



Phoenix Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY309806
Inspection date	09 February 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	Fry Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG2 0QG
Telephone number	01438 352366
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Registered person	Phoenix Nursery
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?

Phoenix Nursery is privately owned. It opened over 20 years ago, moving to its current premises in June 2005. It operates from 3 rooms in a detached building situated in a residential area of Stevenage, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 07:45 to 17:30 all year round, with the exception of 1 week at Christmas and 2 weeks in the summer. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 20 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery serves the local and wider community. It is able to support children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five staff. Four of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a further qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. They are beginning to learn about good health and personal hygiene practices through following practical daily routines, such as washing their hands before lunch-time. However, their understanding and independence is not consistently promoted as they do not always wash their hands before snacks and are not fully involved in the routines at lunch-time. Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are clearly documented and staff ensure that these are respected. Their growth and development are promoted because they are offered a balanced range of nutritious foods at snack and mealtimes, including a range of fresh fruit and vegetables. There are colourful, informative displays on a range of health topics, such as the food pyramid and healthy bones; giving children, staff and parents further information on this subject.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities, which contribute to their good health. They regularly use the outdoor play area, or space is made indoors, so that they are able to use larger play equipment such as climbing frames, slides and ride-on toys, and smaller equipment such as balls, hoops and bean bags. They also practise and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in activities such as physical play sessions where they: crawl through tunnels; throw bean bags; roll on mats and jump from one hoop to another. They demonstrate skill and control in smaller physical movements, for example, they are able to use scissors correctly and construct objects using a range of materials. Children's health is further promoted as all paperwork is in place in order to monitor this. However, their confidentiality is compromised as parents are able to see other children's details when signing the medication record.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where there are creative displays and resources are well organised. Their safety is given a high priority and staff carry out daily safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. A major risk assessment has also been completed and staff are able to refer

to a range of additional safety information. This helps to ensure that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. The daily implementation of policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety in all areas, for example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised on a regular basis, using different exits each time so that staff and children are familiar with the procedure.

Children are developing an understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves safe. They are consistently given clear explanations by staff to help them understand the relevance of safety rules, for example, they understand why it is important not to run inside. They have also covered topics such as road safety and 'stranger danger', increasing their awareness in this area. Children use toys and resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. These are checked regularly to ensure that they are clean and safe. Children's welfare is very well promoted because staff have attended additional training and have a good knowledge of child protection procedures. They have developed clear and comprehensive paperwork to support them in identifying, reporting and following up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They enjoy their time at the nursery and are enthusiastic about the activities and play opportunities provided. They are very confident in their relationships with each other and with adults. Their personal development and self-confidence are promoted through appropriate support and interaction from staff. The implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework helps ensure that new children settle quickly and are offered appropriate activities to promote their development and enable them to become confident.

Children are in a stimulating environment where resources are appealingly arranged and easily accessible. They confidently make choices about their play and activities throughout the session. Staff make good use of open questions and discussions to encourage children to think further and extend their learning. Their development in all areas is consistently promoted because staff have developed comprehensive activity-planning procedures. They also pay meticulous attention to the evaluation of daily activities and learning opportunities, ensuring that these are balanced and are always appropriate for the individual children and the keyworker groups.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, enabling them to link this to activities and daily play opportunities. Children are supported well in whichever activity they choose, often working in small groups and investigating a range of topics and themes. An example of this is a group of children listening to 'The Three Little Pigs' story; whilst listening they experiment with straw, sticks and wooden bricks, attempting to build houses and working out which materials are best. They are supported throughout by

an additional staff member who encourages them to try the full range of materials. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use clear assessment methods, producing regular reports which cover all areas of learning and are used to plan future activities and highlight any additional needs.

Children enjoy a varied and stimulating range of activities. These include regular opportunities to participate in a variety of crafts, construction, role play, reading and physical play sessions. Children's knowledge is further extended as they cover a variety of topics such as 'Autumn', where they looked at changes in leaves and trees, the weather, the changing light and early evenings. Children are confident in initiating conversations and in using language to explain their thoughts. They enjoy listening to stories and are beginning to use writing for a variety of purposes, for example, discussing different types of housing and creating labelled diagrams of these. However, their opportunities to view written words and letters are not consistently promoted as labelling of everyday objects and resources is limited.

Children are motivated and enthusiastic about their play and activities. They have good relationships with their peers, playing imaginary games and negotiating turn-taking and sharing. They are able to apply their developing mathematical skills when discussing and explaining concepts, for example, talking about the differences and similarities in their homes and producing simple bar charts to show these. They are gaining an awareness of their own culture and that of others through activities, discussions and regular access to resources such as maps, books and puzzles, which give information and positive images. Children enjoy opportunities to explore texture, colour and shape through activities such as: playing with cooked pasta and shaving foam; sand and water play; cooking and shape sorting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are offered a wide variety of activities which help promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness and respect of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Christmas, Chinese New Year, Diwali and Ramadan. Children have participated in themed activities such as the creation of Italian, Nigerian and English Cafés, where they served and tasted authentic dishes, with parents being involved in sharing their traditions and in the provision of food. Children are valued and respected as individuals and staff ensure that specific needs are clearly identified and consistently met.

Children are kind and considerate to each other. Their behaviour is good throughout the sessions as they confidently choose their activities and organise turn-taking and sharing. They respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified and met as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is implemented daily. Staff have attended additional training and are experienced in identifying needs and in working with parents and other professionals to ensure that children are offered the most appropriate care and support.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given initial information about the setting and the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. They are kept well informed of their children's progress and activities through regular reports and meetings with staff, informal discussions and the use of informative, up-to-date notice boards. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and in the nursery, for example, through the displaying of current themes and topics, and the use of parental questionnaires. This positive attitude helps ensure that parent's views are valued, standards are maintained and appropriate care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the needs of all children attending are met. Children's care is enhanced by the setting's good organisation and they benefit from the care provided by experienced, well-organised staff. There are stringent procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. A clear staff induction process and ongoing monitoring ensure that the nursery's policies and procedures are understood by all and are consistently applied.

Children benefit from the good organisation of play space. They are able to move safely and freely between activities, enabling them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Good organisation of all areas ensures that children are offered a wide range of activities and opportunities both within the building and outside. Children are able to work in small groups or sit quietly to read as staff have set aside a quiet area which can be screened off from the main play area.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the clear understanding that the manager has of her role and responsibilities, ensuring that she is aware of all regulations. She acts as a good role model, attending additional training, demonstrating her enthusiasm for her work and supporting staff to attend further training. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting, helping staff to feel valued and motivated. All sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of activities throughout the week. Children are always given sufficient time and resources to enable them to complete their activities and tasks. Their progress is tracked through ongoing assessments and monitoring. Staff pay attention to the planning of future work, ensuring that the needs of individuals are met and the development of all children is promoted.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. 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 that children's confidentiality is protected when parents are signing the medication record
- review hygiene practices and lunch time routines so that children's independence is promoted, their choices and privacy respected and they gain a knowledge of the relevance of this area.

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):

- further develop opportunities for children to view letters and the written word.

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