



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 130641

DfES Number: 546082

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	12/07/2004
Inspector Name	Tina Kelly

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Toad Hall Nursery
Setting Address	100 Hempstead Road Watford Hertfordshire WD17 4LA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Miss Sarah Owen
------	-----------------

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Toad Hall Nursery is one of fifteen 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 1996.

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 two up to five years on the two levels has extensive outside play provision for the preschool children.

There are currently seventy eight children aged from three months to five years on roll, this includes twenty funded three year olds and seven funded four year olds.

The children attend for a variety of part time and full day care sessions.

The nursery is open fifty weeks of the year and is open from 7:00 to 19:00 with most places being used between 8:00 and 18:00.

A high percentage of staff have early years qualifications up to level three.

How good is the Day Care?

Toad Hall Nursery provides satisfactory care for children. Overall the nursery provides a warm and welcoming environment where children feel happy and secure. The newly appointed manager is working closely with the proprietor and the staff team to ensure the smooth running of the nursery and the continued development of early years training within the nursery setting, however all staff need to be fully informed of child protection procedures.

The baby unit provides the younger babies with a calm and comfortable environment where they can develop and explore both in their nursery rooms and the outside play area. Their individual needs are well met with staff managing a flexible routine to cater for the young babies in their care. However the provision for children aged two

to three years did not offer good quality play. The daily plans and routine need to take account of the wide range of abilities within this age group and offer activities with an appropriate time scale that meets their individual needs. The planned activities, outside play provision and meal times need to be better managed and prepared in advance for this young age group.

The preschool setting provides the older children with a wide range of stimulating equipment that supports their all round develop and learning opportunities. They access the garden at various times throughout the day and benefit greatly from this experience. Basic records of achievements and observations are kept for all children.

Safety within the nursery is of high priority, with risk assessments and fire procedures in place. Staff, parents, visitors and children's access are closely monitored and the detail is recorded appropriately.

The partnership with parents is generally good, there is a comprehensive prospectus with information about the nursery and the service that is offered.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The nursery had three actions arising from the last inspection. These required the nursery to make an area at the back of the baby unit safe, to make a radiator safe and ensure children could not access dangerous substances. The radiator and issues around safe keeping of dangerous substances has been addressed however there is still outstanding work to be done at the back of the baby unit so as not to be a hazard to children. This is still outstanding.

What is being done well?

- The staff within the nursery are warm and friendly, they encourage all children to take part in the free play activities and planned, themed work. They work closely with the children providing support and encouraging discussion and language development.
- Staff work closely together and have a range of qualifications and experiences, training needs are identified and courses accessed either in-house or through Young in Herts training opportunities. Staff are well deployed around the nursery with additional staff and rotas in place for busy times of the day.
- Children have free access to many resources within a stimulating environment, there is a wide range of equipment and toys that are of good quality and readily available around the nursery.
- Regular access to the extensive outside play areas provides the children with opportunities to explore and develop their physical and imaginative play ideas in the large grassed garden. There is a large paved area for wheeled and ride on toys.
- There is a good relationship with parents with positive feed back to the

Ofsted parent questionnaires. One mentioned how senior management dealt promptly with issues that had been highlighted by parents.

What needs to be improved?

- safety in the baby unit's outside play area (this refers to pipe work)
- resources, routine and equipment to meet the needs of children aged two to three years
- children's records to ensure all relevant information to meet their individual needs and records of achievements are appropriately recorded and dated
- access to child protection information for all staff

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
6	Ensure hazards are minimised, this refers to the pipe in the baby unit
3	Ensure the needs of the children aged two are being met, this applies to provision of age appropriate routines, resources and equipment.
3	Ensure that children's daily records show all relevant information for their well being (this refers to children under two years) and that records of achievements and observations throughout the nursery are appropriately recorded and dated.
13	Ensure all staff have access to the Local Authority document 'What to do if you think a child is being abused' or similar up to date information from the Area Child Protection Committee.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Toad Hall Nursery is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals within mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development is generally good, however all other areas of learning are limited by some significant weaknesses.

The quality of teaching has some significant weaknesses. Staff are proactive with the children, they are calm and enabling. They plan interesting topics, which encompass children's own experiences. However staff have a limited knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals which has an impact on all children's learning potential. There were many missed opportunities to challenge children and extend their knowledge within all areas of the curriculum. Insufficient grouping of children, inhibits their learning and has a negative impact on their behaviour. Children often display challenging behaviour which is not always consistently dealt with.

