



Torwood House School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY297338
Inspection date	13 January 2006
Inspector	Sue Davey
Setting Address	27-29 Durdham Park, Redland, Bristol, Avon, BS6 6XE
Telephone number	0117 9735620
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Registered person	Torwood House School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Torwood House School is a long established independent school with a separate baby unit and nursery school. It operates from a converted, listed building and is situated close to the Downs in the Redland area of Bristol. The registered provision consists of Torwood Lodge Nursery for infants from 6 weeks to 2 years; Torwood House School Nursery for children from 2 to 5 years; and an after school and holiday club for children from 4 to under 8 years. Children up to 11 years also attend. A

maximum of 166 children may attend the nursery provision at any one time plus a further 56 children in the out of school clubs. Registered provision is available from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday throughout the year, with the exception of public holidays, Christmas and some training days. Care is provided for school-aged children before and after school as well as during holiday periods. The holiday club is open to children from other schools.

The accommodation is spread over two sites. Children have access to 14 play rooms, the school hall and associated facilities. They all share access to secure and enclosed outdoor play areas. The hall is used by older children for meals, ballet lessons, physical education and out of school activities. There are currently 227 children aged from 6 months to under 8 years on roll. Of these, 66 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide area as most of their parents travel to work in and around the city. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and also a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs in excess of 41 staff who work directly with children throughout the registered provision. In addition, there are nine auxiliary staff who include cooks, administrators and maintenance staff. Managers and the majority of childcare staff hold appropriate Early Years or teaching qualifications. Eight staff are unqualified and of these four are working towards a recognised qualification. The setting is currently undertaking the Bristol Standard which is a government approved quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is consistently safeguarded as staff follow effective policies and procedures. Throughout the setting, regular and thorough cleaning programmes minimise the spread of infection and if children are ill or infectious, they do not attend until well again. From a very young age, children practise good basic hygiene routines. Consequently, older children understand the need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals or cooking activities. Staff talk to parents on a daily basis about their child's wellbeing. They find out about each child's individual needs to make sure they provide appropriate care. For instance, they try to follow babies' personal feeding and sleep routines. A good proportion of staff hold up-to-date paediatric first aid certificates and they know how to deal with accidents. Records show that matters regarding children's health and welfare are clearly documented and meet regulatory requirements. All meals and snacks are freshly prepared on the premises. They provide children with a varied, well-balanced and healthy diet that contains plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Children with specific dietary needs are particularly well catered for. Babies receive pureed freshly cooked meals rather than commercial baby food. All children have access to drinking water throughout the day as well as at meal times. Pre-school and reception children help themselves when thirsty. Children who attend the nursery or school receive breakfast, lunch and tea as required. This includes children attending the Holiday Club.

All children have frequent opportunities to play outside in the fresh air and babies are regularly taken out for a walk. Picnics in the garden are a regular feature in good weather. Children have the space and freedom to develop physical skills in the large and fully enclosed playgrounds. For example, they pedal and scoot wheeled toys, throw, catch and kick a ball or roll and run after hoops. Younger children clamber and slide on low-level climbing frames and enjoy pushing trucks and buggies around. In the nursery school, children learn to be aware of their bodies through well-structured movement sessions. They attend weekly physical-development and dance sessions with specialist teachers. Babies have space to roll, stretch and crawl. They are encouraged to practise their first tentative steps under the watchful eye of caring and supportive staff. Little ones who need to sleep or rest are able to do so in peace and quiet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Babies and children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Managers and staff carry out regular checks on all areas of the premises to identify and minimise risks. They frequently review accident reports and take any necessary action to prevent reoccurrence. Measures are in place to protect children from harm both indoors and outside: safety gates are strategically placed to prevent children's access to potentially hazardous areas; the playgrounds are fully enclosed and children are always supervised during outside play; and the rubberised safety surface in some areas helps to prevent injury from tumbles and falls. Staffing ratios often exceed the minimum standard, which means that children are well-supervised. Sleeping babies are physically checked every 10 minutes. All toys and equipment are in good condition and suitable for their purpose. Staff encourage children to explore resources freely, according to their level of maturity. Older children have access to a wide range of materials, including scissors and small-scale items, which they handle with care and respect. The layout of the building means that children quickly learn to negotiate the stairs safely and responsibly. Older children practise road safety on a daily basis as they move between sites. Outings during holiday periods are well-organised and appropriately staffed. All departments regularly practise emergency evacuation of the premises.

