

Sugar 'n' Spice

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218501
Inspection date	05 February 2008
Inspector	Sarah Jane Rhodes
Setting Address	Methodist Church, Bradwell Lane, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 8PS
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Registered person	Sharon Joyce Nicklin
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Sugar 'N' Spice Day Nursery is privately owned and opened in 1990. It operates from a large converted church hall in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire. A maximum of 29 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 55 children aged from two to nine years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs seven members of staff who work directly with the children and a cook. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment. They enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. Being physically active is strongly encouraged. Physical activities such as using a climbing frame and tricycles are freely available to children inside on a daily basis. They also have regular dance sessions where children learn about how their different muscles operate and other messages about being healthy. Outside play happens on a daily basis and is facilitated by staff with, for example, the provision of Wellington boots. Children can access larger climbing equipment, balls and hoops or explore puddles and mud. Most children join in enthusiastically as the staff support and monitor their play. Children develop their physical skills and have a positive attitude towards exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines. They are able to use adequate hand washing facilities and are generally independent in their self-care skills. They know that they need to wash their hands before eating their snack and after using the toilet. Three children each day are actively involved in serving the lunch to the other children. Those serving wear hair nets and tabards and understand why this is required. This helps reduce the risk of cross-contamination and develop the children's understanding of hygiene practices. Children's medical needs both in an emergency and with regard to ongoing medication are met through the use of accident and medication procedures that are understood by all the staff. Clear procedures for sick and infectious children help prevent the spread of infection and keep children healthy.

Children benefit from a healthy diet and the nursery has a healthy eating award. They have access to drinks throughout the day ensuring they are not left thirsty. The nursery provides three meals a day, prepared on the premises. All dietary requirements are discussed with parents, no special diets are currently catered for but a vegetarian option is always available and individual diets would be catered for if required. Children develop a positive attitude to enjoying healthy food through their involvement in serving meals to others and each child making choices as those meals are served, for example, whether or not to have parsley sauce with their fish pie.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. It is a converted church hall that is permanently used as a day nursery. The building is bright and friendly. Staff make the hall welcoming by the organisation of furniture and walls that are festooned with carefully displayed children's art work, which also shows respect for the children's efforts. Children can access a wide range of safe resources, appropriate for the interests of pre-school children. The hall has zoned areas for table top, floor play, messy play, writing and maths, also a cosy area for reading books. Children can move things between areas, for example, pens and paper from the writing area into home play area. They also take control of their learning with active investigation, for example, taking a tube and small cars to the slide to see what would happen if used from a greater height. Risks to children are limited through adequate safety and security procedures along with staff supervision. Staff monitor access to the group at all times. Risk assessments are completed inline with the insurance company's requirements and daily checks ensure the hall and outside area are suitable for the children to use. Emergency evacuation procedures

are fully understood by staff and practised once a term. Staff explain safe practices to children such as, not throwing sand or why a broken toy must be disposed of. This all creates a pleasant and safe environment that children can enjoy and facilitates their ability to be independent and play constructively.

Children are well protected by staff that have a clear understanding of child protection issues and understand the correct procedures to follow. Many staff have received training in child protection and all staff have had a full induction into the nursery's child protection procedures, which ensures that staff fully understand their responsibilities in protecting children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have warm and comfortable relationships with staff and each other, they play happily together and with adults. Confident in the setting's welcoming and caring environment they use the whole of the hall, which is creatively set up to provide areas that are cosy such as the book corner, areas for creative play with paint and glue, or imaginative role play. A strong ethos of children having an ability to choose for themselves produces a physically busy and productive atmosphere. They are independent learners who know their own minds. Encouraged to experiment they enjoy seeing how toy cars will move down tubes or how ice melts. Throughout the sessions children confidently decide which areas to play in; they are very comfortable to play alone or in groups sometimes with adult support. Children's language and communication skills are promoted by staff through constant conversations where children are listened too, opinions are asked for and taken into consideration. For example, when a child was asked to put a tricycle back, he said 'I am just going to the shop, [in role play area] then I will move the bike'. Consequently, children are learning to develop their speech and are able to express their needs or make suggestions confidently. There is a good range of resources throughout the setting to promote imaginative play and children play together in small groups, for example, as a group of builders or firemen. As a result children's social skills are developing well. Staff plan activities which cover areas identified in the Foundation Stage and adapt these for younger children. Staff take regular observations of what all children in the group can do, they have a good understanding of individual children's personalities and learning styles. However, currently assessment records are designed by the Local Authority for use with children who are over three years and staff feel they also do not help them fully record the exceptional progress that some children make especially in communication, language and literacy.

