



Victoria Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY268207
Inspection date	03 April 2006
Inspector	Noreen Elizabeth Appleby
Setting Address	84 Victoria Road West, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, NE31 1LR
Telephone number	0191 430 1643
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Registered person	Nurserytime Group
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?

Victoria Kindergarten is one of four privately-owned provisions, run by the Nursery Time group. It was registered with the current owners in 2003. It operates from self-contained premises, situated in a residential area of Hebburn, close to shops, parks and local amenities. A maximum of 47 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00, all the year round, excluding bank holidays and the Christmas holiday period. All children share access

to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 17 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for nursery education. Children generally attend for regular sessions. Most children live locally.

The nursery is managed by the one of the registered providers, who employs four regular staff to work with the children, as well as two ancillary staff. All childcare staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from Sure Start, including visits from a link teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning the importance of appropriate personal hygiene, as they wash their hands after toileting or messy play activities and clean their teeth after meals. Tissues are not readily accessible to pre-school children, so they cannot attend to all of their personal needs independently. Children's health requirements are thoroughly discussed with parents. Staff have sound arrangements in place for protecting children's health. For example, a formal nappy changing policy, regular cleaning routines and clearly identified policies and procedures for sick children or children who have a contagious disease. Children's first aid arrangements are well met as a result of all staff having completed relevant first aid courses, thereby ensuring a suitably qualified first aider is on duty at all times. Children's accidents are suitably recorded and communicated with parents and carers.

Children's individual dietary needs are suitably discussed with parents and carefully observed by staff, many of whom hold a relevant food hygiene certificate. Children benefit from a suitably planned menu programme, that includes a range of healthy foodstuffs, including fresh meats, vegetables, fruit, cheese and fish. Staff are vigilant regarding children's diets. For example, they do not add salt when cooking and they monitor the quantity of rich food they provide, whilst encouraging children to try new tastes and textures. Babies' formula milk and foodstuffs are all suitably stored to ensure children's health. Young babies are appropriately held when they are bottle fed. Toddlers and older children enjoy meal times, as interesting social occasions, as they sit together and chat with staff and peers. Pre-school children have free access to water, in the Brown Bears room, although they are not sufficiently encouraged to help with mealtime routines or serve themselves, when it is safe to do so.

All children enjoy daily physical activities that help them to develop new skills, whilst encouraging them to keep healthy. For example, regular outdoor play and local walks provide a means of getting fresh air. Children are learning to move around freely and confidently, whilst developing fine and gross motor skills by using large equipment and hand held resources. They also have appropriate opportunities for quiet activities and rests, depending on their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

All children enjoy a bright, interesting environment, in which their safety is appropriately considered. The nursery is divided into age-related rooms, which are suitably organised so children can move around freely, whilst being appropriately supervised. Baby rooms have individual nappy changing units, whilst older children use the adjacent toilets and hand-washing facilities. However, toilet cubicles are not fitted with doors, so present arrangements do not always ensure children's dignity and privacy are respected.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe, as a result of sound working practices within the nursery and when children are taken on outings. For example, children are encouraged walk carefully on the stairs and to hold onto the handrail. They are also learning to use appropriate road safety practices, to keep themselves safe. Toddlers and pre-school children help with tidying up. They are learning to recognise potential safety hazards as they enjoy helping to sweep up sand or mop up water. Staff and management are vigilant about safety issues. They monitor arrangements regularly and ensure reported hazards are promptly addressed, thereby minimising potential risks to children.

Children's wellbeing is given careful consideration in matters of child protection. A comprehensive policy statement is in place and staff demonstrate a sound awareness of action they would take in the event of a concern being raised. Children's existing injuries are appropriately discussed with parents and recorded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's care arrangements are suitably met as a result of staff being aware of individual requirements and ensuring that children have sufficient support. All childcare rooms are well set out to provide an attractive and accessible play and learning environment. Children are gaining a sound sense of routine and learning what is expected of them. Pre-school children generally play purposefully and recognise the need to share, take turns and to have respect and consideration for each other. However, their room is currently being shared with younger children, who do not have similar concentration skills or level of understanding. As a result, activities are somewhat disrupted and children's individual needs or learning opportunities are hampered. However, staff manage the situation sensitively. They use positive support strategies and take time to interact positively with the children, whilst encouraging them to work co-operatively with each other.

