

Edlesborough Under Fives

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	140847
Inspection date	25 March 2008
Inspector	Ann Hilary Guy
Setting Address	Memorial Church Hall, High Street, Edlesborough, Buckinghamshire, LU6 2HX
Telephone number	07854 939226
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Registered person	Edlesborough Under Fives
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Edlesborough Under Fives is a committee run pre-school. The group registered in 1986 and operate from the Memorial Church Hall, Edlesborough, Buckinghamshire.

A maximum of 32 children from two to under five years may attend at any one time. The group is open five days during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 – 12.00 and 12.45 to 15.15 on a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. All children share access to a secure enclosed play area.

There are currently 46 children on roll from two to under five years of whom 35 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The children attend for various sessions. The group support children with a learning difficulty or disability and those who speak English as an additional language.

Eight staff are employed to work with the children, seven of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards obtaining a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children remain in good health because staff adhere to current environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. The children learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care practices through the daily routine. Staff encourage the children to become as independent as possible when going to the toilet or dressing to go outside, and are offered much encouragement. Clear accident and incident procedures are in place and the medication procedure is under review to ensure confidentiality when parents sign in acknowledgement to medication given.

Children receive good quantities of fruit at snack time and are encouraged to make this a social time, with a staff member sitting with a small group of children, assisting where appropriate and developing their art of conversation. The fruit is provided by parents and there is always a very wide variety of different types on offer, enabling the children to experience a wide range of flavours. Milk and water are provided for snack time, with a jug of water and cups available throughout the session for any child needing a drink.

Children enjoy physical activities both inside and outside the building. An area to the side and rear of the building has been securely fenced off to enable children to play outside, however, as the only means of reaching this is to walk through the kitchen, they are unable to offer free access throughout the session. The outdoor area is used after snack time, once everything has been safely cleared away, leaving the kitchen area as safe as possible. Children are escorted through the kitchen by staff and when the area is open, can choose whether or not to go outside. An alternative physical activity is on offer in the hall, together with a range of other table toys. Outside children have access to a range of trikes and bikes, balls and a caterpillar tunnel. Staff try and vary the equipment as much as possible and offer a climbing frame and slide inside the building on some days. Children greatly benefit from this opportunity to experience a range of equipment that develops their physical skills and abilities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Great care is taken to ensure the building and outdoor area remain as safe as possible for the children to use, with clear daily risk assessments taking place prior to every session. During the session the main door to the hall is kept securely locked, enabling the children safe access to the toilet area. Staff are very aware of the hazards during the drop off and collection times and have a clear system where by two staff are located at the door to ensure children cannot leave the premises without their parents or carers. During the first part of the session extremely good use is made of a screen, blocking off the majority of the kitchen but giving access to a hand washing sink just inside the door. This is used by children to wash their hands after taking part in messy activities throughout the session, preventing the need to leave the hall and go to the toilets.

Children have free access to all areas of the hall, which is set out with units and tables breaking up the vast area. When the outside area is in use they can request to come in or go out at any time and be escorted through the kitchen by a staff member. The staff rota clearly shows how all areas of the hall and outdoor area are covered throughout the session. The equipment is in good order, developmentally appropriate and offers much variety. Children also have access

to a unit where they can help themselves to additional resources throughout the session. The clear rules of the group ensure the safety of the children at all times throughout the session. Regular fire evacuations take place and children are alerted to these by the use of a whistle. In order for the whistle to have more effect the new manager does not use it to attract children's attention during the session, as had previously happened, instead she uses her voice and actions to show the key times. Staff ensure the children are well protected and they have a sound understanding of the child protection procedure and their duty to safeguard children's welfare at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages have their individual needs well met through the variety of activities provided at the various sessions. Together with all age sessions each day additional sessions are also offered during two afternoons. These are a small group for the youngest children to attend, where they learn to manage in the large hall, and a group for those soon to be leaving, where staff offer a great deal of one to one, preparing them school and extending their abilities in all areas. Plans fully incorporate the Birth to three framework with the Foundation Stage curriculum and staff demonstrate a very clear understanding of this. The session has some whole group times, but is mostly based on free play from pre-selected activities. Due to the limitations of the hall the group cannot allow children to self select everything but they do have one unit with clearly labelled trays from which children do self select. All children have a key person, although due to the recent staff changes within the group this has not been as static as they would like. The key person is responsible for ensuring the children in their key group's assessment folders are maintained. All staff carry a notepad through the session to record observations which are shared with colleagues at an appropriate time, either at the end of the session or during the regular staff meetings.

Children of all ages have the opportunity to develop their skills in all areas, supported by a dedicated staff team. The weekly plan clearly shows the aims of the week with regard to the aspects of both the Birth to three framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum that are to be covered. This gives plenty of breadth to encompass all ages and abilities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are actively involved in their learning, play independently and are assisted by staff to develop their confidence. Staff know the children well and understand where they are developmentally, enabling them to treat each child's needs individually and help them to extend and develop their skills, understanding and ability. Their progress is plotted against the stepping stones and cross referenced to observations, however, it was noted these were up to date for the eldest children but not all the other children had recent observations. This is an area that the staff are looking at and discussing the best way forward. They demonstrate a good understanding of the developmental levels of all the children but due to the recent staffing issues these have not always been fully recorded. Planning meets the needs of the children because of the staff's knowledge of their development and of key areas that need further extension. The planning is currently under review. A daily plan, showing the activities for the day, is supported by the weekly plan showing the aspects of learning to be covered and a long term plan, showing the topics for the year. The current play leader is maintaining clear records of the aspects identified each week so that she can ensure children experience a broad and full curriculum.