There are stringent security measures to make sure that only those adults who have been nominated by parents collect children. Staff monitor visitors to the building through closed circuit television, positioned at main entrances. A message book and pass-card system is used as an additional method of security control. Should concerns arise, there is always a member of staff on duty who knows when and where to seek advice on child protection issues. Some staff have received recent training. However, a number of staff members do not have up-to-date knowledge in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled throughout the provision. They receive continuity of care, which ensures their ongoing sense of security and ability to develop close and trusting relationships. Staff are enthusiastic and well-motivated as they interact with the children and join in with their play. They provide a wide range of activities and play opportunities to encourage children's all round development. Staff working with babies and children up to 3 years old, use the Birth to Three Matters framework, whereas children aged 3 and over follow the Foundation Stage. Children move from the baby unit to the Nursery School at the age of 2. Throughout the nursery, staff observe and notice what children are interested in and keep a record of their progress. However, planning often focuses on an item of equipment or the current topic, instead of what children need to learn next. Babies and toddlers are given many tactile experiences that stimulate their senses. They play with 'cause-and-effect' toys to encourage curiosity and they develop imagination through simple role play equipment, such as tea sets and dolls. Children aged from 5 to 11 years enjoy a wide range of activities in the after-school and holiday clubs. They are encouraged to complete homework, cook and take part in various sports. Dance, drama and craft activities are particular favourites during the holidays as are the opportunity to develop sports skills. Various outings are organised for older children in addition to regular trips to the Downs and Redland Park.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They make sure children steadily work through all aspects of each area of learning as they make progress towards the early learning goals. Staff record their observations of children's achievements, which forms the basis of their assessments. They know the children well and provide appropriate activities accordingly. Yet, not always is there a link between assessment and planning. Although topics are often used as a starting point when planning activities, staff frequently follow children's own interests instead with great effect. Children work independently as well as in small and large groups. They are confident, articulate and very sociable. Staff talk to children in 'circle time' and sometimes carry out group activities. During this time, they also encourage children to plan what they are going to play with. The daily routine includes a busy and varied curriculum. However, there is sometimes a lack of adult-led activities to provide further challenge and introduce new concepts.

Children spend much of their time in free-flow play. This enables them to pursue their own ideas, concentrate on one particular activity or try a number of different things. For instance, a small group of children excitedly announced they were making party food with the play dough. One child said, "If there's going to be a party there needs to be a present!" The group split up to look for suitable materials. Another child suggested that the present would need a bow and decided to thread coloured pasta on string to make one. Two boys working on the gift discovered that one needed to pull the sticky-tape off the roll while the other carefully cut it. Throughout the various activities, members of staff talked to the children about what they were doing. They encouraged their ideas, asked questions and provided direction when needed. The children demonstrated their ability to communicate effectively, put thoughts into actions, make representational models, problem solve, work cooperatively and explore a range of creative materials. In other rooms, children busy themselves with

simple computer programmes, they practise their early writing skills, complete puzzles of various complexities, make patterns with coloured cubes, and act out complicated scenarios in role-play. They enjoy listening to stories, singing familiar songs and playing musical instruments.

Children experience volume and capacity during sand and water play. They use a range of mathematical terms in their conversation as they describe things as, 'bigger than', 'small', 'very long' and 'thin'. They identify objects by colour and shape and work with construction toys to design and build. Some children spent a considerable time creating dens for the animals. They used wooden blocks and large stones to make caves, and through trial and error found ways to add a roof. In the reception class, children are challenged further. They are motivated and eager to learn as they set themselves targets for improvement. The reception teacher skilfully holds the children's attention and makes sure they all have the opportunity to contribute to group discussions. Children recognise and sound out letters. They use their knowledge of phonetics to put simple words together. They try to estimate a quantity of objects and test their predictions by counting accurately beyond ten. Children also explore other languages as they attend weekly French or Spanish lessons.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and their families are fully included in the nursery and school. They take part in a wide range of non-stereotyped activities and their own choice of play objects is respected. Many resources portray positive images of the diverse society in which we live. Staff plan activities to explore the different traditions and celebrations of other cultures, especially where they relate to the children. Photographs of the children at play are displayed in each room. This helps to make them all feel part of the group. A number of children speak English as an additional language. Staff liaise with parents to make sure they fully meet the child's needs. Some staff speak other languages, which has helped children to feel more settled. Labels and books in other languages and scripts also contribute to their personal identity. Staff have a positive attitude towards children with special needs. They prepare well to meet the needs of the individual child and if necessary attend relevant training. A sensory room is currently being set up to provide a stimulating environment for children.

