



Seashells

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337834
Inspection date	14 March 2007
Inspector	Melanie Arnold
Setting Address	Mablethorpe Children's Centre, Stanley Avenue, Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire, LN12 1DP
Telephone number	01507 479412
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Registered person	Pre-School Learning Alliance
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?

Seashells nursery opened in 1998 and re-registered in 2004 under the governance of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. They subsequently re-registered again in 2006 when they moved premises to operate as part of the Mablethorpe Children's Centre. There are three rooms used for activities and all children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 55 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 17.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 102 children on roll. Of these, 33 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions each week. The group serves the immediate locality and surrounding villages. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and, or disabilities and has systems in place to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 staff to work with the children on both a full and part-time basis. They also employ a cook. All of the staff who work directly with the children have appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted and protected through staff implementing good health and hygiene practices. For example, staff wash their hands before serving snack and all tables are wiped with antibacterial cleaning products before children sit down to eat. Children display good levels of independence as they wash their hands after activities and older children show a clear awareness of their own needs as they independently go to the toilet when needed. Staff regularly remind children to wash their hands after going to the toilet to ensure the spread of infection is minimised. An exclusion policy which details how long children should be kept away from the nursery when they are suffering from contagious illnesses is in place, contributing to protecting children's health. Children's health and safety is well maintained because the majority of staff hold current first aid certificates.

Children thoroughly enjoy and benefit from a healthy, balanced range of snacks and meals. For example, children regularly have fresh fruit at snack times and they enjoy meat and vegetable meals at lunch time. Children eat their meals very well and regularly have second helpings. The nursery cook prepares fresh, home-cooked meals each day, which fully meet children's dietary requirements, likes and dislikes. The cook has a pro-active approach and checks ingredients for salt, sugar, e-numbers and additives before purchasing them. This helps to promote children's well-being. Accessible drinking water is available for children, enabling them to freely get a drink when they become thirsty. The nursery only provides drinks of milk or water, which helps to protect children's teeth from tooth decay. Younger babies are helped with their meals and they are held while they are being bottle fed to ensure they feel settled with their carers and to ensure their needs are fully met.

Children get plenty of fresh air and exercise through playing outside, which promotes their well-being. Pre-school children have the freedom to play either outside or inside, with younger children regularly provided with opportunities to access the outside area. A wide range of toys, resources and activities are accessible to the children in the outside area, which helps to develop their physical skills, control and co-ordination. For example, children enjoy playing in the sand, water, doing painting, using paint brushes and water to pretend paint the fence, playing in soil and building with large blocks and planks which they use to balance on. Older children have great fun showing their skill as they roll tyres down the small slope, balance on the small stilts or balancing beams and negotiate hoola-hoops around cones. Children move with confidence and negotiate space when running around. They can use a range of tools, materials and equipment with increasing skill and control. For example, children are able to push and pull resources as needed, they engage in activities requiring hand-eye co-ordination like doing puzzles or threading and they construct using large and small resources.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure environment. The nursery has three different rooms which can be used to care for children of different ages and abilities. These rooms are well organised, with a good range of toys and resources stored at child height to enable children to freely select their play materials. Children aged 18 months are cared for in the two-year-old room, if it is developmentally appropriate for them. However, the baby room is currently not always used to provide care for children under 18 months. These younger children are on occasions cared for in the older two-year-old room and although staff try and ensure a designated member of staff is made available to supervise them to ensure their safety, this is not always fully achieved. Therefore the nursery has breached a National Standard, which potentially compromises children's safety and welfare.

