



## **Tops Day Nursery**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	144329
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Samantha Powis
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<b>Registered person</b>	Tops Day Nursery
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Tops Day Nursery is one of a chain of ten nurseries, under private ownership. It opened in January 2000 and operates from a converted residential property situated on the outskirts of Wareham in Dorset. Separate areas are used for children of different ages, with some communal areas in use, including a sensory room and outdoor play area.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07:00 to 18:30 all year round. A maximum of 47 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 51 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from a wide area. The nursery supports children with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 staff, including a manager, who work directly with the children. Nine staff have an early years qualification to level 2 or 3 and three staff are currently working towards a recognised qualification. Additional members of staff are employed to support with domestic duties. The setting receives support and advice from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is generally well maintained due to the effective practices and procedures in place throughout the nursery. Good practice is followed by staff members, and appropriate resources such as disposable gloves and aprons are used when nappy changing which helps to prevent cross infection. Older children are learning how to promote their own health, for example, staff remind them to put their hand over their mouth if they cough, and explain to them why this is important. Parents are made fully aware of the policy regarding sick children, and staff adhere to this in practice. This helps to stop illnesses spreading. Although appropriate resources are provided for older children to wash their hands, staff do not always ensure all children do this prior to having their snack. Also, some resources are not maintained satisfactorily. For example, the plastic seat on a high chair in the baby room is damaged, which means it cannot be cleaned adequately. These issues increase the risk of germs spreading. The use of documents such as the accident and medication records help to promote children's ongoing health and well-being. Most staff are first aid trained which ensures that any minor accidents are dealt with promptly and according to current good practice.

Children's health is promoted as the nursery provides them with nutritious home cooked meals and snacks each day. The nursery cook considers children's health when planning an interesting menu, which includes plenty of fresh ingredients. Children enjoy choices such as shepherds pie and toad-in-the-hole all served with fresh vegetables. Suitable alternatives are provided to meet children's individual dietary needs. Before their lunch, children are offered a starter of freshly prepared salad ingredients such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumber and lettuce. This is offered as it benefits their overall health and well-being. Children in the toddler and pre-school rooms can choose to help themselves to a drink at any time, with babies offered fluids at regular intervals or according to their individual routines. Children's individual dietary needs are well known to all staff, which ensures they are fully respected. Children's own food containers and bottles are clearly identified to ensure they are given the correct items.

Children are encouraged to be fit and healthy. Most of them access the outdoor area daily, where they engage in physical activities and enjoy the fresh air. Older children develop control when using equipment such as tricycles and scooters, negotiating obstacles with increasing confidence. The younger children enjoy the low climbing and sliding equipment which can be used indoors or out. Babies develop strength in their muscles, enabling them to stand and look at themselves in the large safety mirror. Children have opportunities to use a range of different tools and equipment throughout the nursery, which benefits their small muscle development.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children's safety is protected well due to clear procedures being followed in practice. Careful consideration is given to ensuring that appropriate staffing levels are achieved, which ensures that children are supervised closely at all times. In general, equipment is appropriately maintained to ensure it is safe for use. Children use equipment that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. The environment is arranged to ensure children are safe and comfortable. Separate areas are available for children of different ages, and barriers are created in the baby room to protect the youngest children from being hurt by those who are starting to toddle. To maintain the comfort of the children using the first floor rooms, an air conditioning unit has been fitted. This ensures an even temperature is maintained.

Older children learn how to keep themselves safe. They take part in planned activities and outings such as visits to the safety centre, where they learn about road safety and safety within the home. On a day to day basis, staff remind children of basic practices to help keep themselves safe, such as keeping the floor around the water tray dry, so they don't slip.

To safeguard children's well-being, staff are familiar with routines and practices that help to protect children from harm. For example, they are fully aware of emergency evacuation procedures as these are practised regularly. Staff carry out daily health and safety checks throughout the nursery which ensures that all areas are free from hazards. Good security systems ensure that children are well protected. Only those invited to enter the nursery are able to gain entry. Parents are made aware of the importance of door security as they arrive and leave, and ensure they adhere to this to maintain the safety of all children attending.