Children learn through free-play activities, group times and focus activities based on the theme of the week. They develop friendship groups and have a good relationship with all the staff. As part of the weekly theme children were looking at height differences and a member of staff drew round them and then the children drew in their features and clothes. These were immediately displayed around the room. Another group were discovering about the life cycle of a frog through tracing pictures of frogs at different stages. In the afternoon session the children had a series of pictures to cut up showing the life cycle of a plant. They were skilfully sticking these in the correct order onto a sheet of paper and discussing the various stages with the staff present.

Group times are of an appropriate length of time and have a purpose. Children are introduced or reminded about the letter of the week and talk about things beginning with that letter. They are reminded about the weekly theme and discuss the activities on offer, in particular those relating directly to the theme. This is a very interactive session with children and all staff taking part. During the group time in the oldest children's sessions the children sit at tables and a white board is used. Children are encouraged to write the number of girls and boys present on the board and together they carry out a simple calculation to work out how many children all together. As well as talking about the letter of the week, words relating to that letter are written on the board as the children think of them. Group times at all sessions were very positive experiences for all the children and enjoyed by all present. Clear links are in place between the group and the local school and the oldest children sometimes spend part of their session on the school site, getting to know the staff and layout before entering the school.

Children communicate very well with each other and staff and are beginning to develop their skills of mark making, although this is restricted to certain areas of the room only. They have many opportunities to count, talk about shapes and use mathematical language, although problem solving is limited during the all age sessions. Through their topics the children learn about the world, its countries and traditions, together with natural topics like growth. The outdoor area has recently been developed and they are beginning to make good use of it, including having planted spring bulbs in troughs to enhance the area. They have access to a wide range of physical equipment both inside and outside the building. Children are encouraged to use their imaginative skills in the role play area, however, this is somewhat limited in the opportunities offered. They develop computer skills through the use of a laptop computer and appropriate programs; enjoy listening to stories and taking part in musical and creative activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging and involvement in the life of the group, and staff work closely with the parents to ensure their individual needs are met. They have access to a range of toys, books and equipment that reflect different cultures and help them discover about other countries, their traditions and festivals. Children are encouraged to make choices and decisions throughout the day, supported by a staff team that know them well. Children with any form of learning delay or disability are fully included and supported to enable them full access to the activities on offer. Children behave well and understand right from wrong and the reason for certain rules within the group. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are welcomed into the group as helpers and staff are always available at drop off or collection to speak to a parent or carer. Good clear communication links, through the notice board, newsletters and meetings, ensure parents are

well informed and involved in the life of the group. Parents comment slips are readily available and the committee address these regularly. New parents receive comprehensive information about the group and share as much information as possible about their child so the staff can settle them as quickly as possible. A complaints policy and log are in place, together with the Ofsted telephone number displayed on the notice board.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The high staff ratios at every session ensure the welfare of the children and create a very welcoming atmosphere in a very large hall. Although there have been recent staffing issues the committee and remaining staff, together with newly appointed staff, have ensured this has not adversely affected the care given to the children. Leadership and management are good. The play leader had only been in post for four weeks at the time of inspection, and was slowly implementing changes to the organisation which were having a very positive effect. These were all done in consultation with the main play leader, who is currently on maternity leave, and the committee. Through the many staff changes the committee have managed to hold the group together in a very positive way. They have looked at the needs of the group and at ways to ensure as much continuity for the children and cause the least upset. This has been very effective and demonstrated by the well organised sessions observed and the settled and relaxed way all the children were at each session.

The registration system does not show any times of arrival and departure. This was discussed and the play leader had already been considering ways to implement this, which were on an agenda for a staff meeting the following evening. The policies and procedures clearly underpin the care given and support all aspects of the group. Children greatly benefit from the fact that a large number of staff hold early year's qualifications and ably develop the children's knowledge and understanding through play.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection three recommendations were made and an action plan set. The committee have implemented a lost child procedure and a complaints procedure that is made available to parents. The play leader is implementing changes to the snack time in order to improve children's socialisation skills and manners. She has plans to further develop this, enabling the children to develop their skills. These changes have positively improved the care offered to the children.

At the last inspection of funded nursery education, three recommendations were made and an action plan drawn up. With the recent changes in leadership of the group, it is not clear how these were initially implemented, however, the current play leader is introducing changes which she is keeping both the committee and main play leader, who is on maternity leave, aware of.

Plans are in the process of development. The medium term, weekly plan clearly identifies aspects of learning at all levels for the children to achieve and leaves it to the staff, who know the children well, to help the children meet these. The group have also introduced two smaller afternoon sessions, one for the youngest children and one for those about to go into school, in order to give staff the opportunity of developing their skills and preparing them for the transition to school.

Children see posters displayed all round the room and labels on toys and areas, they also have a mark making table but do not fully integrate mark making into all activities. A mathematical box has been put together which is looked at a minimum of once a week in group time. This includes shapes and objects for comparison and counting. Problem solving and calculation were not seen in the main session but were very evident in the session for the oldest children. The changes that have been made have had a very positive effect on the standard of nursery education offered.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received one complaint that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standard 1: Suitable person and National Standard 13: Child protection. Concerns were raised regarding behaviour management and child protection. As a result of the investigation, Ofsted set the provider three actions under National Standard 3: Care, learning and play, National Standard 11: Behaviour and National Standard 13: Child protection. A satisfactory response to the actions was received from the provider. Ofsted took no further action and the provider remained 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.

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 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 parents and carers sign in acknowledgement to medication having been given
- ensure times of arrival and departure of all staff and children are recorded.

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 the role play area and link it to the topic when possible
- further develop planning to clearly show the learning aims for all the activities.

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