



Snapdragons Nursery & Out of School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY293287
Inspection date	17 January 2006
Inspector	Karen Elizabeth Screen
Setting Address	Snapdragons Corsham, Pound Pill, Corsham, Wiltshire, SN13 9YW
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Registered person	Rosemary Collard
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 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?

Snapdragons Nursery and Out of School Club was registered in 2004. It operates from purpose built premises within the grounds of Corsham Primary School, in Corsham, Wiltshire. The Nursery serves the local community and the surrounding areas. The facilities include a kitchen, staff room and five playrooms, each with access to toilets and nappy changing facilities. The two enclosed outdoor play areas are fitted with safety surfaces. Children also make use of the school playing fields

and some outside play equipment.

The Nursery is open daily between 07.15 and 18.30, all year round, except between Christmas and New Year. The nursery provide a breakfast, after-school and holiday club. They deliver and collect children from local schools and operate the holiday play scheme in half-term, summer, Christmas and Easter holidays. In partnership with Corsham Primary School, they offer a crèche on Thursday between 09.00 and 12.00, for parents attending the Family Learning Project and childcare for the Early Start Scheme held on Tuesday between 09.00 and 12.00. They also host parenting classes on Tuesday and Thursday between 19.00 and 21.00. A regular baby weighing service is provided by a visiting health visitor. Staff also work with a number of professionals from the Local Authority, including a special needs co-ordinator, speech therapist, community nursery nurse and an educational psychologist.

There are 182 children on roll. This number includes 20 children who receive funding for nursery education. Social Inclusion and Social Services funding is also received for some children. The nursery employs 19 staff. Of these, 1 is a qualified teacher, 16 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and 2 other staff are working towards an early years qualification. Most staff are trained in first aid and child protection, and some hold current food hygiene certificates.

The nursery achieved accreditation status in the quality assurance award Investors in People in June 2005 and is working towards achieving accreditation from Bristol Standards and Aiming High.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Older children are very independent in their personal care. They are aware of the importance of personal hygiene and wash their hands after visiting the toilets independently. Staff act as good role models and encourage children to practice good hygiene. Younger children who need assistance in completing personal tasks receive a high level of support. Good records are kept of children with particular health requirements in order to safeguard their welfare. Most staff members hold valid first aid certificates and all staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the treatment of minor accidents and the administration of medication.

Children enjoy the range and variety of healthy foods and snacks provided and understand which foods are good for them, but staff miss opportunities to enlist children's interest and support in preparing the snacks. In addition, children do not learn how to use cutlery correctly, because they are often offered either just a spoon or fork with which to eat their meals. Similarly, although children are offered regular drinks, these are not readily available for older children to access freely, or for younger children to practice pouring their own, therefore missing the opportunity to develop confidence in their physical capabilities.

Children are encouraged to think about keeping healthy when playing outside. Older children are aware of the importance of wearing coats, hats and scarves to keep themselves warm in the cold weather and independently choose to put them on. They have a positive attitude to exercise, but are not always able to enjoy daily exercise in wet weather, because staff do not make regular provision within their planning to offer a choice of energetic indoor play, such as soft ball. Babies enjoy playing on the floor exploring their environment inside, and occasionally outside. Preliminary planning is underway to improve the versatility of the outside play area through the introduction of a canopy to protect the children from strong sunlight and rain. Although some babies enjoy whole body exercise through a weekly yoga session, opportunities for all babies to develop strong bones and muscles by pulling themselves up, such as on domestic furniture, are few.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well protected by knowledgeable senior staff, who are very clear and experienced in managing child protection concerns. They are aware of the possible signs of children at risk and of their responsibility to report their concerns according to Local Area Child protection procedures. Newer members of staff are less confident, but are clear that they should speak to a senior member of staff if they have cause for concern.

Children are able to move safely around the well-maintained building, because they are well supervised and because the staff are vigilant and carry out regular, well documented risk assessments. Communication between staff and management for reporting and acting upon potential risks is robust. Staff take prompt action to address any identified risks, such as that posed by an unsecured gate, identified during the inspection. Children's safety and welfare is promoted by enlisting parent's support in following relevant procedures when collecting their children, for example through appropriate use of security doors.

