

School House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127521
Inspection date	29 November 2007
Inspector	Tracy Larnach
Setting Address	School House, School Road, Sandwich, Kent, CT13 9HT
Telephone number	01304 615250
E-mail	schoolhousenurserysandwich@yahoo.co.uk
Registered person	School House Nursery (Sandwich) 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 satisfactory. 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?

School House Nursery opened in 1992. It operates from a converted schoolhouse on the grounds of Sandwich Infant School. The nursery has access to four rooms, toilets, a kitchen and an outside area. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding towns.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Thursday and 08:00 to 16:00 on Fridays for 51 weeks of the year.

There are currently 52 children aged from two to under eight years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning disabilities/difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six staff to work with the children. They all hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is also a cleaner employed. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children remain nourished whilst at the nursery as parents may choose to supply a packed lunch or buy a nutritional hot lunch provided in conjunction with the adjacent school. The nursery provides the snacks and children are encouraged to try a range of different fruit and vegetables. This means they are learning about making healthy choices; however, there are some missed opportunities to engage children in meaningful conversations at snack and meal times as this is when staff take their breaks so the remaining staff are very busy. Staff are aware of the children's dietary requirements and any allergies they have so they can act quickly should a child has a reaction. Water is available throughout the session which children help themselves to so they remain hydrated. Children enjoy regular physical play outdoors with a range of toys to develop their large muscle skills and there are plenty of opportunities for children to participate in rigorous physical play for their physical well being. However, the staff compensate if children are unable to go outside; for example, with music and movement, movement is limited due to the indoor space.

Children learn about health and hygiene through the daily routine; for example, children help themselves to tissues and dispose of them appropriately and they know why they wash their hands. However, children wash their hands after playing then sit for a story or a television programme before they eat. This means there is a risk of spreading germs because children cough or wipe their noses then handle toys and books. A cleaner comes in daily to clean the nursery so it is clean and hygienic for the children's play and the staff wash the toys regularly. There is a policy to inform parents that children need to stay at home when they are ill to protect the other children from cross infection. All the staff have a first aid certificate and there is parental permission on file for seeking emergency medical advice and treatment. As a result, staff are able to care for the children appropriately should they have an accident or become ill. Accident records are on file but not kept confidentially and one remains unsigned which indicates the parents may not have been informed. In addition, although written parental permission is sought prior to giving any medication and a record is kept, staff do not request that parents sign to acknowledge when medication is given for the children's health and safety.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery is colourful and welcoming to the children. There is a range of toys and developmentally appropriate equipment both inside and outside for the children to enjoy. Inside there is an upstairs and downstairs, each with two rooms which have been used creatively to enable children to have a range of choices. Children learn about safety during the daily routine; for example, they are taught to hold onto the banister as they walk up and down the stairs and not to push, as a result, they walk safely and with control. A written risk assessment is in place and a checklist ensures both the inside and outside areas are checked for safety to ensure the nursery is ready for the children's arrival. There is a visitors book in place to monitor any visitors to the nursery and an arrival and collection procedure to keep children safe; for example, anyone different picking up the children is identified to the staff and this is documented. The staff have a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse to ensure children are safeguarded; however, were not all familiar with what would happen if allegations are made against them; however, they have access to the current information and child protection policy and would check to find out. Children learn about fire evacuation as

this is practised regularly. There is a log kept of fire drills which are undertaken on different days and at different times to ensure that the majority of the children have a turn so they become familiar with the procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have a range of toys and equipment to independently select from and staff have made albums of all the toys and equipment available that so children may ask or point if they can not see it on the shelves. Children have the opportunity to experiment, explore and discover; for example, as they play in shaving foam and corn starch or explore items in the 'discovery area,' full of interesting things to look at, smell, touch and see. Children use their imaginations as they role play, dressing up and pretending to cook. They are creative with paint and other art media. Children sing as they play indicating they are happy. However, at times the pace and routine does not capture their interest; for example, a group time following a television programme and snack time resulted in fidgety children. Children each have an assigned key worker who uses the Birth to three matters framework to promote positive outcomes for their assigned children. They have recently begun developing photographic and observational development records which are used to help plan activities and look at differentiation for their assigned children. They evaluate the activities and feed this back into the developmental records to show the children's progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff have a good knowledge of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. Children enjoy the activities and show interest in them and staff observe their involvement. Staff talk and listen to the children asking open questions to make them think. The planning and assessment systems are effective and photographic and observational development records show that children are making progress towards the early learning goals. There is a system for assessing what the children know when they begin nursery to help the staff establish their starting points.

