

The Octagon Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY311282
Inspection date	23 May 2006
Inspector	Marian Bvumburai
Setting Address	Walker Street, Hull, North Humberside, HU3 2RA
Telephone number	01482 594324
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Registered person	Goodwin Development Trust
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?

Mini Learners Nursery opened in 2005 and operates from four rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated near Hull city centre. A maximum of 67 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 58 children aged under five years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for early education. Most of the children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 members of staff, eight of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a recognised qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is nurtured successfully. They enjoy a wide variety of regular indoor and outdoor stimulating physical activities, which help them to exercise and keep healthy through play. Staff are creative and make the best of any weather conditions whilst ensuring that children are comfortable and stay healthy. Children are taught about keeping themselves healthy. For example, older children are aware of their own bodies and know to put on their coats for warmth before going outside for fresh air and play in cold weather. Younger children and babies are becoming aware of their bodies through daily routines, experiences and discussions. For example, they wait their turn for staff to help them with their coats before going out, and staff talk to them about the reasons. Babies are also taken outside for short periods for fresh air and enjoy suitable activities such as soft ball throwing. The nursery provides a wide variety of clean and well maintained toys, resources and equipment to facilitate children's physical development and exercise through play. For example, they have prams to push and walk along, balls to throw and catch, sit 'n' ride bikes, slides, scooters, climbing frames, and wooden building blocks.

Children are cared for in a very clean and pleasant environment. They are aware of the importance of practicing good hygiene and do so through everyday routines. For example, after visiting the toilet they wash their hands thoroughly, dry them and appropriately dispose of used paper towels into a peddle bin. Children understand that washing cleans their hands and stops them from being ill. Staff gently remind younger children of this when necessary. Staff follow health and hygiene procedures effectively, which helps to prevent spread of infection and keep children healthy. For example, children in nappies including babies are changed in the toilet areas, separate from the main play rooms. Staff use disposable gloves and aprons, and used nappies are put in Sengenic bins which automatically bag and seal off, maintaining a pleasant smell-free environment.

Children enjoy healthy meals. Menus are pre-planned by staff, who have all attended basic food hygiene. The menu is based on a healthy low fat and low salt diet which does not include use of processed foods. For example, the children's favourite snack of a variety of chopped fresh fruit is provided daily, catering well for all the children including those with special dietary requirements. Children choose and mix what they like from the different bowls of chopped fruits. Pureed foods are provided for babies who are not yet able to chew. During meals times staff stay close to monitor and help the children. They talk to them about the benefits of healthy eating, as well as encourage them to taste new foods. Older children understand the benefits of eating healthily through discussions and topics about healthy foods. Drinking water is kept readily available for older children and they freely get a drink when they want it. Younger children and babies are offered drinks regularly.

Medication and accidents are recorded accurately and signed by parents. Policies for excluding sick children are in place and understood well by both parents and staff. As a result, the good health of children is maintained.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe at all times and cared for in a child-friendly and suitably safe environment. Security into the building is vigilantly monitored, having CCTV and other effective measures in place. For example, parents and visitors ring the door bell outside the reception area. Staff answer the door in person, satisfying themselves of the caller's identity before granting them access into the reception area of the nursery. Access to the areas where children are cared for is further restricted.

Children enjoy freedom of movement in the spacious and well laid out rooms where potential hazards are effectively addressed. For example, toys and other resources, furniture and equipment are situated appropriately around the edges of the rooms, leaving ample free play space. Children safely and freely move around with pretend babies in the prams, find space to construct things, or sit in the comfortable book corner to look at books during free play. Babies have space to roll and crawl safely. Outdoor play is successfully monitored and children remain in the view of staff. Children's understanding and responsibility for their own safety is extended by staff through discussions, explanations of consequences, and helping them to assess risks for themselves. For example, they talk to children about not running into the toilet area when they go to wash their hands. Children know that they are not allowed to run because they might fall and hurt themselves or others. Emergency evacuation procedures are in place and fire drills are carried out, which helps children to understand and know what to do, or become familiar with the exercise in case of emergency.