Staff who work with babies and children under three years, ensure individual play areas are appropriately set out with interesting resources and activities that enable children to make progress across all areas of their development. Non-mobile babies are learning to communicate, by using vocal sounds and body language. They enjoy activity gyms, roll-along toys and bright tactile resources that stimulate their interest and enjoyment. Staff have recently introduced "treasure boxes" to encourage babies'

exploration through heuristic play. Babies are learning to become more mobile. They move around, using all of their senses to explore a sound range of toys, equipment and natural materials that support all areas of their development. They are beginning to vocalise more and they respond well to adult interaction. Toddlers are also making progress, across all areas of their development. Their social skills are improving, as they begin to play co-operatively with each other or take part in large group activities, such as circle games, singing or listening to story. They move around more confidently and self-select activities that interest them. All babies and young children respond well to praise. They are learning to concentrate and to have pride in their achievements.

Staff have completed initial Birth to three matters training. Key staff in the baby room have introduced activity plans, that link with the aspects and individual components of the framework. Staff working in the toddler rooms, plan activities and resources in line with children's developmental stages. Children's progress is adequately monitored, using developmental records.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Key staff are suitably qualified and experienced. They demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, and of how to help young children to learn effectively. Children enjoy a satisfactory range of interesting topics and themes that adequately link to the six areas of learning, although present plans do not ensure children's progression along the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals. Children have a suitable mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities to choose from and staff work supportively, encouraging children to be actively involved. Most children are adequately challenged, although some adult-led activities are not sufficiently focused to take account of children's prior learning, and present assessment systems do not consistently ensure all children are appropriately challenged and extended. Nevertheless, children are making satisfactory progress across all six areas of learning and more able children are progressing well, in some areas. All children are given sufficient time to complete their tasks.

Children are developing confidence and self esteem. Many show increasing levels of independence as they manage their personal needs competently. They are learning to concentrate and sit quietly, for example, during circle time or story. All are forming good relationships with staff and peers. Children are learning to communicate confidently. Some talk descriptively about personal experiences and things that interest them. They enjoy stories and most listen attentively. Some can recognise their names and are able to form a variety of recognisable letter shapes, although this is not always actively encouraged by staff. All children are developing an interest in numbers and counting. Some can successfully identify shapes such as circles, squares and triangles and use appropriate language relating to size.

All children explore their environment with interest. Some enjoy playing with water or sand. Others use interesting computer programmes to help them acquire basic skills in information and communication technology. They are beginning to develop an interest in the world in which they live. For example, they have recently planted seeds and are monitoring them daily to watch how they grow. Children are gaining a sound

