff confidently address the behaviour and clearly explain their expectations for improvement. Some confident children clearly explain the need to share and take turns as recorded in the nursery promise system. This demonstrates their clear knowledge and understanding of what is right and wrong. Therefore, the provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children benefit from staff maintaining friendly relationships with parents who receive good information relating to children's care and routines. They are kept fully informed about the setting through newsletters and display boards. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive suitable information to raise their awareness of the Foundation Stage and what this means for their children. They are provided with opportunities to attend meetings to keep them informed of their children's progress towards the early learning goals. They receive written information on the topics being covered which includes some ways that parents can support their children's learning at home. Systems are not yet in place to share this information on an individual basis so children's learning in the

home is completely maximised. For example, more able children are being introduced to the 45 key words they need to recognise by the end of the Foundation Stage. However, this information has not been shared with parents so they can further support this learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are satisfactorily cared for and protected by the nursery systems and staff. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that all practitioners are suitable to work with children and have a sound knowledge of child development. A detailed staff induction programme is in place to ensure staff are consistent in the care of the children. Nursery practitioners attend a range of relevant training to further develop new and existing skills. The setting employs an appropriate number of qualified staff to work with children. Children receive suitable supervision from staff, who mainly work directly with them to support their play. All ages of children enjoy positive relationships with the staff and eagerly initiate conversations. Good systems are in place to record and store children's registration and attendance details. A detailed operational plan is in place and regularly reviewed to guide practitioner's practice with regard to the agreed policies and procedures. However, the systems are not yet embedded to ensure routine tasks, such as daily room checks, are consistently carried out.

The leadership and management for nursery education is satisfactory. The management team work well with external agencies, such as a teacher from the local authority, to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The nursery management team demonstrate commitment to improving their role in monitoring the effectiveness of the nursery education provision. They have implemented a wide range of systems to evaluate and improve the nursery education provision such as regular staff meetings; a staff appraisal system; improved staff training and development programme; a daily 'huddle' focussing on planning; an increased adult to child ratio in the pre-school; and evaluation sheets for staff to complete. However, regular changes to key personnel such as the nursery manager, pre-school supervisor and staff have significantly impacted on monitoring and improving the quality of nursery education. Although the new staff are appropriately qualified, some are not yet trained in the Foundation Stage, and have limited knowledge of the planning and assessment requirements. Therefore, children are not always challenged in their learning which hampers their progress towards the Early Learning goals. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection several recommendations were raised with regard to health and hygiene procedures; care, learning and play; safety; the organisation of early morning sessions; and the setting's policies and procedures.

The setting has made suitable progress in promoting children's good health as accident records have been reviewed to ensure that they are individual to each child and always countersigned by a parent to acknowledge that they have been informed about any incidents. Staff now ensure that they wash their hands before serving food; they dry their hands on paper towels to prevent the spread of infection; and they wear protective clothing when serving food or feeding babies. Implementing these procedures further enhances children's health. Improving children's safety has been addressed through displaying the public liability insurance certificate; and by the setting keeping a list of named drivers, current vehicle insurance and MOT certificates for the nursery vehicle. The nursery has reviewed its policies and procedures to enhance the service they offer to children and families. A procedure for operating the early start sessions is consistently implemented to ensure an appropriate number of staff are effectively deployed to meet children's needs. The setting has implemented assessment records that chart children's early progress with regard to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and Foundation Stage. Staff make observations of children's development but this information is not always recorded on children's assessment profiles on a regular basis which means that the next steps in children's learning are not sufficiently identified to ensure all children are consistently challenged and extended. Therefore, another recommendation regarding the observation and assessment process is being taken forward from this inspection.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the quality of the nursery education was judged as inadequate. The setting needed to improve the management team's role in monitoring the effectiveness of the nursery education provision and identifying areas for improvement; develop a planning system that meets all children's needs; assess children's initial abilities and regularly assess their attainment along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals; and improve the partnership with parents with regard to keeping them fully informed of their children's learning and involving them in their child's learning in the nursery and at home.

The nursery has started to address all four actions and has made good progress in improving the partnership with parents. Parents now receive good quality information about the educational programme and their children's learning through the nursery brochure, newsletters, information about the daily activities displayed on whiteboards throughout the nursery, parents evenings, assessment reports and informal discussion. The nursery encourages parents to be involved in their children's learning through giving information about the topics and activities covered and by encouraging parents to observe what their children are doing. Parents are also encouraged to talk to groups of children about their work. For example, parents who have roles as a dental nurse and police officer have visited the pre-school to talk to children about their jobs and how they help people.

The nursery management team have shown commitment to improving their role in monitoring the effectiveness of the nursery education provision. The management team have implemented a wide range of systems to evaluate and improve the nursery education provision such as regular staff meetings; a staff appraisal system; improved staff training and development programme; a daily 'huddle' focussing on planning; an increased adult to child ratio in the pre-school; and evaluation sheets for

staff to complete. The management team also work very closely with a teacher from the local authority to identify strengths and areas for improvement. However, since the last inspection there have been many changes to key personnel such as the nursery manager, pre-school supervisor and staff. Although the new staff are appropriately qualified, some are not yet trained in the Foundation Stage, and have limited knowledge of the planning and assessment requirements. This has significantly impacted on the amount of progress made since the last inspection as systems are not yet embedded to ensure improvement is continuous. Therefore, a recommendation is being taken forward from this inspection.

The nursery has introduced a new planning system that ensures all six areas of learning are covered each day. A good range of activities are provided to support children's interests and learning. Currently, the pre-school staff do not plan together as a team or share their ideas. As a result some activities lack sufficient challenge for children and staff are not always clear of the intended learning objective. Some learning intentions for activities are identified on the weekly planning form but these are not sufficiently matched to what many of the children already know and can do. This hinders children's learning and progress. The setting has also implemented assessment records that chart children's progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff make observations of children's development but this information is not always recorded on children's assessment profiles on a regular basis which means that the next steps in children's learning are not sufficiently identified to ensure all children are consistently challenged and extended. Therefore, further recommendations regarding the planning, observation and assessment process are being taken forward from this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been one complaint made to Ofsted since the last inspection. The complaint was received regarding inadequate nappy changing in accordance with a child's individual need. Ofsted requested a written response to this complaint in relation to National Standard 3 Care, learning and play. The provider reported back that there was a system in place for tracking nappy changes and ensuring the children's needs are met. This system has been further improved by the staff member changing the nappy initialling as evidence of the change. The provider has also put in place a system for responding to parents when a complaint has been received. Ofsted are satisfied that the provider has responded appropriately to the complaint. No further action is required. 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.

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 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 procedures for the health and safety of children are understood and implemented by staff
- review the organisation of space and resources to ensure children's developmental needs are met and that best use is made of facilities for young children's rest
- provide activities and experiences to help children value and appreciate each others similarities and differences, ensuring all children feel included
- improve the observation and assessment process to ensure that children's development, as well as the evidence to support judgements, is regularly recorded in written records (also applies to nursery 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):

- extend the staff and management team's knowledge of the Foundation Stage ensuring that the quality of nursery education and monitoring of the provision continues to develop and improve
- improve the organisation of group times and the routine of the day to effectively promote children's learning
- improve planning to ensure that all staff are aware of the learning intentions for each activity; the identified learning objectives are matched to children's abilities; sufficient challenge is provided for the more able children.

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