Early Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and of how young children learn and progress, they can identify children who need stretching or younger ones who need more help. They refer to children's profiles if needed to refresh their memory. Planning is broad, links to the stepping stones covering general play activities and adult-focused activities. It provides guidance for staff to ensure a range of activities and experiences are provided for children to extend their learning in most areas. Staff use active methods to maintain children's interest, sitting with children, asking questions, providing help and support and extending their play. Staff help raise children's awareness of the community and the wider natural world in a variety of ways. Assessment and evaluation of children's achievements during activities is undertaken. Behaviour is well managed and this results in a caring environment for children. The room is well organised and offers a stimulating environment with a good range of resources set out by staff to promote children's learning.

An independent and enquiring mind is nurtured in the children. They are interested and eager to take part in activities. Showing good concentration, they are actively engaged and some persist for considerable periods of time. Children behave well and have warm relationships with both staff and each other. They are able to start to take care of themselves, being able to visit the toilet independently and some are very competent serving lunch to the other children. The concentration and pride at doing a good and important job is evident on their faces. Children make outstanding progress in the area of communication, language and literacy. Exceptional progress is made with sound and letter recognition and the development of reading and very good progress is made with their writing skills. Children learn letter sounds and key words they make progress on to a reading scheme and some make phenomenal progress through the reading schemes reaching levels expected at the end of the reception year. They speak clearly and often with confidence, sharing their experiences in one-to-one conversations. Writing skills are developing with staff providing opportunities for children to write at each session. Children spontaneously write words such as 'Mum' or attempt to write staff's names. Others make emergent writing which is equally valued and displayed. Other mediums such as sand letter moulds are used to help children enjoy playing with letters.

Children understand and use numbers appropriately for their age. Some count up to 10 without help and are able to match number to object as they count the number of spots on the ladybirds back. They demonstrate that they understand shape during construction activities and use concepts of size in activities like sorting different sized buttons. They develop an initial sense of time and place through discussion with staff and looking back at photographs of past events. They explore and investigate, through adult-led activities, for example, looking at ice melting or seeing how fabric can stretch to become bigger. Also through their own role play, using tubes and toy cars to experiment with angles and speed. Children have varied access to information and communication technology, for example, music players and electronic games. They are also shown how library scanners work when visiting the mobile library.

Physical activity is strongly promoted with large spaces inside and outside children have free access to climbing equipment and wheeled toys. Music and movement sessions allow children to express themselves through dance and to learn to control their bodies, they develop a sense of space and the ability to move safely avoiding others. They also learn about the muscles which allow their arm and legs to move. They use tools competently as they write and use scissors to create a decoration for Chinese New Year. They are able to express themselves freely through painting and use their imagination well as they play with dressing up clothes and with the small dinosaurs in the saw dust.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are seen as individuals and the development of their confidence and self-esteem along with the nurturing of children's individual free choice is a strong theme of this nursery. Children choose to join in activities and can freely choose not to. All age-appropriate equipment is accessible to children regardless of gender. Children feel a sense of belonging, they have warm relationships with staff who pick them up and cuddle them if they need a hug. Staff ensure that the resources and activities positively represent the children who attend, as well as individuals from the wider community and festivals are celebrated. Children are developing their knowledge of the wider world, through themed activities such as food tasting and joining in with the wider community at the local church or school. The setting's policies promote inclusion for all children and the premises are suitable for all to access. No child with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities is currently cared for but the setting demonstrated how it had adapted provision in the past to accommodate children with additional needs.