Children have developed good listening skills, they speak clearly and interact well together. They link sounds and letters as they sing a range of songs and discuss letter sounds and different words that begin with that letter; however, this is not always done in a developmentally appropriate way. Children understand that print carries meaning as the environment is print rich and staff write the children's words on their work. This means that children are beginning to recognise familiar words. Children develop a love of books and interest in reading as they enjoy stories they are frequent visitors to the book area. Children have many opportunities to write as a range of writing implements are available as well as paper and envelopes. Children are also encouraged to write their names on their work; however, staff sometimes make dots for them to trace which they may find frustrating as they try to follow the adult lines. Children can count up to ten and beyond and are heard counting as they play. They learn about simple calculating as they talk about how many legs the spider has or 'add one on,' as they play games such as dominoes. Children learn and use comparative language; for example, they talk about more and less and weigh and measure during cooking activities.

Children look closely at differences and investigate in the 'discovery area.' They are curious and ask questions; for example, why the inspector was present. Children's design and making

skills develop as they build with a range of materials; for example, crates, bricks and other manipulative toys. Children have regular access to a computer and are competent using the mouse. Other items that support their understanding of information and communication technology include phones, keyboards and cameras. Children talk about the local environment as there is a photographic display of 'landmarks' which are familiar to them. They also visit the local library. Children have free access to a range of art media inside and out so they can explore using their senses; for example, charcoal, chalk, crayons, paint, markers, pens and pencils. They use their imagination as they play in the role play areas both inside and out which is regularly changed to enhance the children's play of support their interests; for example, it has been a hairdressers, veterinary clinic and a post office. Children enjoy songs and are often heard singing as they play; however their opportunities to be creative with sound is limited. The outside area reflects the six areas of learning and is included in the planning. Children have a range of experiences outside to develop their large muscle skills; for example, they are able to climb, swing, dig, bounce and peddle. Health and bodily awareness is promoted during cooking activities and by ensuring water is always accessible; however, opportunities are missed to develop this further during snack and lunch times. Children can use a range of equipment with developing control; for example, scissors.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery. Staff are very kind acknowledging the children's feelings; for example, when a child bumped his head on another child the staff member gave him a hug and a tissue and said that must hurt. Children show kindness and consideration towards each other, they cooperate well, sharing and taking turns. In addition, they have tricycles that carry passengers and therefore promote their social development. Children become excited about what they are doing; for example, when experimenting with magnets. Staff generally use positive methods of behaviour management with the children; for example, they are praised for what they do which promotes appropriate behaviour and any issues are generally discussed. However, not all methods are positive; for example, time out is occasionally used when children are asked to sit on the stair which does not promote their self esteem. Children are encouraged to take care of their needs; for example, they put on aprons to paint, their coats and shoes, use the toilet and wash their hands, this develops their independence.

