

The Gables

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY282123
Inspection date	01 May 2008
Inspector	Liz Margaret Caluori
Setting Address	67 Sedlescombe Road South, St. Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN38 0TJ
Telephone number	01424 426426
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Registered person	Just Rite Day Nursery Limited
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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 Gables was registered in May 2004. It is one of two nurseries run by Just Rite Day Nurseries Ltd. It operates from two floors of a detached house on the Green in St Leonards-on-Sea. There is access to a fully enclosed outside play area.

A maximum of 55 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 18:00 all year round. Children attend on a sessional or full time basis. There are currently 83 children aged from two years to under five years on roll, of these 56 receive funding for their nursery education.

The nursery employs 10 staff to work directly with the children, including the manager, of whom five hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications. They are supported by a cook and an administrative assistant. The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a suitably clean and well-maintained environment. A cleaner attends the setting each evening after the children leave and staff maintain hygiene levels throughout the day. Tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes before children sit down to eat and toilets are checked regularly.

Children are given support to develop their personal hygiene skills. They all wash their hands after using the toilet and before lunch. However, they are not routinely encouraged to wash their hands before they sit down for snacks. All pre-school children have toothbrushes kept in clearly labelled individual beakers. These are used after lunch and, as a result, children are learning about the importance of good dental hygiene.

Snacks including a drink and a selection of fruit are provided each day. The setting employs a cook who prepares nutritious lunches. These are very popular with the children and they frequently have additional helpings. Written records are held on each child's individual dietary requirements, which are known to the cook and staff serving food. Menus are produced in advance and displayed for parents. Drinking water is available at all times.

Staff with first aid qualifications are present each day to ensure that children can be treated in case of an accident. Appropriate arrangements are also in place to care for sick children and administer medicines. The setting has a system for maintaining the required documentation and staff complete accident records correctly. However, there are weaknesses in the maintenance of written medication records.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to engage in physical exercise. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area with climbing equipment and a playhouse. All children spend part of the day playing outside when weather permits. They move with co-ordination and control and clearly enjoy the fresh air. The nursery also has a room permanently set aside for indoor physical play. This contains a range of soft play equipment, a ball pond and a selection of child sized fitness equipment such as a treadmill. This room is also very popular with the children. The setting has a policy of not letting more than eight children play in this room at any one time; this is strictly adhered to. At certain times during the day staff ask who would like to play in the room. They choose eight children from those who express an interest. However, there is currently no effective system for monitoring who has been chosen throughout the day. This results in some children being allowed in more than once whilst others do not get a turn.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety is put at risk by the failure of the setting to maintain accurate records of the attendance of children and the staff who work with them. In addition, there are times when the number of staff working directly with the children does not meet the required ratio and is insufficient to meet the needs of all the children. This does not sufficiently promote children's safety and wellbeing.

The setting has recently reviewed the child protection procedures and these are now clearly set out in a comprehensive written policy. Basic child protection training has previously been organised for the staff team. The nursery co-ordinator has responsibility for investigating and

reporting any child protection issues. Existing and new staff have been inducted in the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child.

Security arrangements are generally good, as visitors must ring the doorbell to be let in by staff. There are also a range of effective precautions in place throughout the setting. These include the use of covers in all unused electrical sockets and safety gates on the stairs. Children benefit from the free flow arrangements on each floor as this allows them a high level of independence.

The setting has appropriate arrangements in place to protect children in case of a fire. Smoke alarms are fitted along with fire extinguishers and a fire blanket. Emergency escape routes are clearly identified and children take part in practise evacuation drills.

Children play with a satisfactory range of toys and resources although the range set out for children to access freely is sometimes limited. The toys and equipment provided are appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the children attending.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for over two floors. They are separated by age with the two to three-year-olds on the ground floor and the pre-school children on the first floor. Most children separate easily from their parents and carers and respond well to the friendly, warm welcome they receive from staff.

Recent staff changes have effected the overall organisation and running of the setting. The staff assigned to work with the younger children tend to be those who have been employed at the nursery for the longest period of time. They are frequently called on to support other colleagues and this impacts on their ability to create a settled, secure environment for their key children to play and learn in. However, these staff are very motivated and are committed to monitoring and improving the experiences and opportunities for children. They offer a mix of free play and adult lead activities and these cover all areas of children's development. Children benefit from the opportunities they receive to explore and investigate their environment. However, the current organisation of lunch times disrupts this arrangement for a considerable period around the middle of the day. During this time, the younger children who do not sleep are taken to play outside if the weather permits. They also spend time with the pre-school children. This arrangement does not cater for children who wish to take part in activities that are more restful.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are provided with activities, which address all areas of learning. However, the recent departure of key staff members has resulted in a lack of effective planning. The staff allocated to work with the pre-school children have all been very recently employed and are yet to develop coherent working practices. The routine of the day is unclear and there are several times when children are required to sit as a group whilst domestic tasks such as preparing snacks or brushing teeth take place. During these times, staff play games with the children and are generally successful in engaging their attention. However, the frequency of these sessions disrupts the flow of the day and reduces the times that children are free to choose their own activities and investigate their environment.

