



# Sherrardswood School

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** EY297342  
**Inspection date** 10 March 2006  
**Inspector** Paula Durrant

**Setting Address** Sherrardswood School, 3 Lockleys, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 0BJ

**Telephone number**

**E-mail**

**Registered person** Sherradswood School

**Type of inspection** Childcare

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sherrardswood School has been in operation for approximately 76 years opening the nursery unit in 1995. The nursery is sited within a self-contained building within the school grounds and consists of an open plan two-tier classroom facility with a separate enclosed quiet area. A maximum of 38 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:00 until 15:50 for 36 weeks of the year. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children who attend the school come

from a wide catchment area. The nursery welcomes children with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 4 staff, all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because practitioners incorporate and revise their written procedures to reflect current environmental health guidelines. For example, staff wear protective clothing when dealing with bodily fluids and rigorously abide to their sick child procedure in relation to exclusion periods of childhood diseases. All staff are trained in basic food hygiene and in emergency first aid for infants.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene as they wash their hands as part of the daily routine such as following use of the toilet facilities and prior to eating. Although children understand the process of hand-washing they have limited awareness of the reasons behind the task as discussions about germs are not introduced. They develop an understanding of healthy living as they undertake topics and access physically challenging resources in the garden. Children recognise their own limitations resting after lunch to recuperate their energy levels such as looking at books and creating make-shift beds from the child-sized sofas.

Children are well nourished. They receive an array of seasonal fruits as part of their snack provision in addition to a nutritionally balanced packed lunch provided by parents. Although there are no current children in attendance with individual dietary needs there are systems in place to raise staff's awareness should this change. Children have plentiful opportunities to access drinks at their leisure. Provision of cups and a drinking water tap in the setting provide children with access to a drink if they should become thirsty at other times than set breaks where they are provided with a choice of milk or juice.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in safe and well-maintained premises where all required precautionary measures remain in place. For example, an alarm system and high handles ensure children are unable to leave the building as they cannot reach the door mechanism and strangers are unable to gain entry without staff being alerted to their presence. Practitioners help keep children safe in the nursery and on outings because they understand and comply with written health and safety procedures. A dedicated Health and Safety representative monitors the environment, resources and activities provided, linking these to risk rates and control measures as part of the nursery's ongoing risk assessment system.

Children access an extensive range of safe, high quality, well-maintained

developmentally appropriate resources which are effectively organised in child height furniture to encourage independent access. Although children are aware of the appropriate codes of conduct within the setting they are not always guided in keeping themselves safe. For example, staff promptly intervene to redirect inappropriate behaviour such as not placing a pencil in their mouths but do not fully explain the reason as to why they have been instructed not to do this. This means that children are potentially restricted in developing an awareness of how to keep themselves safe as they do not fully understand the implications of their actions.

Staff protect children well. Strong recruitment and induction procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience, training and vetting checks. Children remain the primary focus of care in this well organised and managed setting. Staff are vigilant in their practice and are confident in their knowledge of child protection, reporting concerns appropriately to senior staff. Open relationships between home and nursery ensure that children's needs remain the single important factor. The child protection coordinator ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children arrive full of enthusiasm and promptly settle to the activities on offer. They demonstrate positive levels of self-esteem as they confidently initiate conversations with staff and visitors in attendance. Children make independent choices in their play as they pre-plan their activities in line with the High-Scope ethos. They are highly skilled at taking responsibility for their learning and in articulating their thoughts on their achievements during recall mid-session.

An established curriculum encompassing both the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework guides staff in the delivery of a broad range of practical activities. For example, children learn about 'Spring' as they grow seeds in plants pots and grass in a fun and practical manner as mock hair in their facial heads made from tights. They know that in order for living things to grow light and water is required.

Children relate very well to each other. They take turns in using the computer and play together cooperatively negotiating roles of postmaster and customer in the role play post office. Children respond positively to the guidance of staff. They undertake challenges set such as forming correct letter shapes when playing with shaving foam on the table-top. Staff are very aware of children's individual capabilities as they track children's achievements through focused observations and their daily planner. Should a child not show an interest in participating in a particular area of play or should they not fulfil a task then staff will utilise this information to ensure future opportunities are provided.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's needs take precedence within this provision. Effective admissions procedures and positive relationships between home and nursery means that staff gain a full insight into the child's capabilities and any specific individual requirements such as medical care or dietary intolerances. A positive extension of school community relations such as access to a Special Needs Coordinator means that staff and child receive support from a specialised practitioner who is able to work alongside both parties establishing a suitable working programme. This means all children are fully included in activities and events offered.

Children recognise the appropriate codes of conduct required within the nursery environment. They know to use social graces and do so without prompt. Children show care and concern for others. For example, a child assisted another child during registration by offering her hand to aid the child to their feet.

The nursery have good links with their parents. They constantly request feedback from any school event and offer regular opportunities to share any issues both formally and informally. Although the nursery have a complaints procedure in place this does not reflect current legislative changes in which the school is responsible for managing their own systems for documenting any concerns raised.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children thrive in this highly organised environment where significant emphasis is given to reviewing and monitoring the quality of care, the ambiance of the premises and resources offered to the children in attendance. For example, the school are currently developing their outside play area to encompass an enclosed veranda which will provide a free-flow environment to allow an extension of the curriculum both inside and out. They are also working hard to correlate policy documents required under the National Standards with current school criterion and to expand their range of positive images within their resources as outlined in their annual budget action plan.

Robust recruitment procedures, a strong senior management team and skilled practitioners who are suitably qualified in childcare ensure children receive a varied balance of practical activities to progress their overall development. The effective use of key workers means that children periodically are cared for in small groups where they receive sufficient support and guidance. For example, children divide into core groups at the end of registration in order to participate in a focus activity whilst the remainder of the children are able to plan their activities as part of the High-Scope principle. This means that children have plentiful opportunities to actively contribute to their learning. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children in attendance.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

This is not applicable.

## **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 complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE**

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.

## **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):

- extend children's awareness of the reason behind the hand-washing process, this refers to discussion about germs
- extend procedures to raise children's awareness of how to keep themselves safe
- ensure there is a system in place to manage any parental concerns in line with current legislative changes.

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