



Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110039
Inspection date	26 April 2006
Inspector	Jill Milton
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Registered person	Just Learning 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?

Just Learning Nursery opened in 1992 and is part of a national chain of nurseries. It operates from 10 rooms in purpose built premises in the grounds of Basingstoke Hospital. There is access to secure gardens for outside play. The nursery serves a large area of the community.

The nursery opens on weekdays all year round, from 07.00 to 18.00. A maximum of 100 children may attend at any one time and of these, not more than 42 may be

under 2 years of age. There are currently 132 children under 5 years on roll and this includes 23 children in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 33 staff working with the children and of these 20 have appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from within the Just Learning organisation and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a clean environment where staff follow procedures to safeguard their health and welfare. Staff follow appropriate good hygiene practices during most care routines, such as nappy changing and meal times. Children are safe from cross infection since they use individual flannels and bed linen. Staff encourage all children to wash their hands after toileting or before eating and older children are aware of these routines. Staff have careful procedures in place to administer medicines to children and they offer calm reassurance to those requiring on-going support to health needs.

Children receive regular nourishment and drinks during the day. Older children access fresh drinking water by themselves, responding to their own needs to quench their thirst. Staff are aware of children's individual dietary requirements and respond to parental wishes regarding foods eaten at the nursery. Children eat a satisfactory range of nutritious meals and snacks during the day. They develop independence at meal times, coping with a range of cutlery. Reorganisation of some meal times results in more sociable arrangements for the children, particularly at breakfast time. Staff now remind children to wash their hands before starting their toast or cereal.

Children have appropriate opportunities to rest during the day. Younger children settle well, with comfortable bedding and a calm atmosphere, though some older children find it more difficult to relax. Children access the outdoor area for short times in the day where they can enjoy a little fresh air and exercise. They have a suitable range of equipment to develop their skills though the outdoor area is not used very well to maximise the opportunities for energetic physical play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play safely in the nursery since the staff are vigilant about keeping the premises secure. They make use of a range of procedures, such as close circuit television of the building and monitoring of the main entrance. Children are collected by adults known to the staff and photographs and passwords provide good back up. The children play in rooms where adults now carry out daily risk assessments and there are a number of effective safety measures in place, for example, storing

cleaning materials in locked cupboards or the use of finger guards on doors. Staff act on training about safety and these systems work well indoors, though staff overlook some hazards in the garden. Staff prevent children from harm but they do not always help children to learn about safety for themselves, for example, by offering simple guidance on how to carry a chair.

The nursery is well organised in the lay-out of rooms and equipment. Staff brightly decorate each base room with examples of the children's art work, posters and colourful mobiles. This presents the children with an attractive place to play and learn. Children play in comfort as the staff monitor the temperature of the rooms, increasing ventilation with fresh air. Children of all ages use a broad range of equipment, appropriately matching their different abilities and stages of development. Many resources for the older children are within their reach and they take an active role in tidying away toys and returning boxes to the correct shelf.

Staff are careful to monitor the children's welfare and they have sound systems in place to check the suitability of adults who are working with the children. Each room contains a file of information linked to child protection for easy reference and staff are aware of the nursery procedure to follow up concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children under 3 years at the nursery receive sound levels of care in their base rooms. Their key workers know their individual needs and interact well with them during the daily routines of feeding and changing. Babies and toddlers take part in many sensory activities and the colourful photographs reflect the fun of playing with jelly, flour or spaghetti. Following training, staff plan a more suitable range of activities for the younger children, with a focus on experiences linked to the senses. Young children regularly play with treasure baskets, which contain natural and everyday materials of different textures. Babies enjoy playing with toys that have coloured lights or sounds, and toddlers respond happily to music. Staff link the children's development to areas of the Birth to three matters framework and helpful displays are in each room for parents to see. A book for each child records milestones of development through the nursery. This information supports the continuity of care for the children and helps inform staff and parents of a child's progress.

Children experience moves between rooms in a planned way to help provide a smooth transition. Staff welcome new children visiting a room and ensure they quickly settle into the routine. Children are included in special events at the nursery, for example, with a visit from the local fire fighters. Children speak excitedly about seeing a real fire engine and older ones record the event in drawings to share with their parents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff now have an adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage and they use this to plan the weekly activities.

Most children are progressing along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and staff are starting to record this in a new record keeping system. Staff do not yet use the information to plan the next steps in children's learning. In some cases this means that children are not extended and challenged, for example, with their writing development or physical achievements.

The children are learning to be part of a group and to share and take turns. Some older ones are developing friendships and play together in their imaginative games. With changes made to the daily routine, the children now have chances to make their own decisions about what to select for play and this helps their independence. Far more use is now made of meal times to encourage children's self-help skills. They are more confident at pouring drinks, setting out cups and helping to serve food. Staff interact with children appropriately in one-to-one situations or when working in small groups and children settle well to enjoy a shared counting game or story book. Large group situations are not so effective in supporting the children's learning. At these times, and when children are waiting for a change in activity, they become restless and noisy.

