



County Hospital Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253690
Inspection date	17 October 2006
Inspector	Melanie Arnold / Susan Houlton
Setting Address	County Hospital, Sewell Road, Lincoln, Lincs, LN2 5QY
Telephone number	01522 573081
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Registered person	For Under Fives 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 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?

County Hospital Day Nursery is one of several nurseries run by 'For Under Fives Ltd'. It opened in 1991 and operates from a self-contained building in the grounds of Lincoln County Hospital. Children have access to five play rooms and a baby sleeping room. A maximum of 42 children may attend the nursery at any one time. Priority for places is given to health authority staff but places are also available to the general public. The nursery is open each week day from 06.45 to 18.00, all year round, with the exception of Bank Holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 61 children on roll, who attend for various sessions each week. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and or disabilities.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff to work with the children. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted generally well through staff implementing some good health and hygiene routines. For example, cot sheets are washed each day, disposable gloves and aprons are worn by staff to change nappies and individual face cloths are used to wipe children's faces after meals. However, inconsistent practices throughout the nursery result in the risk of cross infection not always being effectively minimised. For example, thorough hand washing practices are not effectively promoted with all children and the nappy change procedure is not fully adhered to, to ensure the changing mat is wiped down between children being changed. Children's well-being is effectively maintained because the nursery has clear policies in place regarding, exclusions periods for when children are ill and procedures showing how children are protected from the sun during hot weather. Children rest and sleep according to their individual needs and home routines. Sleeping children are regularly checked to ensure their health and safety is fully maintained.

Children's growth and development is promoted well through a healthy, balanced diet. They enjoy meals and snacks, which are nutritious and regularly include healthy options like fresh fruit and vegetables. Children's social skills are promoted well as they sit and enjoy eating their meals and snacks at the table with their peers. Babies receive good support during meal times to help them progress and develop the skills needed to feed themselves. Children benefit from drinks of water or milk only, which helps to effectively maintain their health and well-being. Younger children are regularly provided with drinks and older children independently access drinking water when they become thirsty, ensuring their needs are well met.

Younger children get plenty of exercise as they regularly have fun playing in the soft play room. Children also enjoy participating in action rhymes, where they are encouraged to move and stretch. However, daily opportunities for all children to play outside in the fresh air are not always provided. Therefore, children's health and well-being is not fully promoted at all times. Older children are active and are becoming increasingly independent, acquiring control over their bodies and learning new physical skills. They enjoy a good range of energetic physical experiences and have fun whilst developing their hand-eye co-ordination and large muscle skills. They are developing a positive attitude towards physical activity. For example, children enjoy running and jumping in the soft play area and then with the help of staff use the equipment to build a castle. When outside children take turns to use the pedal toys, the climbing frames and play ball games with staff. Children laugh as they catch balls in loose netted bats. However, as physical development is not fully planned for, more able children are not always fully challenged to further extend their skills. Children are aware of when they are tired and happily rest and sleep according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are warmly greeted by staff each day, which helps to create a welcoming environment. This helps children to feel settled and secure. Space is used well, with children accessing different rooms on a rota basis providing them with a greater variety of play resources and play experiences. This results in an accessible, stimulating environment being created, where children enjoy playing with a good range of developmentally appropriate toys, resources and equipment to meet their needs. Toys and resources are well maintained through regular checks, which are completed by staff as they set the toys out. Children's safety is effectively maintained because written risk assessments and daily premises checks are completed, which help to ensure potential hazards have been fully minimised. Children's understanding of what to do in an emergency is effectively promoted through regular fire evacuation drills.

Children's safety is fully safeguarded because the nursery is maintained securely and because staff implement good security procedures. For example, staff monitor access to the premises by vetting people at the door and they ensure children only leave with authorised people. Children are well protected because staff are fully aware of the nurseries child protection policy and procedure, which results in staff having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Therefore, children's welfare is maintained at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and relaxed in their environment, with any new children helped to feel secure by staff providing them with good support and close contact. Children enjoy their time at nursery, where they show eagerness to participate in the good range of activities on offer. Babies have fun playing in two base rooms which are purely used by them. This ensures babies access a good range of developmentally appropriate toys and resources to help promote their skills. Babies also have great fun playing in the soft play room, where they enjoy rolling, bouncing and jumping on the soft play equipment. Babies thoroughly enjoy participating in a good range of messy play activities, which encourages their exploration and hands on learning. For example, babies show great enthusiasm and eagerness to play with the play dough. They have fun trying to roll it, use cutters or just generally squishing it between their fingers. Babies enjoying singing activities and are beginning to join in with action rhymes, as they watch and learn from their older peers. Babies are happy and content because staff interact well with them. Activities and play experiences for babies are planned with regard to the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which helps to support their learning. Assessment records for all children under three years chart their progress and development, also in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Children under three years are cared for in small family groups with the older pre-school children, where staff adapt activities to suit their needs and abilities. They enjoy participating in varied play experiences as they rotate around the different rooms of the nursery. For example, children spend time accessing play resources and experiences in the creative room, before moving through to the pre-school skills room and then finally moving through to the soft play room which has the imaginative room attached to it. This results in children's learning being developed in all areas. Children have fun expressing themselves in play because staff allow them to develop