Children are interested and want to play with the available toys and resources, which are safe and in good condition. Although many well-chosen and good quality resources have been purchased since the last inspection, the organisation of craft materials does not enable children to easily make selections for themselves.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from staff who are interested in what they say and do. Their confidence and self-esteem are raised by staff who are sensitive to their needs and know them well. They make friends with their peers and develop excellent relationships with the well-established staff team. They learn to take turns and co-operate well. Children are happy and keen to attend, some resist leaving when they are collected early. They make confident choices from the activities provided and are interested and enjoy their play. However, weaknesses exist in the range and

types of materials with which children can regularly express their creativity, and in the opportunities for children to extend creative opportunities for themselves.

Babies make their needs known, for example indicating whether they want more food by either pulling the spoon closer or by pushing it away. Staff are warm and attentive and the babies respond by smiling when they make eye contact. Babies demonstrate that they know how to gain attention and make contact; listening and paying attention to the staff. In turn, staff are alert to their attempts to communicate, for example by moving a toy a little closer when a baby tries to reach it. Babies are afforded too few opportunities to develop fine motor control through sensory experiences, such as 'gloop' made from cornflour and water.

The plans and patterns within the day are well established. Children are beginning to predict what will happen next and to extend their skills in a secure environment. Plans are used as a basis for the day, but they are not rigid and are subject to change according to the babies and young children's interests, needs and other variables such as the weather. Staff are using the birth to three framework to support their work with young children. They recognise that it is a useful tool in planning appropriate experiences and tracking their progress, but do not use it to the best advantage, as a tool for planning individual children's development.

Children attending the holiday club and the out of school provision, influence the choice of resources, activities and experiences provided. This is achieved through consultations with staff about what they would like to see provided and their thoughts on those already organised. Excellent opportunities exist for these children to be creative. For example, they followed an Egyptian theme and made individual writing tablets with 'hieroglyphics' and a three dimensional pyramid made from plaster of Paris. They also co-operated in helping each other to apply 'Ancient Egyptian' eye make-up.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Individual staff knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals is variable. Plans do not clearly show the purpose of activities, how the children will be grouped or how staff are to be deployed. Staff make some adaptations to short-term planning, but do not systematically plan how activities can be adapted to suit all ages, abilities and learning styles. They make regular observations and assessments, but these are not linked effectively to planning to help children to build on what they already know. Staff have variable expertise in the use of effective questioning and prompting to reinforce children's learning. The balance between opportunities for children to initiate and plan activities, is weighted in favour of an adult-planned programme. Very good support is given to children with special needs, and their families, for example parents and professionals are involved at the earliest opportunity. In addition, staff are committed to undertaking any relevant training needed in order to support children's individual needs.

Children learn to be co-operative and work well together, for example two children collaborating to prise ice from the lid of the sand tray. They are aware of behavioural

expectations and stop to listen when staff give instructions to the whole group. Children show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities, but some opportunities for developing their independence further, such as encouraging them to initiate their own plans, are not sufficiently fostered. As are opportunities for self-chosen challenges, such as offering to help cut up the fruit for snack time.

Children demonstrate good speaking skills, such as describing what the ice tastes like to another child. Supportive staff act as good role models and take time to listen to children. Activities such as role-play are not always extended to include opportunities to write for a purpose, such as making a shopping list. Weaknesses in the organisation and management of whole group times, such as registration, leads to disruption, when children's attention is lost.

Children show a keen interest in number and counting such as number rhymes, but the group is too large and children lose interest when they are not directly involved. Children's understanding of simple calculations is not sufficiently fostered in everyday activities, for example counting out the number of cups needed, or cutting up enough fruit for the snack. Few practical opportunities are presented in which children can learn about volume, such as pouring water into different sized containers and being prompted to estimate which container holds the most water.

Children enthusiastically construct with a purpose in mind, for example a garage made from plastic construction bricks. Their awareness of features within their local environment is raised through planned outings and visits from community workers such as fire fighters. Chances to encourage children to find out more about the natural world are not sufficiently exploited in the enclosed outdoor area. Children's use of the computer is short lived because they are given too little support to develop their knowledge and understanding of how it works.

Although space is at a premium in the enclosed outside area, children competently and confidently use a range of large equipment such as trikes and balancing steppers, skilfully weaving in and out and avoiding bumping into others. Children collaborate well in devising games which require each to play their part, for example three children making a moving human train. Children are taught to handle and control small objects such as zips and press studs. However, they are set too few challenges to develop their physical skills through running, swinging, pulling; or to refine their co-ordination through everyday tasks such as pouring their own drinks and cutting up their own food at meal times.

