



Toad Hall Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130641
Inspection date	02 February 2006
Inspector	Tina Kelly
Setting Address	100 Hempstead Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD17 4LA
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Registered person	Careroom Ltd
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?

Toad Hall Nursery is one of 15 nurseries owned by Careroom Limited. The site has been a nursery since an original registration in 1992. It was taken over by Toad Hall in 1999.

The nursery operates from a large detached property on the outskirts of Watford town centre. There is a self contained baby unit with outside play provision alongside the main house. The main house which caters for children aged from 2 up to 5 years on

two levels has secure outside play provision. The nursery supports children with special needs and children who have additional languages.

There are currently 96 children aged from 3 months to 5 years on roll, this includes 15 funded 3 year olds and 7 funded 4 year olds.

The nursery is open 50 weeks of the year and is open from 7:00 to 19:00 with most places being used between 8:00 and 18:00. The children attend for a variety of part time and full day care sessions.

A team of 16 staff work with the children, of which 11 hold appropriate childcare qualifications. Other staff are working towards early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn to be healthy through their daily routines, they wash their hands after toileting and messy play and prior to snack times. The pre-school children often do this independently without prompting from the staff.

Children's health and well-being is monitored and maintained by staff who adhere to well established health and hygiene procedures. For example, using disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies. They wear disposable gloves and tabards and use appropriate utensils when handling food. All staff have food hygiene certificates, the nursery ensures they have the opportunity to attend a rolling programme to maintain standards and ensure children learn about good hygiene procedures from competent role models.

Children benefit from a well balanced diet and healthy snacks, they are introduced to new tastes and experiences. As part of The Chinese New Year children have noodles for tea. Children access jugs of water and cups are always available as well as being offered water or milk at snack times. Staff sit with the children at meal times, many staff eat with the children, they prompt conversations around what the children like to eat, events and meals at home. They also display good manners, they assist the children with their cutlery and support them as they serve their own meals and drinks independently. Children's dietary requirements are discussed with parents and recorded appropriately, this enables staff to meet the children's individual needs. The nursery cook adapts and provides a range of different foods to ensure the parents requests are met.

Children enjoy physical activities during allocated sessions in the garden. They are able to develop their physical skills with a wide range of toys and equipment. Children show enjoyment and enthusiasm in their play which is well supported by staff who encourage the children and join in with them. Children freely access a range of small equipment from storage bins which extends and develops their catching and throwing skills. The older children have the opportunity to use the garden twice a day, plans are in place to ensure they have the opportunity to access different activities and

resources throughout the week.

Younger children in the baby unit do not have access to the outside on a daily basis. Plans are to be reviewed to ensure that they do have regular opportunities to explore their outside environment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, well maintained and secure environment. Particular attention is paid to the security of the site. Staff are able to check visitors by cctv monitor and manage entry to the nursery to ensure the safety of the children at all times. Risk assessments and evacuation procedures are maintained with the information displayed so parents are aware of the procedures in place that protect their children.

Children use good quality equipment that is appropriate to their needs. There is low level storage throughout the nursery which enables the children to make free choice and access resources independently. They have access to extensive and secure outside play areas, there is a separate garden for the babies so they can play safely away from the older children. Children learn about personal safety through their daily routines, staff remind them, not to run, to take care as they negotiate steps and to go up and down stairs slowly. They ensure the children learn about safety in the community through themes and projects. Visitors come into the nursery to expand on the children's experiences of road safety and the role of the emergency services in their local community.

Children's well-being is further safeguarded as the nursery ensures all staff attend a rolling programme of child protection training, they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to the children's safety. Parents are made aware of the nurseries child protection policies and procedures in the prospectus. There is a designated member of staff for child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a wide range of experiences and activities that allow them to make independent choices and extend their play ideas. They quickly become engaged in role play, construction, messy play as well as the activities linked to the plans and themes. Children are confident in approaching both staff and visitors to ask for assistance or to share experiences and retell events from home. They are keen to be involved in getting out resources, they are able to do this as they are stored at low level and clearly marked so children are able to recognise the toys, this also helps when they put toys away at the end of their play. Photographs and displays of the children's work are used extensively throughout the nursery, some are laminated and sticky backed. This enables the children to change and adapt displays either in discussion with staff or independently to change their environment. Staff continue to

develop their knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, they review their practice to ensure appropriate activities and routines are in place

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff continue to develop their knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The planning is based on the six areas of learning and provides clear links to the early learning goals for focused activities. The observations and records of the children's learning is taken into account for future planning. Staff are beginning to recognise children who need more challenge, their play is extended as they are encouraged to explore and extend their learning.

All staff interact well with the children, they ask appropriate questions to confirm the children's understanding and prompt them to move on in their thinking. This was highlighted at the maths area where a wide range of imaginative resources enabled the children to count, calculate and predict. However, these skills are not extended in their daily routines, children do not have frequent opportunities to extend their use of measuring, counting and shape recognition in all aspects of their learning and play.

Children show good levels of concentration, independence and imagination. They have developed good listening skills and clearly enjoy story and singing times when they are confident to join in familiar stories and rhymes. There is a range of opportunities for the children to develop their writing skills at the mark making table. Children do not have access to writing implements or books in other play settings or in the imaginative play area. They are not developing their understanding that these skills are to be used in everyday routines and activities.