Positive images are reflected in the environment; for example, non stereotypical dressing up clothes, displays and photographs. Different cultures are celebrated through festivals from a variety of cultures to enrich the children's knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Children are encouraged to appreciate and value each other. Photographs of the children give them a sense of belonging; for example, on their placemats. Children with English as an additional language attend the setting. There is a policy for working with these children which highlights the importance of working in partnership with parents and gives positive ideas on how to settle them into the nursery. Older and more able children enjoy a weekly visit from a French teacher so they learn about other languages. A special educational needs coordinator works with outside agencies to develop individual educational plans for children with learning difficulties or disabilities to enable staff to support their learning. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents and children are greeted warmly; however, because of the limited space it is difficult for them to come into the nursery. There is a locked information board and 'write on' board

outside which contains information parents need to know; for example, the inspector's presence in the nursery. Information, policies and staff training certificates are displayed on an information board for the parents inside the nursery; however, because parents do not routinely come into the nursery newsletters also include a policy each time they are issued to keep parents informed. The prospectus contains information about the Foundation Stage and separate information is provided when children become funded. Parents are happy with the care and feel confident to approach the staff and manager in the nursery. There are systems in place to assess children's starting points when they enter the nursery. Parents meetings are held twice per year when parents view their children's records and the new photographic and observational development records are intended to encourage parents to contribute to their children's records regularly. As a result, parents are informed of their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from qualified staff who are very caring. They deploy well so children can move around safely. There are rigorous and robust recruiting procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with the children and an induction checklist asks questions such as where are the first aid boxes placed so new staff quickly become aware of how the nursery operates. An updated complaints procedure is in place but does not mention that parents may view the complaints log on request. The parent poster is displayed in a prominent place. The required documentation is stored securely; however, there is some missing detail for the safe and effective management of the setting and for the welfare and care of children; for example, in the accidents and medication records. The pace and routine of the session is generally good but children's attention is lost at times; for example, group time. In addition, there is no clear warning for tidy up time to allow children to finish what they are doing. Children are able to free flow from inside to out in the better weather when heating the nursery is not an issue. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good.

The committee is proactive and supportive towards the nursery staff and the staff meet together regularly and work well as a team. They have opportunities to plan together in their key worker groups. There are systems in place to review, monitor and evaluate the nursery education programme; for example, through the outcome of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale assessment and the completion of three modules when the staff were working towards obtaining the Kent kite mark accreditation award. In addition, they regularly undertake parent surveys and reflect on their practice which helps them to recognise both their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, weaknesses are mostly identified and acted upon to benefit the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

After the last care inspection there were six recommendations made to improve practice. These were to consider ways of increasing children's opportunities to self select toys and equipment, and ways of helping them to develop independence; to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues; to ensure that new staff receive sufficient induction and supervision to enable them to fully carry out their responsibilities and that staff have opportunities to regularly update knowledge of childcare issues; to ensure that there is a named staff member who is responsible for behaviour management issues; to ensure that written records contain all the required information and to provide opportunities for parents to receive

regular information on their children's progress, and to see the operational plan. There were no key issues identified after the last nursery education inspection.

The nursery has worked hard to provide opportunities for the children to be able to self-select. They have also developed albums of equipment for children to ask for or to point to if they not able to reach it to enhance their choice further. Staff have a generally good knowledge of child protection and all of the current information is at hand to enable them to safeguard the children in their care. All staff have an induction to enable them to carry out their responsibilities and ongoing appraisals which help to identify training needs. A named staff member is responsible for behaviour management so staff know who to go to should they have concerns. Written records are mostly accurate and up to date as there is an annual review of policies and procedures; however, there a some issues that have been identified as a result of this inspection and a recommendation made. Finally, strategies have been put in place to improve partnership with parents. Parents receive copies of policies and procedures through regular newsletters, they are invited to parent evenings regularly and with the recent introduction of the photographic and observational development records to record the children's 'learning journey' the staff are planning to continue to develop this further. As a result, there have been improvements which impact positively on outcomes for children.

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):

- ensure that procedures for hand washing protects children from the spread of infection
- ensure strategies for managing unwanted behaviour are positive and promote children's self esteem
- ensure all records which are required for the safe and efficient management of the provision, and to promote the children's welfare, care and learning are maintained confidentially and contain the required detail.

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):

- improved the children's opportunities for experimentation with music and sound to enhance their creativity
- improve the pace, routine and organisation of the setting to allow children more opportunity for uninterrupted involvement in the activities they choose and consider a warning prior to tidy up time (this applies to care too).

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