Children behave very well and respond positively to boundaries set by staff. They take turns and share, help each other to tidy away and are learning to use their manners. Staff encourage children to show concern for others, for example, suggesting some four-year-old boys check a younger child is alright and older children remind others of the rules, for example, keeping the chairs in a circle at circle time thereby letting everyone see. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children benefit from the positive partnership staff are developing with parents and carers. Children settle well because the staff work closely with parents to ensure their child's needs are met. Children's individual needs are discussed and recorded with parents on the children's enrolment form. Parents are made aware of how the setting operates through discussion both before children start to attend and on a daily basis at the beginning and end of the sessions, as well as regular newsletters. Daily verbal information is exchanged with parents about their child's well-being.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive early education is good. The setting strongly encourages parents and carers to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways, by sending in items to look at as part of themes or through working with them at home. Children have book bags which they take home on a daily basis these have library books with a reading diary which both staff and parents write in. Children learn letter sounds and key words and these are also sent home in the book bag for parents to share with their child. Parent's thoughts are gathered for the start of the 'Stepping Stones' booklet. Parents of children who were attending in the summer term had an opportunity to attend a parents' evening, this they said was extremely helpful especially to some of the parents who have more limited opportunities to collect children from the setting and engage staff in daily feedback. The evening has given these parents a good idea of the work undertaken and their child's individual progress. However, parents of children who have had funding from September 2007 onwards were not as fully informed about the Foundation stage at the time of the inspection.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are clear staff recruitment and vetting procedures in place for when new staff are recruited. The registered provider ensures that new staff are monitored, supported and fully appraised during a three month probationary period which ensures children are protected. Just over half the staff who work with the children are qualified and additional training courses have been attended. This contributes to the quality of care and experiences provided for children. The registered provider takes a very active role in the daily management of staff and ensures there are systems in place to provide clear direction, support and leadership, for example, regular staff discussions take place and staff appraisals have been introduced which include discussions about staff's ongoing suitability and training needs. Appropriate guidance is given to ensure that staff are clear in their roles; they work as a very supportive and stable team. Staff are confident to take on a variety of roles within the setting and during sessions. Policies and procedures are in place to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. There are systems in place for recording accidents, medication and attendance. However, the attendance record lacks some necessary detail. Children are marked in and out ensuring an accurate picture of the number of children in the building is kept at all times for fire evacuation purposes and the

hours children are booked to attend are also recorded. However, where they deviate from these hours staff do not mark the actual time of arrival and departure. Therefore, on a limited number of occasions children's actual hours of attendance are not recorded.

The leadership and management is good. Guidance and support is given by the registered provider to ensure that the educational programme is delivered well. The registered provider is working in the setting for most of the opening hours and provides a very strong steer on the ethos of the setting and how childcare combined with early education will be managed. There is an ethos of child directed play, with a strong focus on communication, language and literacy and a family atmosphere which develops children's understanding of the world around them. There are systems to develop the curriculum, internally one of the staff members is currently undertaking a teacher training course and externally additional support is provided through regular visits by the local authorities advisory teacher and staff also link in with the local schools reception teacher. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to ensure there is procedure to follow in the event of allegations made against staff and ensure that existing injuries are recorded at the time of arrival and signed by parent or carer. The safeguarding children policy has been supplemented by a document that sets out what action will be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and existing injuries records contain all necessary details.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to continue to improve the progress and development of children's personal, social and emotional development through freely chosen activities and daily routines. There is a strong ethos of children directing their own play throughout sessions. Children are very involved in serving meals at lunchtime which was particularly highlighted to the provider at the last inspection. Children are make strong progress in there personal, social and emotional development.

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.

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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):

- develop assessment records to comfortably accommodate children under three years and the progress of more able children, allowing identification of the next steps for children as an ongoing reference for all staff
- ensure a daily record of the children's actual hours of attendance is maintained.

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):

- continue to develop systems to effectively share with all parents information about the Foundation Stage and the assessments undertaken by staff.

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