The staff are maintaining informative assessments on children's progress, although these are not always dated. Staff are aware of the need to utilise these records to inform children's next steps in their learning, this is yet to be implemented.

The leadership and management of the nursery is generally good. The nursery has seen many staff changes recently, a new manager is now in post she is aware of the issues to be addressed. The manager has acknowledged the need for staff training, this is a priority. New planning and assessment procedures were available on inspection, these are due to be implemented once all staff receive training. All staff attend regular team meetings and have annual appraisals.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents are provided with good quality information about the nursery and it's routines, however there is limited information about the education programmed offered.

What is being done well?

- The newly appointed manager of the nursery, has many years experience of working within early years. She is working closely with the proprietor and her new staff team to improve the provision offered to the children and parents. Many new positive suggestions with regards to planning and training have already been investigated and are to be implemented within the very near future.
- Children have access to a stimulating environment and a broad range of equipment and toys, which helps to support their all around development. They have ample opportunities to access the garden and its many resources throughout the day.

- Staff are warm and friendly with the children, they fully participate within children's self-chosen activities. Children enjoy selling fruit and vegetables to staff from their farm shop in the garden. They are keen to share 1:1 stories with staff, again during their sessions in the garden.
- Partnership with parents and carers is valued within this provision. Parents on the whole are very happy with the care and education their children receive. Parents have expressed concerns with the recent staff changes, however they feel that new staff are friendly and approachable. Parents are confident to raise any concerns that they may have with their child's key worker.

What needs to be improved?

- staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, to ensure children receive effective challenges throughout the curriculum. Ensure curriculum plans encompass learning objectives for those children who learn at different rates and how these children are to be grouped. Ensure children's assessments are utilised to inform their next steps in learning.
- staff's strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour. Ensure all staff are consistent with the children, helping children to understand what is expected of them in terms of acceptable behaviour and thus enabling them to work co-operatively with each other.
- parents information, to ensure their prospectus informs them of the Foundation Stage curriculum followed, and how the nursery proposes to implement this.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is the nurseries first funded education inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
------------	------------------------

Children are excited to participate within bread making activity, although many children find it difficult to sit and listen. They are developing a sound awareness of their own needs, however rarely show sensitivity to others. Children's behaviour has an impact on their ability to form close relationships with their peers. They can play co-operatively with close adult support. Children's independence is not fully supported at lunch times, they sit for long periods of time and become restless.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
------------	------------------------

Children are confident speakers, they enjoy sharing their experiences of holidays and trips to their "big" schools. They competently recall the ingredients utilised within cookery. Story times are not positive experiences for all children, many of whom find it difficult to sit and concentrate. Children are beginning to learn sounds of letters, although more focus is required within practical situations. They have good access to writing materials, however they need more support to utilise these.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children can effectively count out required amounts of milk and flour to make bread. They confidently count 16 children going to play in the garden. Cooking activities promote children's knowledge of shape, space and measure. Children label shapes within their environment, informing me of the circle and square tables. They help to lay tables for lunch, although there were lost opportunities for children to explore calculation further, through effective staff involvement and extension.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children are eager to explore the bread making machine, they want to know how it works? They observe dry ingredients before they are mixed together and see how the final product has changed. Children have good ICT skills, they effectively utilise the computer to desired effects. They build and construct with a wide range of resources, although need more independence to do so. The current topic Farms, effectively encompasses children's sense of time and place. Topics foster a variety of cultures.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children move confidently within the attractive garden. They climb the large apparatus with growing skill. Children crawl through tunnels, slide down slides and ride wheeled toys effectively. Children are aware of space around them, although some crash deliberately into each other which is dangerous. They wash their hands at appropriate times, however staff do not support children's health and bodily awareness during physical play. They utilise a wide range of equipment and tools competently.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children explore colour, texture, shape and form through a broad range of resources and materials. They enjoy painting with their hands and exploring water and sand in the garden. Children are eager to participate within singing and utilise musical instruments enthusiastically. There were missed opportunities for children to listen to the different sounds they can make. Children's imaginations are developed through well equipped role-play both within the nursery and in the garden.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, to ensure children receive effective challenges throughout the curriculum. Ensure curriculum plans encompass learning objectives for those children who learn at different rates and how these children are to be grouped. Ensure children's assessments are utilised to inform their next steps in learning.
- improve staff's strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour. Ensure all staff are consistent with the children, helping children to understand what is expected of them in terms of acceptable behaviour and thus enabling them to work co-operatively with each other.
- extend parents information, to ensure their prospectus informs them of the Foundation Stage curriculum followed, and how the nursery proposes to implement this.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.