Children enjoy playing with a very wide range of resources and equipment, all of which are safe and maintained in good condition, and of good quality. The age-appropriate and suitable resources are stored safely but accessible to all children whilst ensuring free play space. For example, in the baby room the ball pool is located in one corner of the room, away from the traffic at the centre where escaping balls might be stepped on and damaged.

Children's safety is considered paramount. Staff have attended training and demonstrate good understanding of child protection issues and know the reporting procedures, if concerned that a child is being abused.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled, for example, as they are left by their parents they willingly wave bye. They receive good care and learn effectively, cared for by well qualified and experienced staff. The staff have a comprehensive understanding of child development and how children learn. They have attended Foundation Stage training and have embraced well the 'Birth to three matters' framework, on which their curriculum planning and assessments are based. Planning is done in advance by all the staff as a team. All children are offered an extensive range of learning opportunities and stimulating activities with a wide selection good resources to support their learning. For example, music, singing, baking, outdoor play and discussions about different topics such as the 'Family theme' this term.

Children are interested and enjoy trying new things. Adult-led activities are clearly introduced and explained to children. Staff appropriately challenge children by asking open-ended questions to make sure that they have understood all aspects of new learning. For example, children willingly participated in a planned activity to help them listen and establish different noises

using different mediums. It involved putting rice grains or pasta into boxes or bottles and shaking the contents. Children were interested and discussed whether the noise was loud, louder or quite. The stimulating activities and play opportunities address differentiations, ensuring that younger or less able children are able to take part in all activities confidently and at their own level. For example, during painting activities older and younger children may use brushes, while babies use hands and feet.

Staff build good relationships with children and have high expectations of their behaviour. The nursery operates a key-worker system which helps children to know their main carers and feel safe. The key workers keep well documented evidence about each child and regularly assess their progress towards the early learning goals. Staff use this information as a planning tool, to ensure that each and every child's needs are focused upon and addressed, linking it to stepping stones. They make effective use of the Birth to three matters frame work and use it as a guide to record progress for children aged under three years.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Personal, social and emotional development are particularly nurtured well. Children work well together, for example, during outdoor play they build balancing bridges using wooden blocks. They work co-operatively, thinking mathematically to find solutions and match and join the wooden blocks. They share decision-making, discussing and negotiating options and assisting one another without falling out if they do not get their own way. Children have self esteem, are well-behaved, eager to learn and confident to try new experiences.

Communication, language and literacy is promoted well. Children enjoy accessing and looking at interesting books which are kept within their reach and in full view. They listen intently to stories and contribute. Mark-making materials are available at all times and they are confident in experimenting; writing their own names and shopping lists.

The mathematical skills and vocabulary of more able children are extended through everyday experiences. For example, during the bridge building staff ask open ended questions to encourage thinking, such as "how many blocks do you think you will need"? and "do you want them all of the same size"? Children respond by keeping count and discussing sizes of blocks needed, using mathematical language such as big and small, more and less. Staff conscientiously use every opportunity to encourage children to practice counting, subtracting and adding on.

Physical development is promoted well through play. For example, having built the bridge referred to in mathematical skills, the children then climb and walk on it. They confidently practice balancing skills by controlling their bodies effectively. Children regularly have opportunities to exercise and practice fine motor skills through activities such as manipulating puzzles and handling pencils.

Creative development is an area very much enjoyed by all the children. They use their imaginations well. For example, they creatively make up stories during play in the home corner, particularly when they are dressing up, or playing mums to their dolls. Daily, there is opportunity for children to experience a variety of medias, paint, crayons, gluing and sticking, and children enjoy sand and water play.

Children are developing good knowledge and understanding of the world. They are familiar with their community, family and friends who help them. They have many opportunities to learn about the cultures and beliefs of other people, and the provision is attended by a good

percentage of children from a variety of the ethnic minorities. For example, this term they had a 'Family' theme topic where a chart showing different families including their own has been made to help children learn.