awareness of different cultures and beliefs, through suitable learning opportunities linked to various festivals, celebrations and children's personal religious events. They are gaining physical skills and most manage their body movements well, when using large equipment and ride-on toys. They have regular opportunities to select and use tools and equipment, such as pencils, glue, collage materials and junk modelling, which they manage with increasing skill and control. Children are developing creativity through a satisfactory range of art activities, imaginative play and regular singing activities, that help them to gain an appreciation for music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly welcomed into the nursery. There are suitable procedures in place to discuss, and agree with parents, children's individual or special needs; although present shared room arrangements do not always ensure they are sufficiently supported or extended. The nursery key worker system enables staff to know the children well. Children are secure and content because staff are always on hand to offer support and reassurance. They take time to listen to what children say and ask or respond to questions. Children are gaining an awareness of diversity as they access a satisfactory range of resources, such as books, posters, musical instruments and ethnic dolls. They also enjoy a suitable range of activities that link with celebrations such as Divali or Chinese new year. They show concern for living things. For example, they know they need to water the seedlings, so they will grow into flowers. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff act as good role models for children and have sound expectations for their behaviour. Children benefit from clear routines. Appropriate boundaries are set and practices are sensitively reinforced, so children know what they are expected to do. For example, staff encourage the children to help with tidying up and to listen at story time, or join in with songs. Children are learning to be polite and well mannered. They receive appropriate encouragement and purposeful praise. As a result, they are developing confidence, self esteem and pride in their achievements.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Information is initially shared, using a welcome pack that identifies nursery routines, policies and procedures and basic information about the Foundation Stage. Notice boards, curriculum displays, activity plans, menus and newsletters also serve to keep parents informed about their child's time at nursery. As a result, parents have adequate opportunities to be actively involved in their child's learning at home. Staff also have informal discussions with parents at the start and end of each day. They share written information with parents about babies' care; such as rests, nappy changing and food intakes. Open evenings are planned twice yearly, when staff update parents about their child's achievements and progress. Management also send out parents' questionnaires. Comments received from parents indicate that they are very happy with the quality of care the nursery provides and the progress their children are making.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Sound recruitment and vetting systems ensure children are appropriately cared for by suitable staff. The manager monitors day-to-day arrangements to ensure there are sufficient staff on duty and that they are suitably deployed; thereby contributing towards children's continuity of care. Children also benefit from a key worker system, as well as having opportunities to take part in large group activities, such as meal times. At present, toddlers and pre-school children are sharing the same room. As a result, arrangements do not always ensure children are effectively supported or challenged. Nevertheless, all children are happy and settled within the nursery.

A broad range of policy and procedure statements clearly identify the operational plan, which is appropriately implemented in the setting. Children state that they enjoy coming to nursery. They are gaining the confidence to initiate and extend their own play and learning. Children's personal records, and other associated documentation, are adequately maintained in line with the requirements of the National Standards.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Over the past year there has been a significant turnover of staff. One of the proprietors has recently taken over the management role and she is closely monitoring all issues arising from the last inspection, to ensure the nursery development plan is successfully completed. Staff benefit from a sound supervision and appraisal system that ensure they are adequately supported. Staff and management act as good role models. They demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to their roles. They are able to identify the team's strengths and areas for development. They demonstrate a strong commitment to on-going training, to develop their knowledge and skills and to monitor and improve practices within the nursery.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection, the nursery were asked to improve procedures for checking staff suitability and submitting appropriate documentation to Ofsted; for ensuring unvetted persons are never left alone with children; and for ensuring that the registers of attendance are retained for a period of two years from the date of the last entry.

Management verify that there are comprehensive recruitment procedures in place to ensure all staff are suitably vetted and experienced for their roles. There are no students working in the nursery at the present time. The manager takes responsibility for notifying Ofsted of significant staff changes and for ensuring children are appropriately supervised. Registers of attendance are now retained for a minimum of two years from the last entry. The nursery has successfully completed actions raised,

thereby improving children's safety and wellbeing throughout the setting.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection, the quality of nursery education was judged as inadequate. The setting was required to develop staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn; to use daily opportunities for children to participate in activities where they are questioned and challenged; to develop effective assessment systems that clearly monitor children's progress and to use assessments to help move children to the next stage of learning.

Most staff, working with children who are entitled to nursery education, have attended training to develop their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They also have the support of a link teacher, who has helped them with planning activities that closely link with the stepping stones and early learning goals. These measures are improving the quality of nursery education for children, although children are not always given opportunities to participate in daily routines such as meal times, when it is safe to do so. Children have comprehensive assessment files, but these are not regularly completed and some staff are not adequately familiar with assessment systems. As a result, children's progress is not effectively monitored and consequently, planned activities do not always ensure children are sufficiently challenged and extended.

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

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):

- improve toilet arrangements to ensure that the dignity and privacy of children are respected
- ensure staffing arrangements are adequately designed to meet the individual, or special needs of all children.

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 staff knowledge, skills and practices in improving the educational provision, so pre-school children receive a broad based curriculum effectively linked to the early learning goals
- continue to develop planning and assessment systems and ensure activities are adequately focused, so all children are sufficiently involved, challenged and extended. Use evaluations of focused activities effectively, to monitor children's progress and to inform future planning.

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