



Ridgemount Cottage Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101517
Inspection date	01 July 2005
Inspector	Shirley Ann Jackson
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Registered person	Partnership of M Hendry & L Gerrard
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ridgemount Cottage Nursery and Ridgemount Cottage Nursery School opened in 1993. It operates from six rooms in a refurbished outbuilding, with a new extension, in the grounds of a thatched cottage. It is situated in Brockworth, a residential suburb on the outskirts of Gloucester. The nursery serves the local area. It is owned and run privately.

There are currently 49 children from birth to eight years on roll. This includes 11

funded three-year-olds and 11 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery has experience of supporting children with special educational needs.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday each week all year round, except Bank Holidays. Sessions are from 08.00 until 18.00 hours.

Seven full and part-time staff work with the children. Six have teaching or early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children observe how staff help to prevent the spread of infection by cleaning the tables after meals. Children's health is supported as staff have clear procedures in place for dealing with accidents and administering medication. All children are able to rest or sleep according to their individual needs. Staff check on sleeping children frequently, this helps to safeguard them and benefits their well being. However, nappy changing is done within the nursery routine and not according to the child's individual needs.

The children are offered snacks in adequate quantities for their needs. These follow children's dietary requirements and babies' feeding routines are consistent with those followed at home. Those that can, feed themselves and have control over their eating, choosing when they have eaten enough. However, older children are not offered a healthy balance of snack and this limits their understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Children have regular opportunities to play outside where they enjoy fresh air and physical activities. A daily timetabled session in the garden enables children to develop control of their bodies, for example, as they throw, catch and kick balls. Although staff provide some low structures for children to climb on, more able children are not always physically challenged by the equipment available.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a well maintained, child friendly environment. The environment is welcoming to children as some wall displays show and value their work. Children are well settled within the environment and can safely access some suitable resources. Indoors and outdoors, a wide range of good quality, safe, developmentally appropriate resources are offered. Children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe as they listen to regular reminders about looking where they are going when riding on wheeled toys.

Children are protected by staff who have a clear understanding of possible risks to children's well-being. Staff have risk assessments in place both indoors and outdoors. They help keep children safe through their understanding of health and safety requirements. However, the buzzer on the front door to alert staff to it's opening is not always switched on and this compromises children's safety. Staff are trained in first aid and child protection and are aware of how to put the correct procedures into practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. They participate in a wide range of activities, most of which are planned to support their progress and achievement. All children settle well and are enthusiastic about the activities offered. Staff interact skilfully with the children. They become involved in their play when appropriate, and sometimes let the children take the lead. This builds children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff are aware of how younger children develop and learn. Staff working with the younger children listen to them and respond accordingly, for example, getting out the paint when a toddler was keen to make marks. However, many of the resources for the younger children are plastic and do not offer children sensory and everyday experiences. Children are confident and motivated within the nursery environment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. They are keen to learn and engage in a wide range of many adult-led and some child-initiated activities.

Children listen attentively at story and circle times. They use a wide range of vocabulary in conversation and enjoy singing songs. Some children begin to use anti-clockwise movements with pencils and pens. Some begin to form recognisable letters, for example, writing their names on their "jobs". Children willingly attempt to count with some numbers in the correct order, for example, a four-year-old counting to ten. They begin to consolidate this through practical activities such as sorting out farm animals on work sheets.

Children are curious and ask lots of questions to help them to understand the world around them. They watched curiously as a workman repaired a wall opposite the nursery garden. Children have many opportunities to examine objects and living things to find out more about them, for example, planting and caring for seeds and bulbs. They go for walks in the local area which helps them to become familiar with the environment. Children have opportunities to enjoy a number of creative activities, such as, painting, collage and junk modelling, but many of these are adult-led. For the rest of the time children have restricted access to a range of craft materials, this hinders their spontaneous creativity. Children have opportunities to engage in imaginative play based on their own first-hand experiences.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff know the children well and this knowledge is used effectively to ensure that children are supported and extended in

their play and learning. Children are given time and opportunity to learn and develop at their own pace using a variety of good quality resources. Staff encourage the children to take the lead in some activities by the use of appropriate questioning and positive interaction. Planning gives children a wide, balanced range of opportunities which cover the six areas of learning. Staff have systematic methods in place to observe and assess the children. These are then used to aid future planning to ensure children's competence in certain skills and to help children progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show care and concern for themselves, such as, washing their hands after painting. They also show care and concern for others, for example, an older child showing concern for a younger child who was upset. Children operate reasonably independently within the environment and move smoothly between activities. They display high levels of involvement in activities of their choosing, such as, using the computer. Children are skilfully encouraged to behave well, for example, to take turns in games and to share outside equipment. Staff encourage children to begin to resolve their differences together through discussion to find possible solutions. Children demonstrate a good understanding of behavioural expectations within the nursery.

Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered. All children are known and well supported as individuals. Children settle quickly, they wave to parents and are then eager to play. Resources which reflect positive images of the wider community help to raise children's awareness of diversity.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good information about the nursery initially and this is ongoing through a regularly updated notice board and daily talks with staff. Parents pass on detailed information about their child before care starts. Children benefit from this two way sharing of information as it ensures consistent care and helps them to settle in the nursery. However, parents are not encouraged to become actively involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children receive good education and satisfactory care as a result of the satisfactory organisational skills and the good quality of leadership and management of the nursery education. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children who attend. Children are cared for in a child-oriented play environment which helps to make them feel settled and secure. They feel at home and at ease within the environment. This means they are confident to initiate some of their own play and learning. However, much of the day is adult-led with only some free choice activities offered. The routine and structure of the sessions provide a good balance of play opportunities both indoors and outdoors.

The staff team work well together giving children the support and encouragement to extend their play and learning. Staff are enthusiastic about helping to move the children on to the next stage in their learning. However, lack of training to enable staff to enrich the younger children's sensory development and their access to natural materials limits the experiences for these children. Policies, procedures and all legally required documentation which contributes to children's well-being is clear, up to date and confidentially stored.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to ensure that children in highchairs are appropriately harnessed, to plan a range of activities and play opportunities for babies overall development and to provide a suitable range of toys and activities in order to meet the developmental needs of babies and younger children.

Since then children's safety has improved due to the new highchairs which have been purchased and staff using safety harnesses at all times. A range of resources have been purchased for the younger children to increase the range available. However, as many of these are plastic, younger children do not have regular opportunities to explore different materials and textures.

At the last education inspection the nursery was asked to review planning to ensure that all six areas of learning receive sufficient attention. The manager and deputy have put procedures into place which show clearly how all six areas of leaning will be covered. In practice, this happens over a period of time.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- improve the range of experiences offered to children under three, for example, by using the Birth to three framework
- ensure that nappies are changed according to individual need and not the nursery routine

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):

- provide free access to a range of craft and resources to encourage the children to create spontaneously

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