their own ideas. For example, a child freely accesses and colours a picture at the easel, using her own imagination well, with staff observing but not directing her play. Children's confidence and self-esteem is effectively promoted through staffs' skilful approach. For example, a child who shows reluctance in her abilities to draw around an object is provided with good support, assistance and encouragement by a member of staff. The child then manages to draw around the object and shows obvious delight and new found confidence because she has achieved this for herself.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress in their learning because staff have a thorough knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum and recognise how individual children learn most effectively. A variety of varied and exciting teaching methods help children remain motivated and keen to learn. All the staff working with funded children are involved in planning and assessments. They use their knowledge of the children through continual observations to plan a stimulating curriculum and ensure inclusion of all children to support their progress towards the early learning goals. However, although children receive sufficient challenge during the majority of activities, differentiation for more or less able children is not included in written plans. Therefore, staff are not always consistent in helping children achieve their full potential.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is a priority and a strength of the nursery. Children become increasingly independent when dealing with their physical needs. They are learning to take the initiative and be self-sufficient within their learning by choosing activities and accessing resources for themselves. They concentrate well and persevere with tasks showing high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Children are kind to each other, behave well and show respect for their environment. For example, a child carefully uses a dust pan and brush to sweep up spilt dried peas whilst another child cuddles a friend who chooses the child's favourite song at singing time. Children listen attentively to stories and respond with excitement. For example, following a story about the 'Gruffalo' children chat about the characters, who they like, who is frightening and what they would have done. They ask questions of each other and the staff, listening carefully to others' points of view. This shows a good understanding of the framework of conversation. Children learn to link sounds and letters, recognise their name and write for a purpose. For instance, children are encouraged to write their names on artwork and paper and pencils are always available. Staff are skilful at developing children's non-verbal communication, including eye contact, facial expressions and hand gestures to promote their speaking skills.

Mathematical language is used by children across the curriculum as are problem solving skills and the idea of pattern. Staff use resources well to encourage this. Children use sequencing skills to lay the table and have great fun guessing and then counting the number of dried peas that are on different size spoons. However, worksheets are used regularly, which rarely promote learning as well as hand on experiences. Children respond well to the effective questioning techniques of the staff which extend and consolidate their learning. They talk about how to use a compact disc player and learn why milk needs to be kept cold in the refrigerator. Children use the computer keyboard, mouse and tools, such as scissors and cutlery, with increasing skill. They have many opportunities to explore, gather information and satisfy their curiosity through

first hand experiences which helps them make sense of the world. For example, a child perseveres in working out how to fill a plastic bottle with water without it spilling back into the water tray. Other children experiment using different techniques to build in the sand. Magnifying glasses are readily available for children to view objects in more detail. Time and resources are used effectively to provide children with opportunities to work in large and small groups and select their own tools and materials although opportunities for children to explore, and create with, natural materials are not fully promoted. Outings, activities, the good use of resources that positively promote our diverse society and visitors such as a dental practitioner, the police and a hairdresser increase children's understanding of the local community and the wider world.

Staff value children's creativity and encourage them to express themselves imaginatively. This enables them to make connections between one area of learning and another. The role play area is regularly changed to give children a variety of experiences such as a dentist's surgery, a shop and a travel agent. Children enthusiastically recall how they recently dressed up in yellow and red clothes to attend a nursery party to celebrate 'Pooh' bear's 80th birthday. Children listen and move to a variety of music and enjoy making and using musical instruments. Children are excited and have a wonderful time joining in and learning new action songs relating to harvest. Staff skilfully relate this activity to a previous activity about seeds and growing helping consolidate children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident, settled and they receive good continuity of care because regular staff work with each age group of children. This enables staff to get to know children well, resulting in their individual needs being fully met. Staff have a clear understanding of equal opportunities, which ensures children are treated with equal care and concern. Children's understanding of the wider world is promoted well through activities, the accessibility of a good range of resources reflecting diversity and people of interest visiting the nursery. For example, the police and ambulance have visited the nursery providing children with good first hand experiences to help develop their knowledge and skills. Children with learning difficulties and or disabilities receive a good standard of care. The special educational needs co-ordinator within the nursery works closely with all staff, children's parents and outside agencies to help children make progress and to ensure their specific requirements are met.