Throughout the nursery and school, children behave very well: they are polite, considerate and cooperative. Staff have a positive approach to behaviour management and a clear understanding of appropriate methods for dealing with children at different levels of maturity. For example, they support babies and toddlers to play together and effectively distract negative behaviour. Older children are encouraged to talk through disputes and staff support them to find positive solutions to problems encountered through play. Staff give children clear and consistent boundaries. They praise and acknowledge good behaviour and issue reward stickers in recognition of their achievements. In this way children develop high self-esteem and learn to consider the needs of others. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The nursery's partnership with parents is good. Staff are friendly and approachable and they greet parents warmly at the beginning and end of each day. At the start of a placement, staff spend time talking to parents to find out about their child's likes and dislikes and any specific needs. They work together during the settling-in process and share information on a daily basis. This relationship helps young children to feel secure and eases the transition from home to nursery. Monthly newsletters, notice boards and displays of children's work keep parents in touch with day-to-day issues and future plans. Regular parents' evenings and social events contribute to the positive relationships between parents and staff. Parents receive regular up-dates on their child's progress and are free to examine and discuss their assessment files at any time. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the assessment record by giving staff information about their child's experiences and achievements outside of nursery. From time to time, they are asked to complete a perception questionnaire, and records show that parents are very pleased with the care and education their children receive. Management take seriously any suggestions made by parents and, where appropriate, implement changes to further improve their service.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are safe and well cared for throughout the setting. Each department has its own manager and staffing structure. Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that staff are thoroughly vetted and selected for their suitability to work with young children. This includes peripatetic staff who are employed to teach specific skills such as drama, ballet and languages. The induction process ensures that new staff quickly learn the setting's policies and procedures and know where to seek advice if required. Room managers are responsible for briefing relief staff and monitoring any students on placement. Staff are effectively deployed across all departments. They follow a consistent and sometimes complicated daily routine to make sure children access a balance of indoor and outside activities, including a number of extra curricula sessions held at set times throughout the week. In each department, staff work extremely well as a team and they meet together regularly to discuss children's needs and plan future activities. The after school and holiday club manager organises suitable activities for children who attend out of school hours. She makes sure there are sufficient staff to work with the children during these periods. Occasionally there is a lack of communication between departments with regard the updating of some policies and circulation of new information. However, this has little impact on the children as all regulatory documentation is in place and up-to-date. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are good. The Nursery School Manager regularly works with the pre-school children, which enables her to monitor the effectiveness of the education provision. She is a good role model for staff. The setting is currently working towards the Bristol Standard, which is an Early Years' quality assurance scheme. Managers have taken a lead role with this and involved all staff in its completion. Consequently, children benefit as staff reflect on their own practice, recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and work on areas in need of improvement. All staff receive an annual appraisal. They are encouraged to

develop and update their practice by attending various training events throughout the year.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last nursery education inspection, a few recommendations were made to help the nursery improve their practice: they were asked to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage stepping stones; to develop planning, assessment and evaluation for individual children; and to encourage parents to contribute towards their child's assessment process. Over the last twelve months, the nursery has made steady progress with these recommendations. Staff now have a clear understanding of the stepping stones and effectively use them to plan appropriate activities. However, they are often topic led and, therefore, not always based on staff's knowledge of what children need to learn next. Planning, assessment and evaluation are currently under review and still being developed. Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's assessment. This has given them the opportunity to take even more interest in their child's education and highlight the progress they make at home.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- update staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues
- make sure the planning and provision of experiences links with staff's observations of what children can already do and focuses on what they need

to learn next (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):

- make improvements as indicated in the care section above
- further develop adult-led activities to introduce children to new concepts and challenges.

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