Children engage well in imaginative play based on their own experiences, such as preparing a meal and reading a story before bedtime. They enjoy combining different media and materials, but there are weaknesses in the range and types of materials with which children can explore and express their creativity. In addition, the organisation of craft materials does not encourage children to extend adult or child-led activities and experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents is good. Positive relationships between the staff and parents, contribute to the children's confidence in the staff. Close partnership with parents is achieved through the high quality information provided about the organisation of the nursery. This strong link is also achieved through the daily exchange of verbal, and some written, information regarding many aspects of the children's lives whilst in the nursery and also at home. Although parent's evenings give parents the opportunity to experience first hand the kinds of activities provided, general information about the activities, experiences and their purpose is less effective; as is the information parents receive about the Birth to three framework and the Foundation Stage of learning.

Staff ensure that parent's views are regularly sought and acted upon, for example through a six monthly questionnaire. Parents are also invited to make suggestions for improvements at any time. Children are developing a sense of belonging through the very warm welcome extended to their whole families, for example through the crèche provided for the family learning programmes managed in conjunction with Corsham Primary School. Staff are well informed and sensitive to the parents own needs and are currently working with a number of outside agencies to find ways to better support the whole family.

Parents feel able and welcome to discuss their observations of their children's learning at any time, but many are unaware that they can add their own comments and observations to their children's files, this means that the records are not quite as full and accurate as they might be and that parent's knowledge of their children is not sufficiently exploited, to support and develop the learning opportunities provided by the nursery.

Staff provide excellent role models through their calm and polite manner and have reasonable and realistic expectations of children's behaviour. They set and maintain clear and consistent limits, using positive behaviour strategies. Babies experience and seek closeness through regular routines such as nappy changing, where they mirror the facial expressions of the staff and they talk and sing nursery rhymes. Staff have a 'can do' attitude towards finding solutions to any difficulties affecting the inclusion of all children. In addition, they attend regular special needs training and seek advice and support when appropriate, from the Area Special Needs Co-ordinator.

Children are beginning to learn about the different activities and the people involved in their community. They take part in visits to the wider community, for example babies ride in their pushchairs to the local shops and parks. All children are valued as individuals and the staff work hard to ensure that all children can be involved in any activities on offer. Children learn to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences. For example, staff use books and resources especially chosen to reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children's welfare is promoted through well organised and well maintained paperwork. Personal information and specific permissions are obtained before the children attend. They are regularly updated and filed securely for each child. Policies and procedures, such as the child collection policy, have been specifically developed for the nursery in order to promote the efficient management of the provision.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The newly formed pre-school team work well together and are developing a strong team spirit. The newly appointed nursery teacher is aware of the main strengths and weaknesses of the provision and is pro-active in seeking support from the management to make the necessary improvements.

The nursery manager ensures that she and her team are deployed to good effect to ensure that children receive excellent adult attention. However, there are some areas where nursery practice has not been followed, such as providing children with appropriate cutlery. In addition, recorded observations are not always evaluated for use in planning children's progress. Staff share a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. There is a distinct commitment to staff training and development which is very well supported by the manager, and the owner of the nursery. All are involved in devising their own training plans to enhance their practice and have recently completed several short courses on specific approaches to learning and child development issues. Staff feel valued, recognised and respected. Many have been with Snapdragons for a number of years and some have 'risen through the ranks' to management positions.

Improvements since the last inspection

Good progress has been made in tackling the recommendation raised at the last inspection. They were asked to monitor their use of daily feedback sheets for parents of children aged between 3 and 5 years old. This was in order to ensure that the time taken to complete them did not impact on the care and education offered to the children. Staff consulted all parents about the value they placed on receiving written feedback. As a result, they decided to give parents verbal feedback when they collect their children. This means that staff now spend more time working directly with the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of the 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 that the written observations made of children's development, are used in planning their individual progress (this also applies to nursery education).
- ensure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times.
- ensure that children are provided with appropriate cutlery, with which to eat their meals.
- ensure babies regularly experience malleable materials such as 'gloop' and playdough.

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 all staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage of children's learning and are involved in planning the curriculum.

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