Children freely access creative art materials, they confidently make free choices from the art trolley demonstrating good manipulative skills as they select collage materials as well as glue and paper. Children independently access the computer, however opportunities for the use of technology is limited in other play settings, they are not able to expand on their understanding in other areas of the nursery or in their imaginative play.

Children show care and concern for others, they work in key groups that are not age specific, this means that the older and more competent children are able to explain and tell other children about their routine and what is expected of them. Children show a good understanding of the outside world as they play complex games with cars and tracks, they use appropriate language in their imaginative play as they re-enact aspects from home, shopping and travel. They are learning about time as they discuss days of the week and their daily routine.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome from staff. On arrival they confidently separate from their carers and begin to play with or alongside the other children. Their independence is promoted as they take part in a wide range of activities that

develops their social skills and confidence. Staff have developed a system to ensure that all children have the opportunity to take part in both planned activities and free play, they monitor and encourage them to explore and develop their play ideas in all areas of the nursery. Children's work is respected and displayed around the nursery enhancing their self-esteem.

Children with special needs and who have additional languages at home are well supported. The nursery liaises with a range of agencies to ensure their needs are met. Staff are aware of their individual backgrounds, they adapt and extend the activities to ensure all children are able to take part and enjoy all that is offered within the nursery setting.

Children are learning to play together and take turns in small groups. They access a range of resources that promote equality of opportunity and develop understanding of the wider world. They also have practical opportunities to develop their understanding of different cultures, they enjoy dressing up and activities based on cultural festivals. Children behave well throughout the nursery, they learn about good manners and to be helpful. Staff are good role models, they are patient with the children, they explain what is expected of them and use praise at every opportunity.

Partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents know about daily activities, they are kept informed of themes and topics through information displayed around the pre-school rooms and discussions with key workers. However, some parents have limited information about the Foundation Stage curriculum provided by the nursery. This means that children do not benefit from the sharing of information that would enhance their learning.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's well-being is monitored and maintained as systems are in place to ensure staff working with the children are safe to do so, records of staff deployment are kept to ensure ratios are met. Children's individual needs are recognised and met with appropriate documents and policies in place that comply with regulation.

The nursery provides in house training for staff. Behaviour management sessions have been attended by all staff, this has enabled them to work together as a team to provide consistent support for all children as they settle in to the nursery setting.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The nursery has experienced a period of instability but is now developing a stable staff team who are working together with enthusiasm to create and maintain a caring environment for children in all areas of the nursery. The Pre-school Room Leader is committed to developing her staff team and their skills. Staff continue to review and monitor the recording systems for observations and planning to ensure activities and topics extend and develop the children's learning in all areas. Staff act as good role models, they are committed and enthusiastic as they take part in all activities

alongside the children to support and extend their learning.

Staff monitor their practice to identify areas of learning that need developing, the detail is recorded in the action file. This is reviewed regularly and has an impact on the planning of activities provided for the children to progress their learning. Children's progress is assessed and recorded, the information is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure appropriate activities are provided to extend the children's learning opportunities.

Children learn in a well planned environment, there is a balanced range of activities and experiences that incorporate the six areas of learning. Children are interested and engaged in their daily routines, they are focused and concentrate well on given tasks.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to ensure all staff had access to the local authority child protection documents. The information is now readily available and displayed around the nursery. They were requested to ensure detail on the children's routines were recorded and dated appropriately, practice has been reviewed and the required detail is now in place. The needs of the children aged two years has also been reviewed. Children now benefit from more appropriate routines, resources and equipment.

Risk assessment procedures are in place to monitor all areas of the nursery, the hazard in the babies' outside area has been made safe.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to; develop the staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals; ensure the curriculum catered for children who learn at different rates; ensure assessments are used to plan for their next steps in learning; develop the staff's strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour; ensure parents are informed about the Foundation Stage and how the nursery implements this.

Most of these issues have been dealt with, however some areas require further development. Staff have improved their knowledge of the early learning goals, pre-school staff are booked onto Foundation Stage training next term. Plans and assessments now take into account the children's varied abilities and learning objectives. The nursery has provided behaviour management training for all the staff, they have a consistent approach to dealing with challenging behaviour. The nursery prospectus contains details of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 Ofsted have received one complaint against this provider.

The nursery manager referred an incident involving a child to a statutory agency. This incident led to concerns regarding the practice of a staff member within the nursery.

On 15 March 2005 Ofsted visited the nursery to discuss the concerns with the manager and the registered provider. The provider had already instigated disciplinary proceedings in respect of the staff member and that staff member had resigned from her employment within the nursery.

Ofsted are satisfied that the provider took the correct action to deal with these concerns and no further action is being taken by Ofsted in this matter.

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):

- ensure access to the outside play area and opportunity for fresh air is planned into daily routine within the baby unit

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 understanding of Foundation Stage
- review planning to incorporate outside play, mathematical concepts, technology and mark making in all areas of play and learning
- ensure parents are fully informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and how they can support their children's learning.

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:
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