



Queen of Hearts Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220035
Inspection date	16 January 2006
Inspector	Sarah Measures
Setting Address	122 Rockingham Road, Rockingham Road, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN16 9AG
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Registered person	Queen of Hearts Nursery School 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 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?

Queen of Hearts Nursery School opened in 1990 and is located on the ground floor of a converted Victorian house situated in Kettering, Northamptonshire. The nursery serves local families as well as those from a wide surrounding area. It operates from eight rooms and two reception areas. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open from 08.00 to 17.30 hours from Monday to Friday all year, except for public holidays.

There are currently 167 children from 2 to 5 years on roll, of whom 75 are funded 3 and 4 year olds. The setting supports children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 part time and 11 full time staff. Four staff have teaching qualifications and 12 have appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards appropriate qualifications. The nursery has achieved 'Investors In People' quality assurance status, and the 'Heartbeat' award for healthy eating. It also receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy as they are cared for within premises that are well maintained with high levels of cleanliness. They are further protected as staff stringently follow careful health and hygiene procedures. For example, clear hygiene routines are in place when children are changed and at meal times. Children learn simple good health and hygiene practices, as they wash their hands before eating and those that attend all day brush their teeth after lunch. Children are well protected in the event of an accident, as there is a rolling programme of first aid training to ensure staff's knowledge is kept up to date.

All children benefit from regular outdoor play and exercise as outdoor play is part of daily routines, even in colder weather. Children develop good independence and self-help skills as their environment is organised to encourage them to complete tasks for themselves and staff encourage them to have an awareness of their own needs. For example, staff discuss the need to put on hats and coats before they go out and talk about being worn out after physical activity.

Children have very good opportunities to develop physical skills, as this area of development is carefully planned to provide activities that develop control and co-ordination and awareness of space. There is a wide range of physical equipment accessible to children to challenge them and help to develop their large and small physical movements and control. Children also enjoy music and dance activities that give further opportunity for them to be active and refine their physical skills.

Children stay healthy as they are well nourished and are able to sleep and rest according to their needs. The provider and kitchen staff work hard to ensure a very varied and nutritious menu is provided. For example, food is freshly delivered, meat is ordered from a local butcher to ensure it contains no additives and menus are carefully planned to ensure children are able to make healthy choices. Dietary needs are well met, as staff have a very good awareness of their responsibilities and clear systems are in place to identify and meet needs. Children's health needs are well met as staff work well with parents and the provider takes great care to ensure staff are fully informed of any medical conditions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment that is risk assessed on an ongoing basis to ensure no hazards are accessible. Premises are very welcoming to children, with extremely well presented displays and photographs. Children are well protected as staff follow thorough safety routines demonstrating their good awareness of safety issues. For example, children are well grouped and supervised at all times and both entrances to the nursery are carefully monitored by senior members of staff at key times of the day.

Children in all areas of the nursery use high quality toys and resources. Good quality and suitable furniture and equipment are also available to support the needs of the children. Children are well protected because staff understand their role in child protection. Clear policies and procedures are in place to ensure children are protected from abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children in all areas of the nursery feel secure and are well settled as they have good relationships with staff, who put them first and are attentive to their needs. Staff are developing their knowledge of the framework 'Birth to three matters' and plan and provide a wealth of stimulating activities for younger children that meet their developmental needs extremely well. Activities are carefully planned and presented in many fun and interesting ways, as a result children are well motivated and enthusiastic as they make choices about their activities. Young children develop confidence and self assurance as they take part in dance activities and action songs. They develop the will to explore and investigate as staff encourage them to make the most of the many learning opportunities available.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use their sound knowledge of child development and the Foundation Stage to plan a range of purposeful activities that provide good levels of challenge for children that receive funding for nursery education. Many activities are excellent in the way they are prepared and carried out, as a result children's learning potential is maximised. Children's learning is consolidated as activities are clearly linked to a theme of learning and staff make the most of discussions to reinforce their understanding. The way that children are grouped and assessed means that they have opportunities to learn at an individual pace.

