



The Early Bird Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY263172
Inspection date	15 January 2007
Inspector	Jacqueline Crawford
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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Early Bird Nursery School opened under the present owners in 2001. It operates from several rooms on the ground and first floor of a specially adapted building. It is situated in the centre of Rustington, West Sussex. A maximum of 25 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 57 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these 20 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff, of whom two hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are five members of staff, including the manager in the process of completing relevant early years qualifications.

The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is effectively promoted because practitioners follow appropriate health and hygiene guidelines and procedures. Most staff hold a current first aid qualification. Children learn to understand good health and hygiene practices in order to keep themselves healthy. For example, the older children know the importance of hand washing and independently wash their hands after messy activities, using the toilet and before snack and meal times. The younger children are gradually increasing their independence with good support from staff. Children use automatic paper towel dispensers to dry their hands, which prevents cross infection. Children are protected because high standards of cleanliness are maintained in all areas of the nursery. However, the removal of toilet doors for safety reasons, compromises the older children's privacy and dignity. Babies are appropriately protected, as staff ensure good practice is maintained in all areas of their care. For instance, staff use disposable gloves when changing nappies and anti-bacterial cleaner on the changing mats between each nappy change.

Children's health and dietary requirements are met effectively through discussions with parents and by keeping comprehensive children's records. Babies receive meals and bottles provided by their parents. These are stored appropriately and heated to the correct temperatures to ensure the well-being of babies. Babies enjoy their mealtimes in quiet surroundings with carers they know well. Children benefit from a range of healthy snacks, such as fruit, raisins and breadsticks. They bring packed lunches from home and these are refrigerated. Children enjoy social mealtimes together and become aware of the importance of healthy eating and of storing food correctly. Children receive regular drinks throughout the day, although the older are unable to help themselves to drinks or pour drinks themselves.

Children rest and sleep according to their needs in a quieter area of the nursery. Babies sleep in a designated sleep room and when sleeping are regularly checked by staff. Arrangements for sleeping children are agreed with parents and travel cots are available. Staff are aware of appropriate hygiene and good practice, such as ensuring individual bedding is provided for each baby or child. Children develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise and daily outside play opportunities all year round, however, this sometimes is provided more effectively for the younger children. Babies have good opportunities to be active and are taken on walks in pushchairs in the fresh air and enjoy activities outside in the garden in suitable weather. They enjoy crawling through a play tunnel, chasing balls and playing peek-a-boo with staff. They have opportunities to crawl and move around the baby room freely acquiring physical skills. The younger children and toddlers enjoy an excellent range of physical play and exercise. For example, they participate in Yoga exercises developing bodily control in movement and

relaxation. Older children enjoy similar fun activities, outdoor play and local walks, developing their physical skills using a good range of equipment both in and out of doors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are very well cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. Staff are vigilant at monitoring the environment both inside and out, using regular checks and risk assessment to identify potential hazards. For example, staff are aware the decking in the garden becomes slippery when wet, so ensure this area is safe for children before they play outside. Space within nursery is effectively organised, allowing children to move around safely. Children are safeguarded as there are effective systems in place for arrival and departure and to prevent unauthorised people entering. All visitors are clearly recorded. Good use made of safety equipment to ensure children and babies are well protected throughout the nursery. Regular emergency evacuation procedures are carried out and recorded with fire alarms tested each week. All staff have received additional fire safety training.

Children and babies use a wide range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children generally play with resources put out for them as it is an organised environment where activities are planned rather than free flow play and learning. The provision of good storage and the cleaning and checking systems in place, ensure children benefit from using clean and safe toys and equipment. Children are encouraged to learn about their own safety within a carefully controlled environment. They develop an awareness of taking responsibility for keeping themselves safe. For example, they learn to use the stairs sensibly and safely being aware of others.

Children are safe and protected because staff understand their role in child protection. They are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. All staff receive safeguarding children awareness training and parents are informed of both the nursery and local procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are settled and enjoy their time in nursery, showing they are comfortable and familiar with routines. Children develop a positive relationship with caring staff who know the children well. They build friendships with their peers and interact well in their play and during organised activities. Therefore children develop their confidence and self esteem within the home atmosphere of the nursery environment.

Babies have their individual needs met effectively and benefit from the close relationships they enjoy with their regular key staff, which enables them to feel secure and well cared for. Staff ensure babies enjoy a wide range of stimulating experiences and have opportunities to explore and make discoveries within safe boundaries. For example, babies enjoy messy play, they love music and songs and shaking musical instruments. They delight in crawling through a play

tunnel and playing peek-a-boo with staff and listening and responding to books shared with adults.

Children show interest in activities and respond enthusiastically to those led by staff. They have access to a good range of suitable toys and resources enabling them to acquire new knowledge and skills, within a homely but formal learning nursery environment. Children benefit from the secure knowledge the staff have of child development and the many planned activities linked to Birth to three matters. Topics are reflected in the planning for the older children, such as the theme of 'Books'. Activities such as art, craft and role play relate to the story of the week, 'The three little pigs'. Children enjoy simple and appropriate yoga exercises, which are extremely well presented by staff and enable children to develop their physical and relaxation skills effectively. Staff tell stories which interest the children and increase their imaginative thinking. Children enjoy many action and counting songs and rhymes, parachute and ball games listening attentively to instructions from staff, helping children to develop their social confidence and communication skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have an adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage, but their understanding of using the stepping stones to plan activities is not effective. Staff have a good knowledge of child development and of how young children learn; good teaching methods are used when activities are extended, for example, group discussions and story times. However, the organisation of the learning environment, the restricted programme of activities and use of resources, limits children's access to a broad and balanced range of meaningful experiences across the six areas of learning. Planning does not clearly identify areas of learning and activities are not evaluated, in order to identify whether the learning intention has been achieved. Each child has a development record but these are not used effectively to plan the next steps in individual children's learning.

Children enjoy their time in nursery and show interest and concentrate on the majority of the activities provided. However, free play time does not enable the children to select or access many resources themselves or reflect a stimulating learning environment. Children take pride in being helpful to staff by packing toys away and they enjoy coming together with the younger children for social lunch times. Children listen attentively to staff and learn the importance of good manners, building upon their confidence and social skills. Children enjoy interactive stories, such as 'Way down deep in the deep blue sea', and respond to questions relating to the story with enthusiasm. Children also learn that stories can be written and told in rhyme. However, children do not have access to a comfortable book area, to allow them to access a range of books freely and independently or share books with friends. Books relating to the current topic of 'Books' are not displayed. Children recognise their names and are encouraged to write their own names and label their work. However, the use of notices and labels to increase children's recognition of familiar objects and topics around the area is limited. Children enjoy good discussions and learn to link letters to sounds, recognising letters in print on flash cards. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday activities, for instance, at registration and snack times. Some children are confident to count to 10 and beyond and recognise numbers 1 - 10 in print. Children enjoy being imaginative and creating their own pictures using different shapes in coloured paper or building models using manufactured construction kits. Children have access

to computers and games, but the use is limited with little adult support for effective learning. Children learn about the natural and wider world, for example, they care for the nursery goldfish, grow plants and tend their area of garden in the warmer months. Children learn about the passing seasons during seasonal activities and discussions, but have little opportunity to contribute to interest tables or displays. Children learn about a variety of festivals and celebrations around the world and find out about their local community through outings and visitors to the nursery. However, there are few resources or displays available to increase children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Children develop their fine manipulative skills effectively, for example, they learn to use scissors correctly, glue spreaders and pens when creating their shape pictures. They enjoy music and movement activities, finger rhymes and playing with hand puppets. Children show spatial awareness as they move between areas and are aware of others in group activities. Children contribute to displays using their own pictures or working with others to create a large collage, such as 'The Gruffalo' display linking with the 'Book' topic. This enables children to work with different materials exploring colour, shape and form. Children have limited opportunities for role play in order to express their thoughts and communicate their ideas in imaginative play. However, children enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes and have some opportunities to use musical instruments and to match movement to music.

Children are making satisfactory progress in the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning. Staff and their key workers know the children well and are aware of their individual progress and development. Staff are informed about children's starting points as development records are kept for the younger children and these go with the children as they progress through the nursery. However, staff do not have a system where observations are made, but use their knowledge of each of the children, therefore, records are rarely up-to-date. Staff are not making the best use of the accommodation and resources, to enable children to learn through consistently meaningful, stimulating play and practical activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and families receive a warm and friendly welcome into the nursery by caring and approachable staff. All children are respected and made welcome. Staff work with parents to meet individual children's needs, which ensures they are included fully in the life of the setting. Children feel comfortable and at ease in the small nursery. They develop a full sense of belonging within their groups and with their key worker and the other staff. Children get to know all staff in the nursery as the groups join together for some activities. Babies develop warm and close relationships with familiar carers. The baby area is organised well so babies feel secure and comfortable and always know the staff looking after them. Therefore babies and toddlers develop social confidence and begin to enjoy relationships with the adults and other children. Parents are kept well informed about the care given, routines and their children's progress and development through daily feedback notes and discussions with staff.

Children behave extremely well and gain a high level of self control. They learn to understand responsible behaviour and play harmoniously with others, becoming aware of their own needs and the needs of others. Interactions across the whole provision are very good, with children

co-operating and enjoying their time in nursery. Staff act as good role models showing respect for the children and each other. Children have opportunities to make some choices and to take decisions in their play, however, this is sometimes prevented with many activities organised and formally planned. Babies and children have access to an age appropriate and suitable range of resources, however, free access is restricted by the nature of the accommodation and the organisation. Children have limited access to resources reflecting positive images of diversity. However, children become aware of diversity within their own community and a wider society, through topics, local outings, visitors to the nursery and as they celebrate Christian and other festivals.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Good relationships are established between parents and carers and the staff. Parents express their appreciation of the quality of care their children receive. Parents receive good information about the provision and are kept well informed about their children's care and progress. They have regular newsletters and access to information boards and the full set of nursery policies and procedures. Parents have opportunities to attend consultations with staff and key workers to discuss their children's progress and development. Annual reports are written by the key workers giving parents opportunities to make comments. Parents receive little information relating to the planning of the educational programme and the curriculum based on the stepping stones and the Foundation Stage. Parents can request to see their children's development records at any time. Parents and carers have few opportunities to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery is organised effectively and is successful in providing continuity of care for the children as they progress through the nursery. All children receive good support from staff who enjoy their company and know them well. Staff fully understand and follow the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures and implement them effectively. This protects children, promotes their well-being and helps them develop their potential. However, some policies and procedures need to be reviewed and revised. All other legally required documentation and records are well presented and are clearly maintained.

Although there have been staff changes, the daily operation of the nursery is successful in providing continuity of care for the children. Several staff are currently working towards relevant qualifications. Staff successfully refer to guidance such as Birth to three matters, which contributes to the good provision for babies and the younger children.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The leadership and management support the staff team well and provide good role models. Management is aware that a qualified manager or deputy must be on duty at all times. Staff development and training is encouraged, with staff training needs identified through an appraisal system. Management is working towards having the majority of the staff qualified and recognise the importance of having sufficient qualified staff. Management is also aware that a qualified manager or deputy must be on duty at all times. However, the provision of nursery education for the funded children is compromised,

as staff do not have sufficient knowledge or understanding of delivering the Foundation Stage. This is reflected in the planning of learning activities and not linking them to the six areas of learning effectively. Therefore, activities sometimes lack stimulating learning opportunities. Children's development records are not maintained sufficiently, in order to successfully monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals. Management recognises the areas that need improvement within the provision and the additional training required for staff relating to the Foundation Stage, in order to provide more effective learning opportunities for the funded children.

Management has a clear vision for nursery education, leading to improvements in the organisation and the outcomes for children. Management understands the importance of monitoring and evaluating the provision more closely to identify the strengths of the provision and the areas for improvement. Management shows a commitment and is effective in promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a recommendation was made to ensure all records are maintained and policies and procedures revised. All records are now clearly maintained to comply with legislation and the requirements of registration. The policies and procedures are currently being up-dated, including the correct information about the regulator, thus ensuring children's health, safety and well-being is protected.

A further recommendation was made to ensure that the outdoor play space is secure. A new safe and secure play area has been built, providing a high bolted inner gate, thus ensuring children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

A recommendation was made to ensure that at least 50% of staff are suitably qualified and experienced in the care of babies and toddlers. Over half of the staff are currently undertaking appropriate training in which they will be qualified. Some staff are nearing completion of the training including the manager, thus ensuring children are cared for by experienced and knowledgeable staff.

It was also recommended that a suitably qualified and experienced manager is on duty at all times. A manager has been appointed but a qualified deputy manager has not. Therefore, there is not a manager on duty at all times, to ensure the quality of care is maintained for children in the nursery.

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.

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 satisfactory.

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):

- organise toilet facilities to ensure the dignity and privacy of children is respected
- ensure children have access to a broad range of resources and activities which reflect diversity
- ensure a suitably qualified manager or deputy are on duty at all times

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):

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to enable them to use the stepping stones to plan for children's learning
- improve children's individual assessments and ensure this information is used to plan the next steps in children's learning

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