To ensure children's ongoing welfare is fully protected, staff have a secure understanding of child protection policies and procedures. The setting has a designated person with responsibility for child protection to ensure any concerns are dealt with effectively. She has a secure understanding of her role and responsibilities to ensure the setting do all they can to protect children from harm.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children appear relaxed, happy and settled throughout the nursery. Children in the baby room are offered sensitive care and are provided with a range of interesting activities within a welcoming environment. Staff are familiar with individual children's needs and ensure these are respected. On occasions, activities offered to children in the toddler room are not sufficiently exciting or stimulating to capture their interest. For example, children are limited to snipping at a large plain piece of paper when practising scissor skills, rather than having a range of resources and materials to manipulate and experiment with. In some areas of the nursery, resources are not set up well to fully encourage purposeful play. For example, role play areas in the toddler and pre-school rooms are untidy and have limited resources to interest the children.

Staff working with the younger children have a sound understanding of the needs of the children they are caring for. Their use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework ensures children are offered suitable activities to support them in their learning. Very detailed information gained from parents helps children to feel settled and secure, as their home routines are adhered to whenever possible. The younger children take part in a range of fun activities, such as painting using their hands and feet, cooking and using their senses to explore a range of natural materials.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children are offered a broad curriculum which offers opportunities in all areas of learning. Effective systems are in place to record children's progress through observations and photos, which allows staff to support children in their learning. Some evaluation of activities means that staff can use this information to plan for children's development. Staff demonstrate a sound awareness of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use this to help them plan for the children's needs. However, at times, activities are not well prepared, which means that staff spend time preparing resources rather than working directly with the children supporting their learning. Sometimes, the daily routines take over from opportunities to play, limiting time for children to become really engrossed in their play.

In general, staff use an appropriate range of methods for helping the children to learn. They use some effective open ended questioning when involved in activities with the children, which helps to encourage thinking and learning. For example, staff talk to the children about how many more cups they need when preparing for snack time.

Children are becoming independent. They are supported by sensitive staff which enables them to settle quickly. They are encouraged to manage tasks such as pouring their own drinks and putting on their coats on their own, which increases their confidence. They are beginning to form successful relationships with their friends and seek support from familiar adults. Staff are consistent in the praise and encouragement they offer to the children which helps them to feel secure and encourages good behaviour.

Children listen well to a group story, however, their interest in selecting and reading books by themselves is not fully encouraged as the book corner is not set up to look inviting. Children are encouraged to engage in mark making, using materials in the well resourced writing area. Familiar text is displayed to encourage their awareness of print. Sometimes, staff do not fully encourage children to use writing for a purpose, as they write the children's names on their paintings, rather than encouraging them to do this themselves.

Children are learning about number and use counting when playing independently. Two children play together building towers using the construction equipment. They recognise when one tower is taller than the other, comparing height. One child says that his model is a tree house showing how the people climb up to it. However, opportunities to engage these children in discussion about their models and therefore extend their learning, is not acted upon by staff. Children engage in some basic problem solving during practical activities, which increases their understanding of number order and value.

Children have many opportunities to learn about their own local communities as they regularly go on walks and outings to places nearby. For example, they recently went to the town library and have also been to feed the ducks on the river. Visitors, such as the local police officer, come in to talk to the children, developing their understanding of the roles of individuals within our community. Children's awareness of others is well supported. They enjoy celebrating festivals such as Hanukah, and regularly use resources and equipment that offer positive images of diversity. Children have regular opportunities to use the computer and other equipment to support their confidence in using information and communication technology. Children's creativity is encouraged as they have independent access to creative materials and resources at all times, however, some children have not yet been taught how to access and use all the equipment. Children's own work is valued by staff, and used to create bright wall displays. Children join in enthusiastically with singing and enjoy using the musical keyboard to make their own music. Role play areas are not always set up well to fully encourage children to use their imaginations or promote their learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included as their individual needs are given full consideration. Key workers liaise very effectively with parents to ensure they are familiar with any specific routines, requirements or wishes, which helps the children to settle well. An identified special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), who has a secure understanding of her role, works closely with parents and related professionals. This ensures that the consistent and specific support is given to each child.