Children have positive attitudes towards learning and confidently try new activities. They develop good social skills, as they have opportunities to socialise in different groups throughout their day. Children learn to play co-operatively and consider others, as they share resources and assist one another with different tasks. Children have very good opportunities to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts, as this area is carefully planned using practical ideas and methods to solve problems. For example, children have completed a very well implemented activity

that encouraged them to compare and group different sized teddy bears. Children count during everyday situations and are supported by staff who encourage them to use the range of games and resources available that help them to calculate and develop an understanding of number.

Staff are skilled at using probing questions to help children develop their language for thinking. The opportunity to enjoy books is well integrated within routines and staff are enthusiastic in the way they discuss and deliver stories. As a result children learn to value books and eagerly tell staff about those they have chosen from the library. Children show good control and concentration as they practise their early writing skills and have interesting opportunities through role play situations to write for a purpose. A range of creative activities are available to children, however these lack opportunity for them to design and create using their own ideas. Children experience varied ways of expressing themselves, for example, through music and dance activities. They use their imagination and develop confidence as they enjoy taking part in extremely well organised and realistic imaginative play situations.

Children use everyday technology to support their learning, as they have regular access to a computer and have also used a digital camera. They develop a sense of time as they talk about past and present events during large group discussions. Staff skilfully develop children's vocabulary and understanding as they talk about features in the natural world. As a result children confidently talk about the weather and how the trees lose their leaves as they change colour. Children's experiences are broadened as staff organise visits to the setting from professionals from the local community. For example, the local policewoman has visited under the current theme to discuss road safety with the children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging as they are valued by staff who work well with parents to meet individual needs to ensure they are fully included within the life of the setting. The setting provides a warm welcome to all, as posters and displays positively represent a diverse society and toys and resources that include different races and cultures are well integrated within children's play environment. Children's experiences are enhanced and they learn to value those that are different from themselves, as they celebrate different religious festivals and learn about different cultures. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children feel secure and are very well occupied and are therefore well behaved. Staff act as good role models treating children and one another with respect and consideration, encouraging children to do the same. Children learn responsible behaviours and develop patterns of good behaviour as staff use praise and rewards for good behaviour and discuss situations to help them understand the consequences of their actions.

Children with special educational needs are well supported as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is confident in her role and has completed a variety

of training courses. There are clear policies and procedures in place to enable staff to identify individual needs, monitor children's progress and seek appropriate professional support if necessary.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting and high importance is placed upon their involvement. As a result friendly and supportive relationships are established which enables communications to take place easily between staff and parents in order to help staff get to know children well. Parents are well informed of how their child is learning, as they are invited to attend information sessions and take part in activities to help them support their child at home. Reports are sent home and parents are invited to 'parents' days' so that they can look at their child's records and discuss their progress, although staff are available for discussions throughout daily sessions also. This ensures parents are kept up to date with their child's progress and maintains good continuity in children's care and education.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and education is enhanced by effective and efficient organisation. Policies and procedures work very well in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Staff recruitment procedures are not fully developed to ensure they are entirely robust in ensuring staff's suitability to work with children.

High adult:child ratios are in place and staff make up a well qualified work force which ensures children are given good attention and are very well supported. The grouping of children and the organisation of space and resources helps meet individual needs, gives children the opportunity to move between areas independently and ensures they benefit from a range of different experiences. All required documentation is in place and systems for keeping records are well organised, in order to promote children's health and welfare. Overall, the needs of children are well met. Staff are fully committed to providing high quality care and education for children.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The registered provider is very experienced and is very involved in the day to day running of the nursery and the education of the children. This means that staff learn from the professional and knowledgeable example she sets and that the quality of children's education is carefully monitored and evaluated. Staff are well supported and valued as their own developmental needs are nurtured. As a result staff morale is high and this enthusiasm is passed on to the children, creating a lively and friendly learning environment.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last education inspection the nursery agreed to improve the system for monitoring the progress of funded 3 year olds and the system for planning children's next steps, and to improve the knowledge of the Foundation Stage for less

experienced staff. At the last care inspection the nursery agreed to update the child protection policy to include Area Child Protection Committee procedures, and to include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation made against a member of staff. These issues have been addressed in order to improve the quality of care and education provided for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see upon request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted. There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

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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):

- update recruitment procedures to ensure that they include thorough vetting of staff's medical suitability

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 planning so that children have regular opportunity to be spontaneous and use their imagination in art and design.

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