

Elm Cottage Nursery at Thorngrove Primary School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY300705
Inspection date	10 January 2006
Inspector	Janice Shaw
Setting Address	Thorn Grove Primary School, Woodstock Avenue, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, Cheshire, SK8 7LD
Telephone number	0161 485 7681
E-mail	
Registered person	Yvonne Margaret Thomas
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?

Elm Cottage at Thorn Grove was registered in 2005. It is one of three nurseries run by Elm Cottage and operates from a mobile unit within the grounds of Thorn Grove Primary School in Cheadle Hulme. Children come from a wide area around Cheadle Hulme. It is open from 08.00 until 18.00 daily, Monday to Friday each week, except for Bank Holidays.

The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 until 18.00 all year round. There are currently 31 children on-roll, of whom 14 receive nursery funding. The nursery supports children who have been identified as having special educational needs. All children have English as a first language.

The nursery employs 5 staff all of whom have early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the Local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young children's emotional wellbeing is very well supported as staff are highly sensitive to their needs and offer meaningful support, such as a cuddle when coming into nursery and help and encouragement with an activity. Sleep and rest times are arranged around children's home routines, which helps to provide continuity of care and helps to make children feel settled. The presence of very good hygiene routines, which are clearly established and consistently followed by all staff, ensures that children are very well protected from infection and cross-contamination. Clear procedures for recording accidents, administering medication and sick children are understood by all staff, shared with parents and are effective.

Children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise. They delight in the challenges presented to them when they skilfully steer wheeled toys around the outdoor play space. Even the youngest children are confident to try out new skills, ask for help when needed and set their own limits within the safe environment. They use their large muscles when they make good attempts to move up the climbing frame, and when taking part in vigorous music to movement sessions and weekly dancing classes. Children are presented with a very good selection of mark-making resources and small equipment to develop their small muscles.

Meal times are relaxed social occasions where children and staff sit together around the tables to enjoy their food and each other's company. They gain an understanding of the importance of eating a healthy diet through the provision of wholesome nutritious and balanced snacks. Children help themselves easily to accessible drinking water throughout the session. In the room for over 2's, children independence skills are skilfully encouraged by the provisions of a highly innovative snack station which gives children choice about when to have their snack.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed in the newly refurbished, bright playrooms with their colourful work and paintings displayed all around. They benefit from a good amount of space, indoors and out, which is arranged effectively to provide them with very reliable levels of challenge appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children are eager to attend and relish their time in the well organised and safe setting. They confidently help themselves to resources or happily join in an activity at the start of the session. Their growing independence is well nurtured as they choose from clearly labelled toy boxes, which are stored on open shelving, or help themselves to a book to look at and sit on comfortable cushions in the cosy book area. Staff do not have use of comfortable adult chairs to use when holding and feeding children under two.

A parent's notice board with detailed information, colourful posters and children's work displayed creates a very welcoming environment and shows children how much their work is valued. The safe collection of children is ensured as all staff follow clear procedures and know parents and their family members well.

Risk of accidental injury to children is minimised because staff are extremely vigilant and assess possible risks to reduce potential hazards. Staff have a high level of awareness of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits; this allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm. Children are well protected

as the provision has a secure understanding about its role and responsibility with regards to child protection issues. All relevant information and contact details to safeguard the welfare of children is in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children smile happily when they arrive and greet each other and staff members enthusiastically. Children who are new to the setting spend time with a family member until they are happily settled and confident to explore the opportunities available. Young children are actively involved throughout the play session, where they move freely between the areas or join in organised activities. Children develop a strong sense of identity as a valued member of the group. They gather together at regular times where singing sessions provide children with an ability to relate to each other as they sing a wide range of songs from memory.

Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Staff have developed a good awareness of the Birth to three Matters framework and this is included in the activities and routines they provide. In the rooms for children under two, children benefit greatly from the planning of activities which are specifically geared to enable them to become fully involved and engrossed in a wide range of stimulating activities. Babies watch with astonishment as bubbles are blown and then they disappear into the carpet. One baby waves his arms indicating clearly that he wants more and this sequence is repeated many times, with more babies crawling over to watch and they make very good attempts to catch them. At another point, when music is playing a 9 month old baby holds onto the edge of the ball pool and wiggles in time with music laughing as he keeps in time with the beat, looking very pleased with his efforts.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals, given their capability and starting points. Staff are deployed well and use their time effectively to support children in their learning. Observations and assessments of children are regularly completed and used systematically to inform future planning, although not always organised for ease of reference. A flexible approach to planning and a good balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions successfully to challenge children's thinking and developing language skills. Children experience staff that are warm and affectionate which creates an atmosphere in which they feel secure and valued. Right from the start, staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs, and build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. Staff are very good role models through their own enthusiasm for learning and their high expectations of what children can learn. Teaching methods interest children, helping them to become focussed, resist distractions and persist at activities for some time.