Children are learning how to manage their own behaviour. Staff are consistent in their approach, and give the children gentle reminders about boundaries. Ideas such as the "golden rule" poster in the pre-school room illustrates to children the behaviour that is expected through words and photographs, helping the children build up an awareness of expectations. Older children are very polite, one child spontaneously says "thank you very much" and this is noticed and praised by the member of staff to reward his politeness. This positive approach encourages all children to use good manners. Children develop self esteem and confidence as they see photos of themselves and their own art work displayed on the walls. Children are encouraged to be caring towards each other. They develop an awareness of the needs of those within the nursery, and within communities both locally and further away. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good. They are provided with detailed information about the setting, and about policies and procedures. This includes regular newsletters and information obtained via the internet and email. These practices help parents to make an informed choice about their child's care, and supports all in working closely together. The staff team are welcoming to parents. Parents are familiar with their own child's key worker, and feel confident to discuss their individual needs. Parents are made aware of the complaints procedure and effective systems are in place to obtain parents' thoughts, ideas and comments. This includes having two parent representatives, who meet regularly with management to discuss any ideas for improvement.

Lots of opportunities are created for parents to share records about their own child, both formally and informally. Meetings with parents and key workers are organised regularly. This ensures they are fully aware of their child's progress and also creates time for staff and parents to learn from each other. Information on each child is regularly updated, which ensures their individual needs continue to be met. A daily information sheet is shared with parents of younger children, which keeps them well informed of their child's day. Parents of children attending the pre-school room are provided with information which enables them to further support their child's learning at home, with ideas for fun activities which link with the current topics.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are comfortable and relaxed within the nursery environment. Space is generally well organised, offering areas in which children can play and rest in safety. The outdoor area enhances children's health and well-being. A wide variety of resources, most of which are suitably maintained, allow children opportunities to develop independence and select from the range available. Overall, activities offered to children generally support their learning and development. Children's individual routines are considered when planning events and activities, however, the daily routines of the nursery such as meal and snack times sometimes prevent older children becoming fully involved and engrossed in their play. Also, at times, activities are not well prepared, leading to staff not being on hand to fully support children as they play.

Children benefit from being cared for by a largely qualified staff team. Internal and external training opportunities are offered to all staff to continually develop their skills and understanding. Appropriate ratios are maintained at all times to ensure children are safe. To keep children safe, clear recruitment and vetting procedure are followed to ensure staff are suitable. However, the procedures to ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on the manager are not fully effective. The detailed induction procedure ensures staff are familiar with policies and procedures to maintain children's safety. The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The management systems are generally well organised, further enhancing most children's experiences. However, systems to monitor the activities and organisation of resources to further encourage children's learning are not always successful. This means that at times, children are not fully encouraged to extend their learning through play.

Documentation is used well to support children's care. Important information, such as accident and medication records and daily registers are accurate and detailed and always shared with parents. Secure storage is available to ensure that personal information about children and their families remains confidential. Policies and procedures are frequently reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure that any changes in regulations are adhered to.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspections, two recommendations were raised with regards to care. These related to how food is served and ensuring that children's individual dietary routines are respected.

Staff ensure they obtain detailed written information about children's individual dietary needs and feeding routines, which ensures that children feel confident and secure as their individual needs are met. However, children continue to be offered snacks without suitable tools such as plates being used, which means at times items such as dried fruit are placed directly on the table cloth. This does not fully promote children's health and well-being.

Two points for consideration were raised regarding the nursery education. These were to further develop systems for observing children's progress and to review the organisation of resources. Although some areas of the nursery are presented well, in other areas resources are not well organised to encourage children to engage in purposeful play. Staff use written observations to inform development records for each child. This helps them to plan activities which support children's learning.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection 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 complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **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 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):

- review the way in which staff time is used and areas within the nursery are organised to further promote children's learning (also applies to nursery education)
- improve procedures for recruiting and vetting managers, to ensure they are subject to appropriate checks necessary to confirm their suitability
- ensure all toys and equipment are clean, well maintained and suitable for use.

#### **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):



- provide increased opportunities for children to become engrossed in worthwhile and challenging activities
- introduce effective systems to monitor and review the provision for nursery education.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)