Children behave well because staff act as good role models and use consistent approaches. Positive behaviour management techniques are regularly used to promote children's good behaviour and to help develop their self-esteem. Staff are aware how to deal with any inappropriate behaviour to ensure children's welfare and development is promoted. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of right from wrong as staff discuss any behavioural issues with them. Children show eagerness and excitement in play. They are developing positive relationships with their peers and they relate well to the staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are kept well informed of their children's daily care routines through discussions with staff, with younger babies care routines also recorded in note books, to ensure parents are kept fully informed of relevant information.

Parents receive clear information on the nurseries practices, policies and procedures in an informative brochure and they are kept up to date with current information through information displayed on notice boards.

Parents speak positively about the nursery and the good relationships they have with the approachable staff. They explain that their children are very happy and enjoy coming to the nursery. Parents are particularly impressed with the range of activities available and the progress their children are making. Parents receive good information about the Foundation Stage and the assessments that are made of their children's progress towards the early learning goals. They are invited to open evenings twice a year to discuss their children's progress in detail. Planning is clearly displayed and parents find this and the regular newsletters they receive helpful in supporting their children's learning at home. Staff exchange information with parents on a daily basis, thus ensuring that developing or changing needs of the children are met.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's needs are met because space and resources are organised well. Children receive a good standard of care because they are cared for by an experienced staff team who continually update their knowledge through regular training. In the main, staff are deployed well to help promote children's welfare and development. However, on occasions deployment of staff is not fully effective to ensure minimum staffing ratios are directly maintained for the benefit of children. Children's welfare, development, care and learning are promoted generally well because the majority of records are completed with the required information and they are stored to ensure confidentiality is maintained. Children's records are accessible to each child's individual parents or carers at all times. All relevant policies and procedures are in place to help safeguard children's welfare. Children's safety is effectively protected because thorough recruitment systems ensure staffs suitability to work with children. Continuity of care is maintained for children because appropriate induction procedures are in place, which help staff to understand their roles and responsibilities. Overall,

children's needs are met.

Leadership and management of funded children receiving nursery education is good. The manager is enthusiastic and motivates staff to offer a broad and balanced curriculum so that children learn and develop their skills well in a friendly, stimulating and caring environment. The nursery has clear aims and objectives with a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children. The manager and staff effectively promote equality of opportunity and an inclusive environment. Their philosophy that children need to be interested to make best progress works well. The manager oversees planning and evaluations of the delivered curriculum are used to make improvements to teaching and learning. The manager and staff work together to identify training that will further develop their knowledge and understanding and good use is also made of external advisers. This helps increase the progress children are making towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery agreed to appoint a designated person with responsibility for child protection and to ensure they attended training in this area and to improve the outdoor area to enable it to be used throughout the year. The manager is the designated person for child protection concerns and she has attended training in this area. Staff are fully aware to refer any concerns regarding child protection to the manager, which results in children's safety being effectively maintained. Children can now play outside throughout the year, which helps to promote their well-being, because part of the outside area includes an all weather surface.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery agreed to review planning and assessment systems. This has been completed and assessment systems now incorporate more evaluative evidence on how children make progress towards the early learning goals. This means that planning children's next steps is more effective in helping them make progress. Planning systems were altered to include differentiation following the last inspection, however, the new planning system that has been introduced since then, does not.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 1st April 2004 there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standard 6: Safety and National Standard 14: Documentation.

Concerns were also raised over a child being left alone outside after a break during the day. A childcare inspector made an unannounced visit to the nursery on 17 October 2004 and found the setting had breached National Standard 6. However, the nursery had already taken action since the incident had occurred to help prevent any re-occurrence. The nursery also breached national Standard 14, as they failed to notify Ofsted of this significant incident. An action was raised by Ofsted to ensure future compliance. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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):

- ensure effective hygiene routines are consistently practiced throughout the nursery to help prevent cross infection
- ensure all children have daily opportunities to play outside in the fresh air
- review deployment of staff to ensure it is fully effective at all times.

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 short term planning to show how activities, particularly with regard to children's physical development, can be sufficiently differentiated to ensure that children of all abilities gain the most from the activity and learning materials
- ensure the use of work sheets does not detract from the provision of practical experiences and meaningful activities which promote children's learning effectively.

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