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

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with respect and equality of opportunity is promoted successfully. The provision supports a mixed group of children including some who have special needs and others who speak English as a second language. Staff know children well as individuals which helps them to plan effectively. They provide for each child's individual abilities and interests and meet their needs. Children have self-esteem and feel valued and acknowledged. For example, staff ensure that all children are always addressed by their correct name. Children participate in any activities of their choice, and they appropriately and readily praise and encourage them. For example, a child learning to communicate in English and still unsure, is encouraged on a frequent one-to-one basis to try different activities, building trust and confidence.

The older or more confident children adapt play to their own needs, for example, during outdoor play, some three-year-olds choose to build a bridge using wooden blocks. They help each other carry the blocks to the play area and discuss what they are doing. The staff observe and monitor but do not interfere with the children's decisions. Resources and activities provided include a good quantity of those that reflect positive images of other cultures, different races, disability and gender. For example, the welcome posters on the wall reflect many different languages, and other posters show different families of the world, making all children in the setting to feel comfortable and valued.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included and positive steps are taken to meet their individual needs. A comprehensive and well written policy in place is followed well by staff. The staff work closely with the relevant external bodies to promote the needs of all children, learning from other professionals and extending their own knowledge and skills. For example, staff work closely with the area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) to put together Individual Learning Plans (IEPs) for children identified as having special needs. The child's progress is closely monitored and documented by staff, and then reviewed regularly by all involved.

Good behaviour is encouraged and the staff are good role models. Children play a role in decision making, for example, they helped to put the ground rules together, and they choose what activities they wish to be involved in. Children are happy and feel secure, able to confidently form meaningful and caring relationships with other children and adults. For example, at snack time children choose where they want to sit and who with. It is a sociable event and a very pleasant experience for them as they sit at the table, eating and talking with their friends.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are informed about the provision and given a welcome booklet and there is a clear written agreement which ensures that all are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Parents complete child record forms giving their child's personal details and discuss the child's needs and stage of development. However, there is little evidence on record to show that this information about children's attainment on entry is taken into consideration and used. Staff undertake their own observations and assessments of children within a few weeks of their arrival and record this information.

The parents are given a lot of information about funded nursery education, and it is also displayed on the '3-5s notice board'. In addition, partnering sessions are held once every half-term providing opportunity for parents to join in and work together with staff on selected themes to play and educate their children. Parents are welcome to access their children's records at any time. On a regular basis they are informed verbally by staff of changes or incidents that may affect their child's welfare. Each term, staff formally report in writing on each child's progress towards the early learning goals and the report is given to parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for and supported by knowledgeable staff who understand child development. The staff demonstrate a high interest in continuing to extend their knowledge and improve the service through accessing further training. For example, staff take it in turns to work closely with the 'Play and Learn team', a multi-agency team that focuses on different aspects of the child's development. This enables staff to know and identify any signs and symptoms of concern, enabling appropriate early intervention for the child.

Children's safety is considered paramount, and there are comprehensive records, policies and procedures for appointing and vetting staff as well as effective running of the provision which are adhered to. For example, attendance, accident and medication records are kept accurate and maintained up to date to ensure children's safety. However, a system for recording incidents has yet to be devised and implemented, in which any incidents of physical restraint would be recorded.

Rooms are spacious and staffing ratios are maintained at all times to ensure that children receive appropriate care and remain safe. A key worker system is in place which helps children to know their main carers and quickly settle well in the setting. Children feel confident, safe and secure.

The leadership and management is good. Leadership is strong and staff are supported well with many opportunities for self development. Great emphasis is placed on achievement of all children, ensuring and promoting equality of opportunity. Effective systems are in place for managing and monitoring the provision. For example, comprehensive induction procedures are explained to all staff members. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and consequently children are well cared for.

Staff work as a team to plan activities for all the children. They take into consideration the individual child's stage of development, strengths and weaknesses. This ensures that each individual child's needs are included to be met. Children enjoy quality experiences which help them to develop in all areas of learning. The provision receives support from the local authority.

Relationships with parents are nurtured well and information about their child's welfare and progress is shared effectively. For example, parents are notified of planned activities and invited to participate in some way. This term they have contributed family photos for the 'Families' theme topic.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 a system for recording incidents is devised and implemented.

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):

- ensure that a record is kept of children's attainment on entry (also applies to care).

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