



University of Sheffield Union of Students Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300762
Inspection date	21 March 2006
Inspector	Sarah Gilpin
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Registered person	University of Sheffield Union of Students Nursery
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?

The University of Sheffield Student Union Nursery has been registered since 1976. It operates in a large detached house with an annexe in the Broomhall area of Sheffield and is close to the universities, hospitals and city centre. The nursery provides a day care service for university staff and students, members of the union staff and the wider community. Children who attend the nursery are from culturally mixed backgrounds.

The nursery opens every weekday throughout the year from 8.15 to 18.00 and is registered to care for 64 children from 6 months to 5 years old. Children are grouped according to age across six separate rooms, in addition there is a sleep room on the first floor for younger children and a basement for indoor physical play. The secure and enclosed outdoor play area has a soft surface and a paved area.

There are currently 95 children on roll including 33 children in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There is provision for children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language attend the nursery.

The nursery employs 22 staff on a full and part time basis; most work directly with the children, while others provide catering and cleaning services. The majority of staff hold an appropriate early years qualification and others are on relevant training programmes. Additional training to support staff's ongoing professional development is received from the local authority. The nursery has been awarded a 'Gold' standard for the Sheffield Quality Kitemark, a local quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment. There are clear policies and procedures, which promote the health and well-being of the children. However, these are not always followed by the staff. For example, they do not routinely wash hands after changing the children's nappies, which puts children at risk of cross contamination. The children understand why they need to wash their hands before eating and this is successfully encouraged by staff as part of the daily routine.

Children enjoy nutritious and well balanced meals. The lunch is provided by the university kitchens, while the snacks are prepared on site by the midday supervisor. For example, fresh fruit is served each day for the children. The nursery staff are pro-active in developing the menu and choice for the children as demonstrated by the addition of fresh vegetables to the lunchtime meal. The nursery successfully accommodates the parents' wishes by providing storage for packed lunches and vegetarian foods for children with special dietary requirements. The good food hygiene standards and practices ensure that the food prepared for the children is safe, healthy and planned to meet their individual dietary needs. The children's mealtimes are vibrant and sociable, they thoroughly enjoy chatting to staff and friends as they eat together. Children take a very active role in preparing for snack time and take great delight helping staff with table cloths and setting the table.

The younger children's individual routines for rest and sleep are given very high priority by the staff who work closely in partnership with parents. For example, the children sleep when they are tired and meal times are adjusted accordingly to meet their needs. The children have very well developed physical skills; they enthusiastically use the outdoor area to practise and refine skills. For example, when

using ride on toys and small equipment. In addition, the nursery basement is used effectively by staff to provide music and movement sessions, which are thoroughly enjoyed by the children and they laugh with delight as they pretend to be penguins and ducks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment. The staff are extremely vigilant as they support the children in their play. For example, children are closely supervised as they explore inside the nursery and the secure outdoor areas. The children's arrival and departure at nursery is carefully monitored by the staff who use the security systems well. A clear record is kept of visitors to the setting and as a result the children's safety is maintained. Detailed risk assessments ensure that potential hazards are minimised and the children can play safely.

The children safely access the toys and resources, which are carefully stored at their level. Equipment used by the children meets the required safety standards and is routinely checked by the staff to ensure that items remain safe for them to use. Gentle reminders from staff ensure that children have a growing awareness of how to keep themselves safe as they move around the setting. For example, by promoting walking when children rush around explaining that they don't want the children to fall and hurt themselves.

Training for all staff on child protection is given high priority. As a result the staff have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and use this knowledge to carefully monitor the children, safeguarding their welfare. There is a clear policy that is understood by the staff and successful recording systems, for example, accident and incident records, ensure that staff act in the best interests of the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children's enjoyment and well-being is of high priority to all staff in the nursery. They work hard to ensure that children are settled and cared for in a well planned and resourced environment. The grouping of children is organised to ensure that children's ages and stage of development is carefully taken into account, and as a result their needs are effectively met. Good use is made of 'learning stories' assessments throughout the nursery and staff observe, evaluate each child's stage of development and set focuses for the next steps in their learning. The children are happy and relaxed because staff work consistently with them in designated areas. Children are very confident and comfortable with the staff, they seek support and guidance easily as they play together. The staff successfully use the Birth to three matters framework to plan for the young children's progress, in particular their growing independence. The well resourced treasure baskets are very popular with the children who enthusiastically explore the contents. There are very warm and

affectionate relationships between the staff and all children, this results in children being confident and successfully raises their self-esteem. They enthusiastically enjoy music and movement activities and they jump around happily.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have a good working knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, and as a result they provide children with creative and innovative activities and experiences for them to enjoy. The staff provide activities that are based on children's interests and the retrospective planning system ensures that all areas of learning are systematically covered over time. Good use is made of open ended questioning to test the children's understanding and extend their learning. The children are inquisitive and highly motivated to learn, they are eager to be involved in the activities provided and they are making rapid progress in all areas of learning. The children build warm and harmonious relationships with the adults and their peers. They are extremely confident, and staff ensure that children can accomplish many tasks independently. For example, snack and meal times are unhurried and maximise the opportunities children have to practise and refine skills, such as cutting and pouring.