Children remain safe because the setting has good safety procedures in place. For example, staff are well aware of their responsibility to release children in to authorised peoples care, risk assessments are in place detailing how potential hazards have been minimised and daily safety checks are carried out inside and outside to ensure the environment is safe for children. Children are generally well supervised because staff are mainly deployed well, which ensures children are protected from accidental injury. Children's welfare is fully safeguarded because staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection issues and procedures. Accessible contact numbers for social services are on site, ensuring potential problems can be immediately referred without delay, therefore protecting children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery. Within each of the different rooms, a good selection of toys and resources are stored at child height, enabling children to initiate their own play. When the baby room is operational, the younger children are well cared for by staff who sit on the floor, engaging in play with them. Babies are provided with good levels of support and receive cuddles when needed so they can feel relaxed in their environment. Babies enjoy accessing a good range of toys which help them to develop their skills through hands on exploration. They enjoy playing with an interesting range of resources which are brightly coloured and provide them with different textures to feel and touch. For example, a child enjoys picking up and looking at a shiny bangle, she amusing herself by passing it between her hands and to another adult. The child then finds a bright red feather to look at. She touches it, feels it, tries to taste it and then puts it back down. The child goes on to discover her reflection in the mirror and has fun waving at herself. Staff continually observe children at play and interact with them when appropriate to ensure they are kept well stimulated.

Children within the two-year-old room have lots of fun as they participate in a good range of hands on play experiences, which helps to build on their naturally curiosity as learners. For example, children have great fun participating in messy activities like play dough, cornflour, jelly, pasta, custard, shaving foam and baked beans. They freely access the painting easel where they express themselves creatively and they show an awareness of their own needs as they independently wash their hands when finished. Children regularly play outside and access a

good range of activities to develop their skills. They enjoy playing in the sand and water as well as running around in the fresh air. Children are valued and respected as staff listen and join in with them at play. They are beginning to sit and listen to stories and join in with singing at the end of the session. Children are well occupied and stimulated because staff are referring to the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning play experiences for them.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, enabling children to make satisfactory progress in each area of learning. Planning systems are in place and are generally informative, showing how activities can be appropriately adapted for more or less able children, to help them make progress. Staff's use of time, resources and methods are generally good which helps children to achieve. For example, children participate in a good range of hands on learning experiences, they are allowed freedom of choice to play outside or inside, they participate in adult-led activities as well as group led activities. However, organisation of some group activities requires further consideration to ensure all children can see and participate fully. The pre-school room and outside area, which children freely access, are well laid out to provide activities based on the six areas of learning. Observations and assessments are used to chart children's progress and development. However, assessments records are not used effectively to fully inform future planning for individual children or to ensure all areas of learning are effectively covered and promoted.

Children are confident as they arrive and begin playing with the toys and resources. After registration children have the freedom to either play inside or play with the resources outside. This enables children to make decisions for themselves. Children regularly sit in their key worker groups for activities, like stories, singing and recall sessions. This is where children are encouraged to communicate, recall and discuss the activities they have been doing during the session. Children enjoy singing activities as a song basket is used, where children are encouraged to choose an object out of the basket which represents a song. The whole group then sings the song together. Children relate well to their peers, are learning to take turns and are settled in staff's care. They are aware of their own needs and show independence as they visit the toilet when needed, wash their hands after messy activities or put their own aprons on for activities. Children have free access to the book area and a writing area to help promote their pre-reading and writing skills. Adult led activities are also planned to encourage children to begin practising their writing and give meanings to their marks. For example, when making cards for Mother's Day, children are encouraged to sign their name on to the card. If children are unable to write recognisable letters, they are still provided with lots of praise and encouragement. This ensures they feel good about themselves as they are associating their marks on the paper as their written name.

Children have access to a maths table where they can play with mathematical resources like scales, dice and number puzzles to help promote their skills. When children sit down for their snack, they are encouraged to count how many people are sitting at the table. Children also learn to count objects as they enjoy playing games where they have to count how many spots they have rolled on the dice and then have to find the correct number of tokens to put on to their board. Children enjoy investigating and exploring materials using all of their senses as

appropriate. For example, children have great fun as they dig in the soil. They use small trowels to dig the soil and put it in to buckets. The soil is very wet as children decided to add water to the once dry soil. As children are playing they describe the soil as sticky and cold. Children have also been involved with planting flowers and seeds within the nursery garden. They learning how to care for living things as they are helping to care for the seeds as they observe them growing. Children show a good use of imagination as they fix the pieces of 'Mobilo' together to design and make objects of their choice. Children have access to a main computer and several smaller child sized computers to help support their learning and development.