Children are making satisfactory progress in all area of learning. There is a system in place for staff to make written observations in order to monitor their progress. This is not however currently operating effectively because of staffing issues.

The nursery has been working hard over recent months to improve the provision for creative development. Children have access to a very wide range of arts and crafts resources, most of which they are free to access for themselves. They are given good support to explore the different materials and produce very individual and expressive pieces of art. These are attractively displayed around the pre-school rooms and this has a very positive effect on children's self-esteem. Children also take part very enthusiastically in singing activities and have a wide repertoire of songs committed to memory.

Children take part in activities planned to help them develop their writing skills. In addition, they have access to mark making materials set out in the computer room although the presentation of the resources is uninspiring. This impacts on the number of children to choose to practise writing in their free play. Children enjoy listening to stories read by staff. They have access to a selection of books to look at in their free playtime. Children frequently instigate and take part in lively conversations with their friends and with staff. They use language very effectively to tell stories, negotiate and express their opinions.

Children make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They take part in topic-based activities although they sometimes lack sufficient support to explore and learn independently. Children have access to a suite of computers and confidently use the mouse and keyboard to operate programs. They also enjoy regular opportunities to design and build using a good range of construction equipment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They take part in activities to mark a range of festivals and special days. In addition, they have access to toys and resources, which promote positive images of people from throughout the community and wider world. Children's individual personalities are becoming known to the staff and this helps to promote their self-esteem. There are times when children are expected to sit and concentrate for extended periods, as a result, they sometimes become unsettled. However, other than this, their behaviour is very good. They are friendly, considerate and well mannered.

The manager and staff team have a positive attitude towards meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are also appropriate arrangements in place to support children who speak English as an additional language.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are given a friendly greeting as they drop off and collect their children. Those whose children receive funding for their nursery education are given information about the National Curriculum during discussions with their child's key worker. The parents of all children attend consultations to discuss their child's progress. In addition, daily sheets and contact books are used to allow regular communication between the nursery and home. Appropriate procedures are in place regarding the investigation and recording of complaints made by parents.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

There are systems in place to record the attendance of staff and children, however these do not meet the requirements of the National Standards. There is a book for parents to sign and record the time that their child arrives and leaves each day. However, several of these records are illegible, having been drawn over by children. A daily tick register is also taken on each floor, however, these records do not include times and are poorly maintained. In addition, there is a book for staff to sign in and out and to record times. The quality of these records are inconsistently maintained. As a result, of these issues, it is not possible to accurately determine the names and number of children present at any one time. Neither is it possible to identify the staff deployed to work with them.

The number of staff recorded as being present during each day indicates that the setting as a whole is meeting the minimum requirements of the National Standards. However, there are times when there are insufficient staff working directly with the pre-school children. In addition, staff deployment is poor with the newest and most inexperienced staff being placed to work together. This results in several periods during the day when children are grouped together with a member of staff whilst domestic tasks take place. During these times, children take part in adult-led games, however, the lack of co-ordination results in the same game being repeated several times throughout the day. The organisation of time and space within the setting is dictated by staffing issues and does not always reflect the needs of the children.

The turnover of staff in recent months has been high and this has negatively affected the running of the service. There is a five-stage induction programme in place, which covers all policies, procedures and practices. This programme is spread out over an extended period and several staff have yet to complete their induction. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management in relation to the nursery education is satisfactory. The owner and nursery co-ordinator work closely together and are in regular communication. There are development plans in place and many of the areas covered in these plans have seen significant improvements. The setting has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place and these are reviewed regularly.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, an action was set for the nursery to ensure that effective and appropriate child protection procedures were put in place. A comprehensive and detailed written procedure has been introduced and this is shared with all staff. As a result, children are more effectively safeguarded.

A recommendation was made to increase the encouragement for pre-school children to explore and experiment for themselves. This was an issue, which has since been covered in the setting's development plans. A new free flow system has been introduced and a range of activities are set up for children to choose from in their free play. However, the organisational issues currently being experienced restrict the effectiveness of these arrangements.

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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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that the written records, required under the National Standards, are clearly and accurately maintained
- ensure that the required minimum staffing ratios are adhered to and that there are sufficient staff working with the children to meet their individual needs

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve the systems for assessing, monitoring and planning to meet children's individual learning needs
- improve the support for children to develop their writing and pre-writing skills by improving the presentation of resources.

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