The environment is well organised to provide children with a wide, varied and interesting range of practical activities that stimulate them. Children show good awareness of their own needs and can manage their own personal hygiene. They enjoy the company of their peers as they seek others out to play with chosen activities and resources. Children speak very confidently using a comprehensive vocabulary which is extended well by the skilful interactions of the staff as they talk and question the children during their play. Story and group times are used well and children delight in joining in and predicting events of well known books. Staff effectively use humour to encourage children's thinking, for example, when naming the colours children are wearing and by getting things wrong only to be corrected by the children. The children enjoy many opportunities to write purposefully and the older and more able children have excellent pencil control. They can accurately form the letters of their names and other simple words like 'mummy' as they annotate their paintings and drawings.

Children confidently and spontaneously use mathematical language in their play as they talk about the number, shape and position of items and toys. Children have a good awareness of shapes, they can easily and accurately describe shapes in the every day objects they see, for example, in discussion about the shape of the nursery tables. The nursery computer is enjoyed by the children who show their well developed skills in completing matching games and programmes using the mouse to accurately click and drag. They use their inventive skills to make musical instruments from yogurt pots, an activity that is spontaneously developed following a discussion over the dinner table. Children enjoy the home based play in the role-play area and successfully use their own experiences to enact 'making the tea' for their friends. Children's individual creativity is developing well and they produce some interesting collage pictures and paintings including wonderful portraits of their favourite characters from the 'Gruffalo' story. The children's physical development is encouraged through a range of planned activities including music and movement, and through regular access to the outdoor environment. They use tools such as

scissors and cutlery with confidence to cut items such as paper and pizza with growing ease.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are cared for by staff who work well to meet their individual needs. For example, parents provide a wealth of information to ensure the staff have considerable knowledge of the children's likes and dislikes, which assists their smooth transition into the provision. There is provision for children with special educational needs and successful procedures for monitoring the development of all children. Many children with English as an additional language attend the nursery and staff take time to find out simple terminology to ensure they can communicate and reassure the child. For example, that their 'mummy is coming soon', in a language the children can understand. Parents are regularly invited into the nursery to extend the children's learning, for example, to read and tell stories in their native languages to the children.

Children take a pride in their art work and creations and these are celebrated by staff who display their pictures around the rooms. The children play harmoniously together, they very clearly enjoy one another's company, and play cooperatively, for example, as they build or play in the role-play area. The excellent variety of resources and activities means that children can successfully make choices and take decisions about what they do and enjoy. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There is a good partnership with parents. An interesting and informative display in each area of the nursery to ensure that parents can easily share in their children's learning. The parents are informed about changes in the provision, for example, the alterations to the planning system, and as a result they take an active role in their children's learning. Parents and children are made very welcome by the staff and easy informal discussions ensure that all information relating to the children is successfully exchanged each day. The staff manage the children's sleep routines and diet to ensure they are cared for according to their parents' wishes. In addition, the regular quality surveys provide parents with an opportunity to comment on the provision and the quality of the care provided for their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are cared for in a well managed and successfully organised setting. There are effective systems in place to recruit and check staff, this ensures that children are cared for by adults who are suitable to do so. There are detailed policies and procedures that are generally implemented by the staff and children's well-being is effectively promoted. Staff enjoy regular access to training and development opportunities, and as a result they have a very good understanding of child development and are up to date with current practice. For example, the introduction

of the Birth to three matters framework.

The manager recognises that the quality and experience of the staff team is a strength in the nursery and she supports them effectively to ensure they provide high quality care for the children. The effective deployment of staff means that children are successfully supported as they play and are carefully monitored throughout the day. Good use is made of support staff to maximise the adult to child ratio and maintain the children's safety, for example, the midday supervisor assists the nursery staff at mealtimes.

The leadership and management with regard to nursery education is good and contributes to the rapid progress the children make in their learning. Recent developments in the planning and assessment have been managed well to ensure that children's learning and development continues successfully. Overall, the needs of the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to develop a system for recording all medicines administered to children, a clear record is now in place. As requested the child protection procedure is routinely shared with parents via the easily accessible policy and procedure file. The nursery was asked to monitor the staffing arrangements for the beginning and end of the day, and for the lunch time period. There is sufficient staff on duty at these crucial times to ensure that the adult to child ratio is maintained and to ensure that staff can support the children effectively.

With regard to nursery education, the setting was asked to improve information for parents relating to the Foundation Stage. This is now effectively managed through informative displays about the curriculum, which are easily accessible to parents. In addition, staff were required to improve the opportunities for children to design and make models. This aspect has been addressed through the provision of craft media and materials, which the children freely access.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

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 children's health is promoted by implementing good hygiene practices at nappy changing time.

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 the outdoor play to ensure children's learning continues when they play outside in the garden.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk