



Ellingham House Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110473
Inspection date	13 November 2006
Inspector	Clare Moore
Setting Address	Ellingham, Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 3PJ
Telephone number	01425 473723
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Registered person	ELLINGHAM HOUSE DAY NURSERY 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ellingham House Day Nursery opened in 1996. It is privately owned and managed and operates from 12 rooms from a converted house in a rural location. There is also a separate building that houses the pre-school for the older children. The nursery serves the local and wider area.

A maximum of 86 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 200 children from three months to five years on roll. This includes 56 children who receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery welcomes children who have learning difficulties and disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00.

There are 36 staff who work with the children. More than half of these have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3 and five staff are currently on training programmes.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is very effectively promoted. Children are cared for in a comfortable clean environment and older children learn about the need for good personal hygiene. Children's toys and equipment are exceptionally clean and well maintained. Children become independent by managing their toilet needs and washing their hands as soon as they are able to with sensitive support from staff. Environmental and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures are promoted. An effective sickness policy helps to prevent the spread of illness and cross infection. First aid kits are available and immediately accessible throughout the nursery and staff are qualified in first aid so that action can be taken to treat children in the event of an emergency.

They are served with appetising and nutritious meals and snacks that are cooked and prepared by the chef on the premises which helps them to thrive. A varied menu covers breakfast, lunch and also tea to cater for all needs. Fresh fruit and vegetables feature strongly, for example apple, banana and carrot sticks at snack and tea times. Water, milk and sometimes diluted fruit juice which is being phased out is offered at frequent intervals throughout the day. Children find out about healthy eating through discussion during snacks and meal times. Specific needs of children such as allergies and sensitivities are meticulously recorded and excellent systems are in place to ensure their needs are met. Children rest and sleep at a time that suits their routine and according to their needs. A quiet sleep room with low light levels and a ceiling painted as the night sky helps children to relax and settle. Those that need individual routines and comforts are sympathetically supported and soon settle when they are tired.

Children enjoy frequent fresh air, exercise and physical play in the garden and the grounds with an exciting and stimulating variety of activities which gives older children opportunities to scramble, slide, balance, explore hoops and bean bags, to throw and catch balls, use ride on toys and play games. This helps children to develop physical skills and to keep fit and active. Children understand that they need to wear coats to keep themselves warm in the cold weather.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Risks to children are minimised very effectively because the setting gives safety high priority. Risk assessments are carried out both indoors and outside and premises and equipment are constantly monitored for safety. The premises are very secure. Resources and age appropriate toys are purchased from reputable suppliers to ensure they are safe for the children. Visitors to the setting sign in and out and children are always carefully supervised. Medicines and cleaning materials are stored out of reach. Children know about fire safety procedures as they are practised regularly. Children are meticulously supervised during the time they spend in the care of the nursery. Babies are checked systematically when they have sleeps and older children learn to become aware of safety issues such as taking care not to trip on uneven ground, slip

on wet logs and being careful with sticks when they find them in the woods. Visitors to the setting such as a policemen and firemen also help children to understand safety and children's awareness of road safety is raised through planned activities. This helps to prevent injury to themselves and others.

Staff have a secure understanding of child protection procedures which helps to ensure that children's needs are met. There is a qualified designated person who takes overall responsibility and confidentiality is highly respected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and contented at the nursery due to carefully considered settling in procedures, flexible room transfers and attention to individual needs. Children are very confident and demonstrate a sense of belonging as they arrive and exchange smiles and greetings with staff.

Children spend their time busily in a variety of ways which helps them to enjoy their time at the nursery and make excellent progress in their development. They work with construction using a variety of bricks and blocks, games and music. Children have fun and there is lots of laughter when waffle bricks fall over and they play hiding games when building enclosures with staff. Younger ones are mesmerised as they see bubbles flow around them, reach out their hands to touch them and find they disappear. Children benefit from excellent resources and an exciting range of accessible toys and equipment. They have frequent opportunities to enjoy sensory experiences. Babies explore the treasure basket and handle items with different textures, for example a loofah, cones, shells and stones. Older babies and two to three year olds explore sound, touch and colour with toys such as shakers, activity centres and natural materials. All children are supported in developing language skills because staff talk, listen to them and play enthusiastically with them through out the day. They enjoy songs, rhymes, books and stories. Siblings and children of different ages have opportunities to interact when they meet up together to celebrate birthdays, by responding to invitations by the staff or by asking to join them in the other room.

All children have frequent opportunities to experience the outdoors, younger children and babies who are less mobile visit the animals and watch the activities of the others. As they grow they develop skills when they explore the sand, the slide and enjoy action songs and rhymes.

Daily notes for children under 18 months and records about progress for all children are written by staff and shared with parents which helps to monitor development and ensure continuity of care for the children. Younger children make rapid progress because the staff are knowledgeable and the setting makes good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of the teaching and learning is outstanding. Three and four year olds are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a sound working knowledge of the Foundation Stage and they meet together to share ideas to make plans. They provide a

broad range of activities and experiences, ask questions and offer frequent praise and encouragement.

Children enjoy their activities and can independently access many of the resources available to them. They are motivated and fascinated by what they do, for example they are spellbound by the story and eagerly contribute when asked questions. They enjoy painting, cooking, growing vegetables and exploring outdoors.

Children are confident speakers and listeners. They practise and develop skills as they take part in conversations with staff and other children. Their vocabulary is extended through talking about, for example healthy eating and introducing words such as 'vitamin' and 'calcium' and discussing the seasons and talking about hibernation during a role play activity. They start to develop reading skills as they recognise their names, say and respond to the sounds of letters and practise writing skills when they make marks and write their names on their work.

Children learn about number through rhymes, games and at circle time. They count how many large shaped beads there as they are threaded on to a string, then count again to see what happens when they are taken away one at a time. They explore weight, measure and volume when they use a variety of containers in the sand and water trays and also in practical activities when they bake cakes and biscuits. They explore space and shape as they build with different sorts of interlocking plastic bricks and explore small worlds with a dolls house, dinosaurs and a farm. They are very enthusiastic to take their turn when they compare big and small objects, and all clap together loudly to celebrate each success.

Children are able to make frequent and very good use of the outdoor environment by spending time in the paved area where they play on wheeled toys and in the grounds where they engage in many other activities. They observe the seasons, trees and plants and consider life cycles and the natural world. They grow vegetables and flowers for example beans, sweet corn, sunflowers. They find mini beasts, examine them with magnifiers and make links in their learning when they follow them up in a reference book. They develop their awareness of technology through using a computer, tape recorder and battery operated toys. They take part in experiments, for example finding out what will sink and what will float with the conker they find in the grounds and the pumpkin they grew in the vegetable garden.

Children use their imagination when they explore paint, clay, play-dough, dress up, work with collage and move to music. They are absorbed in role play when they sell food in the shop and prepare an imaginary picnic or answer the telephone and make notes in the office. Children's appreciation of music is nurtured through opportunities to experience musicians and instruments first hand through staff skilled with a guitar and a visitor playing a didgeridoo. Their understanding of rhythm and sound is further promoted through playing a variety of instruments that need to be beaten or shaken to make sound.

Fine physical skills are developed as they operate instruments and tools such as a computer mouse and a hole punch. This is re-enforced at meal times as they handle cutlery and cut up their own food with increasing precision and independence.

Written assessments and records show children's achievements and are clearly linked to the areas of learning. Children's progress through the stepping stones is clearly charted through staff observations and examples of work and activities. This helps to ensure that future planning builds on what individual children already know. The setting has a child centred approach and plans are used in a flexible way to ensure spontaneous opportunities such as looking at a rainbow, or going out in the snow are not missed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued as individuals and are often independent in selecting their own resources from those set out, storage and making choices within the vibrant surroundings and space available to them. They are supported exceptionally well during transition times when they move on to another group in the nursery. This helps them to be happy and settled in the homely environment. They play together well, enjoy each others company and are completely at ease with the staff. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcomed and can be effectively supported as staff are qualified in this area. They practise some of their skills with the younger children using signing to help to aid communication. They also have established links with other agencies for support and further expertise.

Children behave very well, they enjoy playing together and older children develop a sense of responsibility by eagerly helping to tidy away after activities. Younger children are supported with sharing and taking turns which helps them to work harmoniously with others. More experienced children help younger ones, for example fetching paper, helping them to do up coats and to put boots on which encourages children to consider the needs of others.

Children and staff use discussion and an illustrated poster to consider basic rules and codes of behaviour which gives children responsibility and control. Children develop a positive attitude to difference when they explore their different families during themes. They find out about the rich diversity of other cultures and festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali when these are celebrated. These are sometimes brought to life through the experience of knowledgeable visitors. They also experience a taste of other languages. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting to help settle children and provide information about home routines, allergies, likes and dislikes. This is used to help children to feel comfortable, at ease and minimise disruption to routines. Children enjoy attending. The manager and owner give a high priority to personally meeting and greeting parents and children each day which is a valued opportunity to exchange information and promotes a sound working partnership. Parents are given opportunities to share children's records and are well informed about plans, themes and activities which helps them to take an active role in their children's learning. They are given comprehensive information about how the setting runs, and further information about each stage as their child moves through the nursery to different groups. Notice boards help to keep parents informed about routines, the ' Birth to three matters' framework and updated policy documents. A regular newsletter is sent out, a photo board of staff helps parents get to know who is who and a recently developed web site has further information. Parents of younger children have daily

record sheets about activities, diet and their child's day, and parents of older children are invited in each year to share records and discuss progress. This helps to optimise information sharing and continuity for children between the setting and the home.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide exceptionally well. Space and resources are efficiently organised with inviting and exceptionally well set out base rooms for different age groups. Separate rooms are set aside for sleeps and activity rooms are arranged to accommodate different activities, for example sand and water play, role play and comfortable book areas. Storage is mostly child accessible to maximise opportunities available to children. The outdoor area is superb with paved areas closer to the base rooms, a vegetable garden, woodland, story, sand and adventure play areas.

Policies and procedures are clearly set out, regularly updated shared with all staff and made available to parents which contributes to children's well being in the nursery. All the required documentation is in place and there are effective recruitment, induction procedures and training for new staff, students and volunteers. Staff are clear about their responsibilities through written job descriptions and very effective support. They are encouraged to share their ideas and take an active role in their development. There are measures to cover contingencies if staff are away so that ratios are maintained.

The dedicated staff use their time well spending most of it working and playing directly with the children. There is also time set aside for training and staff development.

The leadership and management are outstanding. The management and staff teams are dynamic and totally committed to their provision, they work together very well and continuously seek to improve. They recruit staff who have a natural aptitude to work with children. They evaluate their practice, develop and improve education and care through training, working with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, local schools and the New Forest Day Nurseries Association.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to develop documentation, policies and procedures. They have since updated the documentation and now have a system to regularly review policies and procedures. They were also asked to develop staff knowledge of the early learning goals and give children more opportunities to investigate. This has been achieved through training and giving children opportunities to experiment, for example with finding out what will sink or float, seeing what happens when water is poured onto a water wheel, through using magnifiers to explore a variety of objects more closely and using balance scales. This helps to ensure children are well cared for and make progress in their development.

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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The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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