Children are eager to learn, engaging in activities with enthusiasm of independence as they self-select resources and link up with others in their play. They are very polite and can be heard saying 'please' and 'thank you' as a matter of course. Children wait patiently and are strongly encouraged to be kind and sharing like the rainbow fish. One staff member said to a child, "it's making me sad when you don't share in the house" and the child replied, "it's making me sad too", in a regretful tone, indicating that he was aware of the feelings of others and himself. Children experience a language rich environment where they develop very good speaking and

listening skills. Children are confident speakers who enthusiastically engage in conversation as staff actively encourage and value talk. They enjoy sharing books with adults and listen well at 'story time.' Children know how books 'work' and can retell their favourite stories accurately. In the 'Rainbow fish' story, they enthusiastically recall and describe the story and relate it to goldfish in the tank, and also to the collage they are currently making. All children use marks readily to represent their ideas and older children are able to write their own names. Children demonstrate a thorough understanding of number and shape recognition. When helping themselves to their tea they count the numbers of plates, and children accurately discuss the shape of the sandwiches and the fact that the ham slice is the same shape as each piece of bread, but the cheese spread is in a round tub and "can't be square". They use and recognise numbers through a range of purposeful songs and stories.

Natural resources are always available to help children learn about the world around them when they play in sand, water or make collages with natural materials. Children show a very good awareness of technology around them as they use the telephones, battery operated games and toys. Children are learning about the world in which they live as they learn the days of week, months, seasons and how to dress appropriately in different seasons. Children have good opportunities to listen to natural sounds and different types of music. In the weekly music session with an external music teacher they watch with awe as she plays the violin for them and then they willingly sing along to favourite songs. Children creatively construct in 2 and 3 dimensions, often in connection with the current topic. When involved in role-play children are very imaginative as they dress up and act out both real and imagined experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a well organised and varied range of resources, play opportunities and activities which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. Individual differences and similarities are valued as children benefit from the settings positive attitude to diversity. Careful planning ensures that children with special needs are fully integrated into the setting, resulting in children who benefit from having realistic and achievable goals being set for them. All children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Three staff have attended a course for British sign language and use it confidently when required. Some children have also learnt this and eagerly ask staff "what is the sign for house", in order to help communicate with specific children.

Frequent praise and encouragement enable young children to develop confidence and self-esteem as they test out their social skills within the security of their base room. Children are well behaved and benefit from a calm and consistent approach that is actively promoted by all members of staff. Children are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' and to play together harmoniously. Staff support younger children in sharing, turn-taking and to understand how being kind to others prevents children from being hurt.

The partnership with parents is good. A very positive partnership with parents enhances all aspects of children's wellbeing in the nursery. Staff actively seek parent's views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Children's care is significantly enhanced by the sharing of relevant information between parents and staff about their child's interests, achievements and learning. Parents speak highly of the care their children receive. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The commitment and overall ethos of the setting promotes an inclusive environment in which every child matters. Regular staff meetings and good staff training effectively contribute towards the professional development of the staff. There are good levels of qualified experienced staff in place which contributes significantly to children's care and development. Children are cared for by well organised and skilled staff who work well together as a team. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development and regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and learning. Children are cared for by staff who consistently give utmost priority to protecting all children, promoting their wellbeing and supporting all to develop their potential.

All policies and procedures are individual to the setting, comprehensive and fully support the expert practice of knowledgeable staff. The premises are well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is laid out to provide children with realistic and challenging play opportunities. Many positive links have been made with parents. They are valued and the effective systems in place to share information and involve parents in their child's education contributes to the children's confidence and wellbeing. Children respond positively to daily routines which provide consistency and familiarity in their lives. They happily choose from the inviting range of opportunities available during the session, which help to promote their independence. Staff are flexible and adapt activities to maintain children's interest as they introduce a new idea or sing a favourite song. Children make good progress in all areas of their development as staff provide a good balance of free play and adult-directed activities to meet individual needs.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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.

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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):

- provide adult chairs to enable staff to hold, and feed children under two comfortably.

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 that the observations and assessments of children are up to date in children's individual records.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk