



Early Years Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY339717
Inspection date	07 February 2007
Inspector	Judith Chinnery
Setting Address	Swallowdale Cp School, Dalby Road, MELTON MOWBRAY, Leicestershire, LE13 0BJ
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Registered person	Early Years Nursery 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?

Early Years Nursery registered and opened in September 2006. It operates from 2 mobile classrooms at Swallowdale Primary School, Melton Mowbray. The setting has an enclosed outdoor play area and also has use of the school playgrounds and sports field. Children attending the setting come from the local area around the school.

There are currently 36 children on roll, of these, there are 23 funded children. The facility operates from 09:00 to 15:00, during school term times, for children aged two to five years. It operates a play scheme for children aged three to eight years in the school holidays. There are five staff available to work with the children, four of these have relevant childcare qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health, hygiene and well-being are promoted appropriately by the staff. Policies and procedures for promoting good health care are in place. The staff are beginning to use these to guide them in establishing routines such as cleaning tables used by the children between activities. This helps to prevent the spread of infection amongst the children. Appropriate records for accidents and medication are in place as well as arrangements for handling emergencies should children become ill. This ensures that children are cared for according to their needs and parents' wishes.

Some appropriate routines are in place to enable the children to wipe their hands before eating food and snacks but older children have less experience with washing their own hands with running water, soap and using towels. This means that children are not yet actively involved in learning about good health and hygiene practices for themselves. Children receive healthy choices of food at snack times, which ensure that they are well nourished. They choose between apples and oranges and other fruits at snack time but their understanding about healthy eating is less well developed because staff are not so active in talking about healthy choices.

Children are encouraged to be physically active on a daily basis in this setting. The nursery makes appropriate use of the school grounds and facilities. Children enjoy being able to run around, use tricycles and kick and throw balls. Most children are developing effective skills in avoiding each other as they run, and many are starting to use the pedals on the bicycles. However, staff are less confident in challenging the older children in their physical development. Consequently the older children are less able to practise and hone their skills in balancing, climbing and running.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given a high priority in this new setting. The two rooms of the mobile classroom are decorated with children's pictures so that children and their families feel welcome. Safety features such as socket and heater covers effectively help to prevent accidents to children. The rooms used by the children are carefully laid out so that children can move around and play freely and safely.

Children have access to good quality resources and equipment for their age and stage of development. The low tables and chairs mean that children can sit, eat and play safely. The external exits are secure and prevent access to the children by unwanted visitors. Health and safety policies are comprehensive and are being implemented as the nursery develops. The staff have a growing familiarity with them and are beginning to use them, such as the risk assessments, to minimise any hazards to the children. Staff talk with the older children about more obvious hazards, such as the steps, so that they are able to use them safely. However, staff are less active in talking about other safety matters such as handling tools and other

resources, which means that older children are less able to start to take responsibility for their own safety.

Children are protected and safeguarded in the setting because managers know their child protection procedures well. Most of the staff are aware of the main signs and know to whom they should report their concerns. Training is being offered and child protection procedures are covered in induction for all new staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are mostly settled and happy in the setting. As this new setting expands and the number of children attending increases, the staff are forging sound relationships with the children helping them to feel secure.

Children experience a wide range of activities, most of which they can explore and investigate for themselves. They are interested in making the trains run around the track and persevere with adult help to match the cards in games such as dominoes. They play imaginatively in the home corner and take on different roles such as being an optician. They enjoy trying out different glasses and pretending to make appointments for each other, copying staff as they model ideas. The staff are becoming more confident with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are using this to adapt some activities for the younger two-year-olds who attend the setting. They are also beginning to observe and assess children's progress through the framework. However, staff do not use this information effectively to inform the planning of activities to ensure they are built on children's interests and what they need to do next.

Nursery education

The teaching and learning for nursery education is satisfactory. The number of funded children attending the setting is beginning to increase and staff are starting to implement plans to develop nursery education further. The newness of the setting makes it difficult to fully assess the impact of teaching on children's learning and achievement.

Staff's knowledge of the early learning goals is improving, although they are still not confident with the stepping stones and all the different aspects of learning. While the staff use some open-ended questions to encourage the children to think and express their ideas, they do not make effective use of planning systems to ensure children move on and continue to make progress.

The children are eager to get involved in the activities provided for them. They are starting to develop sound relationships with the staff and with their peers and happily join in activities such as threading bear shapes, where they persevere in getting the pieces on to the thread. The children are becoming familiar with the setting's routine particularly around snack times. Most of them are capable of taking care of their own personal needs such as going to the bathroom by themselves, but often do not act independently in other situations such as sharing and cutting fruit. This is because staff miss some opportunities for children to try things for themselves. Children are able to make choices in their play such as choosing the colour of paint

or what to play with from the resources set out. However, staff do not always make best use of the space and resources to encourage children to be independent and use their initiative effectively.

Systems for assessing children's progress through the early learning goals are in their early stages. Staff have a sound understanding of the need to observe children regularly and collect examples of things they have learnt. They are beginning to use some of this information to chart children's progress towards the early learning goals. They are also starting to identify some of the next steps children need to take in their learning. Current planning systems ensure that children have access to activities from across the six areas of learning usually based around a topic or theme. However, they are the same for all three settings in this group and are not taken from the nursery's own assessments of individual children. This means that activities are not usually based on children's interests or what they need to do next and children are less likely to make progress to their full potential.

Children are confident and able speakers and like to engage adults in conversation about their home life, because staff listen to them and make time for them to speak. They use words and sentences to explain information such as 'it's not really a beast, you know, it's only someone dressed up'. Children handle books appropriately and like to listen to stories. Most children make marks using lines and circles and some more able children attempt to write their name, forming some recognisable letters. Children are able to count by rote beyond ten and will readily attempt to recognise numerals and count objects on worksheets. They are familiar with some size language such as big and little, which they use in their play. However, they are much less familiar with simple calculating and problem solving because staff miss many opportunities during routine activities to practise these skills.

Children are purposeful in construction, ably fitting track and Clic pieces together to make simple models such as a car. They are developing some skills with technology such as using the computer and have a growing knowledge of the world around them as they talk about those who help us, such as firemen. Current issues with planning systems as mentioned above mean that aspects such as early science and the natural world are compartmentalised and sometimes mean that children are less able to consolidate their learning in this area.

Children love to be able to get outside. They pedal tricycles well and are beginning to develop their large body skills, although staff do not always challenge them to make further progress in this aspect. Children's fine hand skills are developing appropriately, they can use scissors safely to cut paper and thread round sewing cards. The children like to get involved in painting and sticking and know most common colours. However, since this is sometimes directed by the staff children are less able to create and design their own art work for themselves. They are developing a wide repertoire of songs and rhymes and enjoy exploring percussion instruments and experimenting with the sounds they make. Children play imaginatively and use the dressing-up clothes to support the roles they take on, such as being a fireman or going to a wedding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to join in and play a productive part in the setting because staff manage children's behaviour appropriately, work closely with parents and have a sound knowledge of equality of opportunity.

Children are developing an awareness of their own and other cultures because they have access to resources which reflect diversity and positive images. The staff talk with the children about differences and the celebration of birthdays and other festivals helps the children develop a respect for themselves and others. Staff take care to plan activities which all the children can take part in to ensure that all children are included in the life of the setting. Appropriate procedures are in place to support children who may have learning difficulties or disabilities.

The establishment of small groups of children led by a member of staff is enabling children to develop a sense of belonging. Staff take time to talk with parents and ask about the children's needs, they find out about children's likes and dislikes and keep appropriate records so that all staff are appropriately informed and able to meet children's individual needs, for example at snack time. Comprehensive information is given to parents about the setting and appropriate records are kept regarding any complaints so that children's care is transparent to all.

Partnership with parents for nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive appropriate information about the Foundation Stage and the curriculum offered in the setting. There are appropriate systems in place to ensure that parents receive good information about their child. Regular newsletters also give lots of ideas for parents to follow up with their child at home. However, because this is in its early stages, parents as yet, have little opportunity to share what they know about their child with staff.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Staff introduce children to their own and other cultures appropriately, they support children in behaving well and are beginning to promote children's personal, social and emotional skills effectively.

Most children behave well in the setting. Staff give clear explanations and set boundaries so that children are aware of their expectations. Staff appropriately distract and redirect young children to alternative activities should a squabble break out. Older children accept the intervention of staff in managing minor disagreements and are usually willing to share. Children respond positively to praise from the staff, which encourages them to behave acceptably.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting is appropriately organised and promotes positive outcomes for children. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The owner has implemented robust systems to recruit staff that are appropriately qualified and have a suitable knowledge of childcare. The setting is also committed to ensuring that staff keep up-to-date with their knowledge through attending local courses such as first aid and

the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This ensures that children are suitably cared for and protected.

There are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that there are sufficient staff caring for the children each day. The key worker system, where small groups of children are cared for by the same member of staff is starting to work well. This means that children receive individual attention and support when they need it. Comprehensive policies and procedures underpin practice in the setting and staff are becoming familiar with them so that children's health, safety, ability to enjoy and achieve and to make a positive contribution is promoted.

Leadership and management for nursery education is satisfactory. The management team is now starting to develop the nursery education curriculum for the over three-year-olds. They are clear in their aims to offer stimulating and exciting opportunities for the children. Managers are knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage and are supporting the new staff in establishing suitable systems for planning and assessment of children's progress. They have begun to target training for staff in the Foundation Stage to ensure that their knowledge is sound. They are also using staff appraisals to identify some strengths and weaknesses. Systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the nursery education are in place and working across the three settings in this group. However, systems are too new as yet to fully assess and see their impact on the quality of teaching.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of any 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):

- continue to develop ways of promoting good hygiene and health practices across the nursery with the children so that they can learn to take responsibility for themselves.

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):

- develop staff's confidence and knowledge of the stepping stones to ensure that children are questioned and challenged sufficiently
- ensure that the assessment of children's progress clearly shows children's starting points and develop ways of ensuring that information gleaned from children's assessment is used to inform planning effectively so that activities are based on children's interests and what they need to do next (this also applies to care)
- develop ways to promote more spontaneous child led learning (this also applies to care)
- continue to develop active ways of sharing information with parents about their child, so that this is a two way process.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk