



Western Elms Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY295050
Inspection date	08 December 2005
Inspector	Judith, Mary Butler
Setting Address	Western Elms Nursery, 59 Western Elms Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2AL
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Registered person	Western Elms Nursery School
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?

Western Elms Nursery first opened in 1962 and has been under the current ownership since 2004. The nursery operates from a large Victorian house in West Reading. Children have access to a number of rooms on the ground and first floor. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. A maximum of 47 children may attend at any one time. The nursery opens each weekday all year round. Opening hours are from 08:00 until 18:00.

There are currently 60 children on roll. This includes 3 and 4 year olds in receipt of nursery funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

There are 16 staff employed to work directly with the children. Of these 14 hold relevant early years qualifications. A further staff member is working towards a qualification. Additional staff are employed to undertake kitchen and cleaning responsibilities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Older children enjoy a range of activities through the use of the outside play area to develop their gross motor skills and contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They are confident in their physical skills and are able to run, jump, kick and throw balls. They have further opportunities to develop these skills through music and movement sessions and access to outdoor equipment such as sit and ride toys. Staff working with younger children do not always make full advantage of the outside areas and this means that these children do not always have opportunities to go outside within their daily routines.

Children are developing their independence skills: older children go to the toilet unaided, confidently wash their hands and deal with their personal needs. Staff give gentle reminders to children about personal hygiene, as do some older children. For example, one child told another child that he needed to get a tissue for his nose. Staff are aware of the importance of personal hygiene and follow correct procedures to protect the health of children and themselves, such as wearing appropriate gloves and aprons when feeding and changing children. Many staff hold first aid qualifications and effective procedures are in place for recording the administration of medication and accidents. Parents countersign all completed documentation and this ensures they are fully aware of any incidents that have happened to their child. Children requiring sleep do so in travel cots or on mattresses on the floor. Bedding is individual to each child and staff ensure that they follow each child's normal daily routines. This enables children to feel secure and happy in their environment.

Children receive healthy and nutritious snacks and meals at the nursery. Staff discuss children's dietary needs with parents, they record and adhere to these to ensure they meet the needs of all children. Parents provide all food for children under two years and staff follow their individual feeding patterns. All children bring their lunch from home and appropriate storage is in place to ensure food is stored at the correct temperature until it is required. Meal and snack times are sociable occasions with staff sitting with the children and chatting about events that have happened or activities they are planning to do later in the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are warm, welcoming and well maintained. Staff greet children and parents as they arrive and most children enter the nursery confidently and with ease. Staff are aware of and offer support to children who require assistance in leaving their carers. This enables children to feel safe and secure within the nursery environment. The premises are secure, with all visitors having to ring to gain entry. Staff undertake daily safety checks to ensure the safety of children at all times. Children are developing an awareness of keeping themselves and others safe, for example, through reminders from staff about not kicking the balls too hard when playing in the garden. Risk assessments are in place to ensure the safety of children both in the nursery and when on outings.

Staff prepare the rooms prior to the children arriving. They create a fun and child-centred environment where children of all ages can choose and select the toys they wish to play with from the good range available. Staff rotate the toys, resources and activities to ensure children enjoy a good variety within the time they spend at the nursery. They provide toys to meet the needs and hold the interest of individual children; for example, the twisty bendy toy for a baby and the different magnets for older children.

Staff have an understanding of child protection procedures and the signs and symptoms of child abuse. Many have attended training and are clear about the routes to follow should they have concerns regarding a child in their care. This ensures children's welfare and safety is a high priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are comfortable in their environment and use the available toys and resources enthusiastically. Staff plan a variety of fun and enjoyable activities for all children within their daily routines. Staff adapt these to meet their individual needs and curiosity; for example, by providing a mirror for children to see themselves in their reindeer masks and an art activity for an older baby whilst the others slept. Children have many opportunities to freely choose the toys they wish to play with and children in the 'Kingfishers' particularly enjoy the role-play. Children enjoy their time at the nursery and receive a good level of support and interaction from the staff. Older children are developing friendships with their peers and all children develop good relationships with the stable staff team. All children play happily and older children initiate conversations and involve other children and adults in their play. They achieve well due to the staff's sound and developing knowledge of early years guidance such as the Birth to 3 Matters framework and the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Staff undertake daily observations on all children in the nursery to record their progress and identify their next steps in learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy the range of resources and toys and take part in planned activities enthusiastically. Staff ensure the room is attractive to children at all times during the day. They rotate toys and resources to ensure children have opportunities to access a wide variety and make progress through the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals. Children develop their independence through the freedom of choice and range available to them. Children enjoy books and stories and often approach adults to sit and read to them on a one to one basis. They handle books appropriately and treat them with care. Most children recognise their names and older children are beginning to realise that print carries meaning. Children have opportunities to freely express themselves and develop their creative skills through a good range of art and role-play activities; for example, the 'Bistro' where children are able to record orders and prepare food for others.

Most children behave well and staff are very aware of those children who need support in different activities; for example, at group times. Children sit, listen, and are confident to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas at group times, such as discussing the magnets. Children are confident in their use of mathematical language, such as 'bigger' and 'smaller' when playing with the fish in the water tray, for instance. Staff develop children's calculation skills through everyday activities, such as counting and adding the balls of clay as they roll them. Children learn about the world around them through a range of different activities and themes. They become aware of the traditions and cultures of other people. They have access to a computer and older children are confident in the use of the mouse and navigate their way around simple computer programmes. Staff provide children with opportunities to access the outside area and develop their large physical skills. Children use a range of freely chosen tools with confidence and ease; for example, pens, brushes and equipment in the role-play area.

Planning covers all areas of learning and identifies the expected learning outcome. A key worker system is in place and all staff make daily observations on individual children's achievements and share these with the child's key worker. Staff use these to update children's profiles and identify and share their next steps in learning with parents. Children's progress through the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals is recorded. Staff discuss the children with parents to ensure they have a good knowledge of their individual needs, family backgrounds and preferences. Staff use a good range of techniques to reinforce children's learning; for example, by working with children on a one to one basis, questioning and re-visiting topics and themes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff value the children as individuals, they have a sound knowledge of the individual children in their care. Parents complete a 'getting to know you booklet' when their child starts the setting. This ensures staff are fully aware of children's starting points, needs and preferences. Parents and staff work closely together to ensure children make the transition from home to nursery smoothly and with ease. Children are developing friendships with their peers and good relationships are in place between

the children and staff. Children learn to tell right from wrong through consistent rules and boundaries. Most children are well behaved and staff act as good role models. They offer support, praise and encouragement to children and act as good role models. Staff display children's artwork throughout the nursery and this enables children to develop their self-esteem.

Children have opportunities to learn and discover about the world around them; for example, through walks to local parks. They access a range of different resources and themes, such as small world toys, puzzles and books, to discover about the traditions and cultures of other people. There are effective procedures in place to support children with special educational needs although none currently attend. Children with English as an additional language receive a high level of interaction and support from staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership between parents and staff is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the policies and procedures when their child starts at the setting. A notice board at the entrance to the nursery displays information about individual staff roles, registration details and insurance. Unfortunately, further information for parents about the Birth to 3 Matters framework, Foundation Stage and current topics and themes through notice boards in each area of the nursery is not available. Staff and parents verbally exchange information about the children at each end of the day and parents receive further information about their child's day through written activity sheets. Staff offer an open door policy where parents can discuss their child's progress at any time. Formal meetings when parents can discuss their child's individual progress and view their work are also offered throughout the year. Parents receive further information about staff changes and planned events through newsletters.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff make good use of the available space within the nursery. They ensure the premises are warm and welcoming to children and parents. Children move freely and easily around the areas of the nursery identified for their use. Staff have a good understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities within the nursery, with the emphasis being on spending time with and ensuring they meet the needs of the children in their care. Staff have a good knowledge of the individual children in their care through discussion with parents and the developmental records in place. Effective procedures ensure all staff have undertaken the required vetting processes. This ensures the safety and welfare of children at all times. Policies and procedures are in place; however, the management are currently reviewing and changing these and they are not available as one uniform document.

Leadership and management are good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Birth to 3 Matters framework, Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and National Standards for full day care. They confidently apply this to their work to provide children with a safe, secure and fun learning environment. The management

actively encourage staff to attend training and update their individual childcare knowledge and skills. A full induction and appraisal system is in place and staff contribute to this by identifying their individual strengths, weaknesses and training needs. Regular discussions take place to ensure staff are meeting the objectives set at their appraisals. Staff attend meetings both as a full team and within the rooms they work in. They use these to plan for future themes, discuss policies, procedures, training needs and individual children's progress.

The provider meets the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received one complaint about the setting relating to Standard 1: Suitability and Standard 13: Child Protection. The complaint was made by a parent to the provider who informed Ofsted of the action they had taken. Following this correspondence Ofsted took no further action. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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 all children have opportunities to access outside play within their daily routines
- ensure the policies and procedures are updated, held in one place, shared with parents and reviewed on a regular basis.

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):

- improve the partnership with parents by providing them with information about the Foundation Stage and current themes and topics

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