

Toad Hall Nursery (Ripley)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	120287
Inspection date	23 July 2007
Inspector	Amanda Jane Tyson
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Registered person	Carerom 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?

Toad Hall Nursery, Ripley was registered in 1999. It is one of sixteen nurseries owned by the Careroom Ltd chain of private day nurseries. The nursery operates from a purpose built building situated in the grounds of Ripley Church of England School in Ripley near the town of Woking in Surrey. The nursery is open each week day from 07:30 to 18:30 for 51 weeks of the year. Children have access to two secure and enclosed outdoor play and learning areas. They are cared for in one of four groups within two base rooms; babies and young toddlers, and older toddlers and preschool.

The nursery accepts children from three months to under five years of age. There are currently 54 children on roll, of these nine receive nursery education funding. The nursery welcomes children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Children may attend for a variety of sessions and most come from the local community.

There are currently 10 staff employed to work with the children. Of these seven hold relevant early years qualifications and all hold current first aid certificates. The setting receives support

from the local authority child care services. They are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) and the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a setting that pays meticulous attention to gathering information from parents about children's general health, medical and emotional needs so that they are well prepared prior to the beginning of placement. Where children have specific and sometimes complex medical needs, staff willingly accompany parents to medical consultations so that they can gain more knowledge and acquire the necessary skills to meet children's needs. The gradual settling-in procedure is highly effective in ensuring that children's experience of parental separation, often for the first time, is tailored to meet their specific requirements. The relationships between staff and children is strong and affectionate, and children are secure and happy.

There are good operational procedures in place to ensure that children's health development is well monitored and supported, but in practice the effectiveness of this varies between staff at the setting when it involves record keeping. For example, although accident records contain good detail and are well monitored by management, the actual accident is not always documented soon enough. This compromises the accuracy of times and raises the risk of staff forgetting altogether. Some daily diaries contain good information about children's general health and well-being, whereas others lack detail. Nevertheless, there are very good systems in place for keeping track on the numbers and type of nappy changes, sleep times and bottle feeds which assists parents in their evening routines. The team are all qualified to administer first aid and three staff have completed more specialised and invasive treatment training.

Children keep healthy and active through good opportunities for physical play. Babies have plenty of space to manoeuvre themselves around and have suitable furniture to pull themselves up on. The two gardens provide enough space for older and younger children to be outside at the same time, and pre-school children benefit greatly by having access to their own small outdoor learning environment which enables them to access the curriculum in the fresh air. Whilst there is a good variety of equipment, such as climbing and balancing apparatus to challenge babies and toddlers physical growth and development, there is not at this stage very much for older and more robust children. However, the excellent monitoring systems have identified this and more suitable equipment has been ordered. There are sufficient pedalled bikes for all the children to use together, they are skilled at walking on stilts, run and jump with ease and have tremendous fun playing parachute games. Children recently enjoyed a sports day event, raised money on a charity field walk and are constantly reminded about the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle during mealtime discussions and through the nurseries participation in the national 'stop the rot' campaign; children brush their teeth after lunch. Children benefit from the nutritionally well balanced meals and snacks cooked and prepared by the on-site cook and good arrangements are in place to provide for children with specific dietary needs, such as allergies and religion. Children have free access to drinking water and babies' liquid consumption is recorded in detail.

Children are very well protected from the risk of cross infection because good monitoring systems ensure that staff follow strict hygiene procedures. Tables are all regularly cleaned before and after activities and meals, hand washing is well promoted through discussion, routine

and pictorial reminders, and disposable changing paper and gloves are worn by staff when they change nappies. Children all have their own linen for sleep purposes and babies have their own cots with familiar toys and comforters which encourages a sense of belonging and helps them to feel secure. The Baby room operates a no outdoor shoe policy which prevents germs entering the room and means that babies can safely explore toys from the floor in their mouth. There are suitable sterilising facilities to meet the needs of babies and parents fully understand their responsibility to keep children at home if they have an infectious condition because it is well explained in the parent brochure and information pack. Kitchen hygiene is very well ensured and monitored via a daily check list and through regular unannounced internal health and safety inspections operated by the organisation.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an attractive and secure environment. The procedure for monitoring the wear and tear of the premises is mostly excellent, for example regular and rigorous internal safety inspections by the organisation identify potential risks and initiate proactive steps to protect children. However, whilst the wooden ramp was identified as in need of repair and steps were taken to organise this, its deterioration whilst waiting for the work to be done was not sufficiently monitored by the setting; the hole had become big enough to cause an accident. This has now been covered as a temporary measure which gives sufficient warning. The larger of the two gardens, where robust play takes place, has a large safety surfaced area which helps to minimise the impact of accidents.

The setting have a very good supply of play and learning resources which are regularly supplemented and replenished, and attractively displayed so that children can safely help themselves. Furnishings and equipment are bright and comfortable and provide lovely relaxing and clearly defined areas where children can play safely. For example, non mobile babies are segregated by an attractive tactile partition which enables them to still see the more robust young toddlers, but protects them at the same time. The availability of a proper feeding chair is of particular benefit to young babies who are able to enjoy lovely close contact with staff during bottle feeding. There are sufficient cots and highchairs to enable all attending children's needs to be met together, and when older children play outside similarly there are enough bikes to minimise squabbles.

The risk of children being able to leave the premises unsupervised is well minimised because access to the entrance is restricted by a child safety gate and parents and visitors have to be let in by staff. Electrical sockets are all covered and the setting ensures that all external inspections, such as to test fire and portable appliances (PAT) are conducted at the appropriate times. Excellent attention is given to ensuring both staff and children are familiar with the procedure for emergency evacuation which is practised every month; management place blockages at exits during practices to ensure that staff are able to respond to variable situations. Sleeping babies are well monitored electronically and by actual checks at regular intervals and these are recorded on a chart. High priority is given to keeping children safe during hot weather conditions and the premises is well fitted with air conditioning units. Whilst the children rarely go on outings off site, older children frequently explore the perimeter of the school grounds, for example when they go on nature walks. There is a thorough step by step procedure for incidents both on and off the premises, including what to do if a child went missing.

Children's welfare is well safeguarded by staff's secure knowledge and understanding of the comprehensive child protection policy and step-by-step procedure which is regularly reinforced

through training and at the monthly staff meetings. Succinct written information provided to parents ensures that they are clear about the nursery's regulatory responsibilities towards children too. The policy has recently been updated to include the procedure to follow if an allegation is made against staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies, toddlers and preschool children settle very happily on arrival because they are warmly greeted by their key worker and other regular staff. Good communication with parents means that staff are up to date on babies' changing care needs, such as sleep and bottle feeding times and they make sure that their nursery routines are consistent with what they have in their home environment. Babies are eager to explore heuristic objects and materials such as crackling paper, sponges and wooden spoons. They are keen to crawl and attempt to walk because they are inspired by the colourful and stimulating play area which is well equipped with interesting toys, such as those that encourage the touching of a button, or opening of a door to create a reaction. Good monitoring systems identified that babies were not getting enough opportunities for outdoor play because their small garden had unsuitable surfacing. The gardens were reorganised and babies now benefit from daily fresh air. Nursery rhyme music plays in the background, staff sing along and babies clearly recognise the tunes because intermittently they attempt to join in. The atmosphere is peaceful and happy. Staff exploit opportunities to engage the babies on a one to one level, for example during bottle feeds and to encourage imitative play.

Toddlers in both rooms are cared for by caring and calm staff who like their work and show interest in the children. Younger toddlers benefit from a good range of creative activities which encourage the use of the senses and creative experimentation. A particular favourite is chalking on the giant blackboard which offers superb opportunities for early mark making. They use the palms of their hands and fingers to create patterns in the shaving foam on the table, explore paint, sand and water, and a wide range of foods such as cornflour and cereals in play. They sing and use instruments, run, climb and use ride-on toys outdoors, pretend play contentedly with pots and pans and tea sets, and respond eagerly when staff look at picture books with them. Staff engage the children in lots of worthwhile conversation which is helping them to become more confident in their use of language. They have tremendous fun playing group parachute games and using the outdoor play equipment. The partitioning of the large room with the use of the computer and role play is effective and beneficial for toddlers in that they understand the boundaries, are unworried about moving up to preschool when they reach three, and benefit from times when they join together for instance lunchtime. However, planning follows the same theme as the curriculum for nursery education and there are not always enough adaptations made to ensure that activities are best matched to their age and stage of development. For example, the role play was set up as a post office and therefore equipped with stamps, envelopes, pens and paper, but not resourced thoughtfully enough to enable two year olds, who are more in tune with 'postman pat', the same opportunities for learning. Planning pays good attention to providing lots of activities to encourage sensory experimentation, but these are not always extended enough to sustain children's interest. For example, a tray of wet soap flakes was briefly explored with hands, but as there were no additional play resources or tools the child's visit was brief.

The level of staff's knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, for which the children are monitored and assessed against, varies between staff. This is best demonstrated by the stark differences between children's individual progress and development records; some files have regular and good observation entries, whilst others have very few.

Furthermore, not all staff are confident enough to link their developmental observation to the appropriate aspect of the framework. Activity learning intentions are not very well identified within planning, although in practice some activities are highly successful. Whilst next steps for development are identified for each child, their progress towards a specific target is not always sufficiently monitored to determine whether or not it is met. However, these weaknesses are mostly related to the use of records and documentation and the outcomes for children are actually mostly very good. This is because key workers do know the children well and ensure that their progress and development is supported during play. This is best demonstrated by the progress that some children have made since the beginning of the placement, such as being able to play alone for short periods of time.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit greatly by the small group size and well organised set up of the learning environment. Play and learning areas are clearly defined and well presented to inspire children's natural impulse to experiment and question, and to encourage independence. Children relax and browse through the well resourced book corner, create and design independently in the workshop area, select their preferred construction equipment and build purposeful models, and enjoy small world play. Significant emphasis has recently been put on increasing science and ICT resources. There is a computer which children are becoming confident in using, they know how to operate cassette recorders and help themselves to giant magnets and torches to assist their experiments. The role play area is linked to the theme, for example a post office which children enjoy, but it is not extended to its full potential. Children often go on nature walks around the perimeter of the school grounds, but off site trips are rare. This is a shame because numbers of children have been low and there are sufficient staff. Although opportunities to engage the children in conversation with the visiting postman are exploited each day, planning does not pay much attention to arranging for other visitors to support themes either. This restricts the opportunities for children to make connections between what they are learning about through discussions and stories, and seeing it for real.

The little garden provides a delightful outdoor learning environment; birds, butterflies, scented herbs and flowers, and rapid growing vegetables and plants surround the children as they listen to stories and participate in interesting and highly worthwhile activities. For example, children drew still life pictures of their favourite plant, they scented their playdough with freshly picked herbs and then debated whose scent lasted the longest and smelt the strongest. During the theme of colour, light and shape children compared the colours of stained glass windows in churches, mosques, synagogues and temples, and looked closely at the shapes of these windows and the buildings. This practical approach to teaching motivates children.

Children's progress and development towards the early learning goals is well monitored through the use of instantaneous observations. These observations are used to inform assessments and to identify targets for further progression. Curriculum planning is far better in practice than what is documented. All children are sufficiently challenged because activities allow for plenty of differentiation, for instance older children are being helped to recognise the difference between a cube and a square and to recognise more complex secondary colours within these activities, but this is not obvious from the planning documentation. The systems currently being used are very effective because the group size is small and the early years practitioner is highly secure in her knowledge of the Foundation Stage, of the associated early learning goals, and of the children's individual learning needs. This knowledge is used well to spontaneously adapt and extend activities as the opportunities arise.

The programme for mathematics and communication, language and literacy is very well included in all activities. Children are keen to write with a purpose, encouraged by the wealth of print around the setting they label, and caption with support, their own pictures. They write pretend letters in the role play post office and are challenged to link letters to sounds during registration time when they find the day and month of the year. The weekly French session is producing excellent results because it is well led and jolly good fun. Children listen carefully as stories are read in a mixture of English and French so that they can follow it and contribute, for example children eagerly held up their picture when they recognised the name of the object during the story. Children confidently engage others in brief conversations in French, such as "hello, what is your name?". The children are very sociable and like to share their ideas, thoughts and experiences as they play and take part in activities. They do this confidently because they know that staff are interested in what they have to say and can do. Similarly they are becoming confident mathematicians; children monitored the growth of themselves and their plants in the sensory garden using measuring tools, they count coins in role play, work out how many place settings are needed at lunch time, weigh the ingredients as they make their own playdough and use number language routinely.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit greatly by the setting's commitment to meeting children's individual needs, particularly in relation to babies' sleep and feeding routines, the settling of new children, and supporting those with specific and complex needs. Children's contributions are highly valued and encouraged and this is best demonstrated by the lovely displays of creative work around the setting, the way that older toddlers help to lay the table for lunch, and pre-school children are consulted about their thoughts and ideas. This makes children feel important and raises their self esteem. Children learn about diversity as they play with resources that depict positive images of disability, different ethnicity and gender, which are continuing to be added to. Older children enjoy activities that are linked to various religious and cultural festivals, such as those celebrated in China and Japan, and by Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Jewish faiths. The comprehensive written behaviour management policy is well understood and implemented by staff. Children behave well because they feel respected by the adults caring for them. They listen to what the children have to say and are polite, kind and fair which sets a good example; children use common courtesies such as please and thank you, share and take turns. Good table manners are well encouraged by staff who sit at the table with them at lunch and encourage social etiquette. There are sufficient quantities of play resources which reduces the amount of squabbles and staff deploy themselves well which means that they are on hand to diffuse potential conflicts before they escalate. Simple moral messages are delivered through group discussions, stories and by pictorial reminders displayed around the pre-school. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The setting have ensured that they are well prepared to meet the needs of children with physical and/or learning disabilities. Named staff have completed specific training in relation to the code of practice for special educational needs. Opportunities for additional training, so that staff keep abreast of developing ideas and continue to develop their knowledge and skills of specific disabilities, is on-going.

Parents are provided with clear written information to explain the operational procedures and policies of the setting. For example, they are familiar with the procedure for making a complaint and understand the setting's regulatory responsibilities to safeguard and promote children's welfare and development. Children benefit from consistent care between home and nursery

because the setting ensures that parents receive a daily summary of children's activities and care routines. The quality of these records though does vary between key working staff; some contain more useful information than others. The entrance hall is warm and welcoming to parents. The notice board and regular newsletter keeps parents informed of special activities, activity themes, and changes within the setting. Activity plans for children aged under three are displayed, although this is more of a resource list and does not clearly show the expected learning intentions for activities. Nevertheless, the organisations brochure clearly explains the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Parents receive regular developmental reports and are invited to attend consultation appointments with their child's key staff member to discuss their progress and agree their next targets for development. Parents feel that their wishes regarding the care of their children are respected and valued.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is good. Parents receive a comprehensive written report of children's progress towards the early learning goals at the end of each term. Their understanding of the Foundation Stage is secured by the well written information provided in the brochure and through additional initiatives, such as the presentation of a range of activities at the parent consultations to raise their awareness of how learning is accessed through play situations. Parents therefore understand the intentions of the early years practitioners and do not expect all activities to produce an end result. They have access to children's progress and development records which show lots of good examples of children's achievements. They are secure in their knowledge of children's individual learning programme because they have contributed to the setting of it, and although documented planning is fairly brief, the theme is well displayed. This enables parents to continue children's learning outside the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Very effective recruitment and induction procedures ensure that children are cared for by a team of suitable and committed staff. The tiered system for monitoring, supporting and developing staff's knowledge base and skills makes them feel valued and increases their enthusiasm. Staff have regular opportunities to attend internal and external training and the procedure for sharing their learning at staff meetings ensures that everyone benefits. The outcomes for children are constantly being evaluated and improved through the use of the working action plan document, for example; the reorganisation of the grouping of children, the changes made to the outdoor play area, and the variety of new resources that are currently on order. Overall, good use is made of the available space, resources and time to maximise the outcomes for children, although identified targets for improvement within older toddlers in relation to the planning and setting up of activities are yet to be fully implemented.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. The effectiveness of teaching is very well monitored and evaluated through the unannounced inspection style visits and on site managerial support. Their working action plan, which is reviewed every three months plays testament to this. In recent months and under new management, a number of improvements have been made to the pre-school learning environment which are benefiting the children greatly, most notably the development and use of the sensory garden. Management are highly proactive and very committed towards improvement and this enthusiasm helps to motivate staff. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals and the delivery of the curriculum is getting better and better as staff's knowledge base increases through training and experience.

All records and documentation which are required for the safe and efficient management of the provision, and to promote the welfare care and learning of the children are in place and well shared with parents. Overall they are put to very good operational use and children are happy and very well cared for in this lovely nursery. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection for care raised four recommendations for improvement, of which three related to National Standard 8; food and drink, and one to National Standard 2; organisation, in relation to the roles and responsibilities of on site management. The provision for food and drink is now good. Children who are old enough help themselves to drinks throughout the day, they choose when they wish to break for a snack and serve themselves lunch. Older toddlers enjoy their mealtimes with pre-school and the occasions are consistently well managed and sociable. Menu's are displayed so that parents know in advance what children will be eating.

The last inspection of nursery education raised three key issues for improvement relating to the organisation of the curriculum throughout the day; the recognition of positive behaviour; and the development of children's progress and development records to include next steps for learning. The pre-school is very well organised to encourage children to make their own choices about what they want to play with and for how long. Routines such as snack time do not disturb play because children can take their snack at any time within a set hour. Positive behaviour is well recognised through constant praise and the way that staff value children's contributions. Next steps for learning are identified for all children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. Concerns were received in May 2006 about the suitability of the then manager, which related to National Standard 1; Suitable Person, and National Standard 11; Behaviour Management. A childcare inspector made an un-announced visit and found that the manager, against who concerns were raised, was no longer associated with the setting because the provider had taken action to address the issues raised. Nevertheless, one action was set under National Standard 13 about referring any child protection concerns to outside agencies and Ofsted within 14 days. Ofsted were satisfied with the provider's response to this, and concluded that the provider remained qualified for registration.

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):

- improve the procedure for recording accidents
- improve the procedures for monitoring the day to day wear and tear of the premises
- further develop: the systems for monitoring and assessing the progress and development of children aged under three years and using it to inform planning; and the organisation and delivery of activity planning for older toddlers.

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):

- further develop: planning and assessment systems; opportunities for children to be involved with the wider community; and role play.

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