Children have free access to a generally good range of creative materials, which enables them to freely express themselves. They enjoy freely accessing the painting easel and they have access to pens and paper at the writing area. Children use their imagination well during play. They have fun playing in the home corner inside, where they pretend to make dinner for their friends. While outside children enjoy taking part in a role play activity. Staff set up a flower show with a till and flowers for children to come and buy. Staff model what goes on in the shop, showing children how to look through the flower book to decide on what to buy, how to ask for their flowers and then pay at the till. This becomes a popular activity with the children who begin to act out their roles as depicted by the staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled in their environment because they are cared for in small key worker groups. This results in children receiving continuity as they become familiar with their specific key worker. Children's individual needs are appropriately met as staff use a 'care and share' form to gather information on children's specific likes and dislikes. All children within the setting are treated with equal care and concern. Their understanding of the wider world is promoted as they access a generally good range of resources reflecting positive images of society. Children with learning difficulties and, or disabilities are well supported within the nursery, with many children receiving one to one care. They benefit because the nursery has a special educational needs co-ordinator in place who is well aware of her role and responsibilities. The nursery works with outside agencies, some of which are accessible within the children's centre, to help children make progress.

Children's behaviour is mainly good because staff use a positive approach by offering regular praise and encouragement to help develop children's self-esteem. Staff are well aware of relevant strategies to use to manage a wide range of children's behaviour, ensuring their welfare and development are promoted. Children are beginning to learn right from wrong as staff calmly discuss their behaviour with them. They are learning to take turns as staff use an egg timer to provide children with a visual aid. This approach works well as is used so children can clearly see how long they have to wait until it is their turn. If children do display inappropriate behaviour, the nursery has access to behaviour management specialist within the children's centre. These specialist work with the staff and parents to help improve children's behaviour. Children arrive and are eager to play. They enjoy freely accessing the outside area to complete a range of activities, which allows children to make their own decisions. Children are settled

and relate well to their peers and the staff, which helps them to form close relationships. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are kept informed of relevant information regarding the nursery, its policies and procedures and the Foundation Stage curriculum through a brochure and information displayed on notice boards. Photographs are displayed well for parents' information, showing the six areas of learning and the kind of activities children participate in to promote each of these areas. Systems to exchange information on a daily basis with parents to ensure they are kept effectively informed of how their children have been while at nursery, are poor. Daily written information is provided for children aged under two, and although staff do communicate with parents when they are approached, staff rarely initiate any conversations with parents. This results in parents not always being fully informed of information about their child's day. Systems to enable parents to be involved in their children's learning and to ensure they are aware of how their children are making progress towards the early learning goals have yet to be developed.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by qualified staff, who work well as a team and display caring attitudes to help children settle in their environment. Clear recruitment and induction procedures are implemented to ensure appropriate people are appointed, therefore protecting children from harm. Appraisal systems are in the process of being implemented, which will help ensure children receive continuity of care. Space and resources are organised well in each room to provide children with easy access to a developmentally appropriate range of toys and resources. However, organisation of children within the nursery is less effective, as younger children are not always cared for in the separate baby room to fully ensure their welfare and development is maintained. All documents and records are in place, completed with the required information and used to promote children's care, learning and development. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The manager and staff are committed to making improvements to the provision of children's nursery education. An early years teacher has been working with the staff to help them make changes to the learning environment, activities offered within the outside area and the provision of adult-led activities, which has had a positive impact on children's learning. However, monitoring and evaluating systems are currently not fully in place to ensure children are receiving a broad and balanced curriculum.

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 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 children under two years are cared for in the most appropriate room according to their developmental needs
- ensure there is a system in place for the regular exchange of information between staff and parents to make sure parents are aware of how their children have been while at the nursery.

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 the use of assessments to fully inform future planning ensuring that children of all abilities are supported and challenged to reach their full potential
- ensure systems are in place to keep parents fully informed of their children's achievements and progress; and develop information given to parents to enable them to become involved in their children's learning
- develop monitoring and evaluating systems to ensure children are receiving a broad and balanced curriculum covering each area of learning.

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