Children are learning about letter sounds and most are able to recognise their own names. They make marks on paper and some can write recognisable letters. They are eager to use role play areas to make up stories, though the presentation of these areas does not support early reading and writing very well. Children use their early understanding of mathematics to confidently count and recognise numbers. They take part in sorting or matching activities and these sometimes link to exploring materials, for example, distinguishing objects which float or sink. Children learn about their environment through topics that introduce them to the natural world. They show an interest in activities like going on a mini beast hunt to set up a new home for worms. Children are confident at using the class room computer and they sometimes take part in building using recycled items.

Children use an appropriate range of materials to express their ideas, for example, paint, chalk and collage. Although some activities are too adult-directed, the children do have the chance to use their own imagination, for example, deciding what to draw next. Children use a large range of musical instruments and take part in singing simple songs on a regular basis.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children and parents receive a warm welcome into the nursery from both the management and the individual room staff. Children settle quickly into play or begin their breakfast when they arrive at the start of the day. Children are familiar with the daily routines and older ones confidently look after their own belongings using named trays. Children are developing positive attitudes to diversity, with posters and resources in use throughout the nursery. Yearly activity plans include festivals from different cultures and photographs reflect children enjoying celebrations, such as dragon dancing during Chinese New Year. The children develop some awareness of their nursery and the wider community with fund raising activities that include them

all. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

Children who have special educational needs receive appropriate support and care. The staff include children in the full range of activities and they work with parents and outside professionals as part of a package of support to children.

Overall children behave well in the nursery and most staff use a suitable range of strategies, such as praising positive actions, to manage the children's range of behaviour. Children are learning to share and take turns, with staff encouraging co-operative play in the toddler rooms. A member of staff has attended training since the previous inspection although the useful information has not yet cascaded down to all room staff. At times in the older children's rooms, the children are repeatedly reprimanded but they take little notice of staff and noise levels rise since the adults do not take appropriate control.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff talk informally with parents and the information they share helps to support the children's care during the day. For children under 3 years there is an appropriate exchange of details about feeding or sleeping routines and staff listen to parent's wishes. There is a broad range of documentation available to families, from the first introductory brochure through to policies and procedures. All rooms display photographs and planning sheets so that parents can see what the children are doing during the day. Parents receive encouragement to provide suggestions or comments about the nursery. Most parents speaking to the inspector expressed their satisfaction with the care the children receive. Parents can access record books to show them how the children are progressing in their general development, although new systems are not fully in place to reflect progress of children in the Foundation Stage.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are using the policies and procedures of the nursery appropriately to promote the care and well-being of the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Since the previous inspection there have been changes in the organisation of rooms for the older children in order to meet their needs more appropriately. The leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. However, the implementation of these positive actions is hindered by staff changes and there is no clear system yet in place to monitor the quality of the teaching for the older children.

The manager is well organised in the day-to-day running of the nursery and both staff and parents speak of the good support that is available. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are sound and advice is continually on offer from the parent company of the nursery. The senior staff have a positive attitude to improving the provision of care and education and they can demonstrate a variety of positive measures taken since the last inspection. Staff receive encouragement to attend training that has a direct impact on their daily work with the children. All regulatory documentation is in place and staff store confidential information securely.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

Following the last inspection, the nursery was asked to address three recommendations. These related to staff knowledge of how to interact effectively with younger children; on going staff training in areas of safety and behaviour management; and the organisation of mealtimes. A programme of staff training has begun in these areas, though some issues have not cascaded to all staff and some weaknesses remain. The biggest impact of the improvements is in the care of children under 3 years, who now have a programme of activities better suited to their needs.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection, the quality of the nursery education was judged as inadequate. The nursery was asked to address four actions to address the weaknesses. These related to increasing staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how to deliver the curriculum to all children. Staff were also required to help children learn through everyday activities and to develop their independence. The nursery manager has introduced an on-going programme of training to increase staff understanding of the Foundation Stage. Staff have responded to guidance received from senior representatives of the parent company and the local authority, with the result that improvements have been made. The impact on the children is to improve the standard of the nursery education they receive so that it is now satisfactory overall. Whilst unavoidable staff changes slow the pace of improvement, the senior staff remain committed to steadily enhancing the quality of the nursery education.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint, in January 2006, relating to the following standards: Standard 3: Care, learning and play; Standard 6: Safety; Standard 5: Equipment and Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. Ofsted made an unannounced visit and was satisfied that the National Standards are being met. The provision remains qualified for 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):

- improve the use of the outdoor play area to help children benefit from fresh air and exercise
- ensure all staff are aware of how to manage children's behaviour appropriately

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):

- use the assessments of children's development to plan the next steps to extend their learning
- review the routines in the day so that children do not wait for long unoccupied periods of time
- establish regular and thorough systems to monitor the quality of the nursery education

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