



Springmead School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY221147
Inspection date	03 May 2006
Inspector	Michelle Tuck
Setting Address	Castle Corner, Beckington, Somerset, BA11 6TA
Telephone number	01373831555
E-mail	info@springmead.com
Registered person	Partnership of S Taylor, M Taylor & J Beardsley
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?

Springmead School is an Independent school and nursery for boys and girls. The age range of pupils is rising 3 to 11 years old. The school opened in April 2002 and are situated in the village of Beckington, near Frome. Children attend from a wide catchment area, the school operating its own mini bus for local children. The building has been purposely renovated to offer a learning and teaching environment. The nursery part of the school has a main activity room, quiet room, toilets/cloakroom and

its own outdoor area. The nursery children also have access to a library, computer suite, hall, dining room and further outdoor play areas, which are used by the older children.

The school also provides after school care and holiday clubs from 08.00 until 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. Meals are prepared on site to include mid-morning snack, cooked lunch and afternoon tea for the children who attend. The staff that work within the nursery hold early years qualifications. Reception and nursery class children are taught by qualified teachers. Currently there are 31 children attending the nursery and 11 in the reception class of which a total of 33 receive funding for nursery education. The school supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health and well being is effectively promoted and given the highest priority by all staff working at the school. Children thrive because staff follow highly effective procedures and practices which meet children's physical, nutritional and health needs. The school holds comprehensive information on each child which is reviewed regularly and updated.

Children are extremely well protected from the risk of cross infection as all staff are aware of children's individual allergies and medication needs. This is underpinned by excellent organisation and documentation as staff demonstrate very good knowledge and practice. For example, when introducing new resources or materials to the children, allergies are always considered.

Children display independence in meeting their own personal needs, for example washing hands before eating and after using the toilet. Children know that they may get a drink of water when they are thirsty.

All children are offered a cooked meal at lunch time. The Principle has worked with a nutritionist to provide well balanced and healthy options, successfully meeting the nutritional needs of young children.

Meal times provide a wealth of learning opportunities which staff exploit to the full. Children are learning social skills at the tables in small groups of mixed ages and abilities. Children help their peers to behave well, to handle cutlery, to practise good manners and to converse together over a good home cooked meal. Staff join in at mealtimes and this creates a happy atmosphere.

Children develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise and enjoy a wide variety of activities offered on site at the school and on outings. Children practice and master fine and gross motor control skills by means of regular access to a very good range of resources. They begin to learn to handle cutlery, writing implements and paintbrushes. This progresses across a variety of tools for gardening, cooking and

learning to master the computer mouse in both the nursery and reception class. Children benefit from a very well balanced programme for their physical development. They have an excellent understanding about the benefits of exercise through topics and discussion. For example, children delight in digging up potatoes when learning about healthy vegetables. They actively participate in tasks such as cleaning out the fish tank to increase their understanding of how to keep other living creatures healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Risks of accidental injury to children is minimised because staff are extremely vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards both indoors and outside. Written risk assessments are in place for specific areas of the school as well as activities, including when staff and children go off the premises. Current legislation is followed and the Principle maintains close contact with the local authority to ensure that fire and environmental health advice is up to date. Children are learning to keep themselves safe by their involvement in innovative and purposeful activities. For example, the children were enjoying the topic of nursery rhymes. They went on a sponsored walk to the Jack and Jill hill. Through the topic they explored safe play by using Jack and Jill as the example and extended this to looking at first aid through Jack's experiences and the science of gravity.

The effective management of space and resources ensures that children have the freedom to explore and play within a safe environment. For example playground time is timetabled to ensure younger children are not at risk of injury from older ones running around.

Children are very well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection issues, policies and procedures and who give top priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy their time at the school and show that they are comfortable and familiar with routines and all staff members. They achieve very well because staff are highly skilled and use their exceptional understanding of the foundation stage, to provide high quality care and education, through meaningful and well planned learning opportunities.

Children demonstrate a very good sense of trust and have good relationships with their peers and adults alike. Children are enthusiastic to join in and to find out and they are able to do so in the happy and homely atmosphere which is maintained. This produces children who are growing in confidence and are able to initiate games and to make choices. For example when they are in the garden they let their imaginations run freely using the play house and table to act out stories and

everyday situations such as using the chalks as pretend food which they cut up and put onto plates

Children visibly flourish whenever they receive praise and are enthusiastic to follow agreed codes for behaviour, for example at lunch time and when tidying up. The approach is positive and therefore results in children who want to succeed and behave well. Children that attend in the school holidays are involved in activities which are well planned, but not over structured to enable children to relax and have fun in a welcoming and safe environment.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The planned curriculum is comprehensive and all staff have very good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. The teacher in the nursery and the teacher in the reception class meet with the Principle, to discuss planning and then provide imaginative and inspiring activities for the children. All planned activities have a learning objective but the staff are versatile to respond to spontaneous play. They assess and review regularly and work hard to produce activities and experiences which are tailored to children's individual needs. Evaluations of work include extensions and challenges set for the next time according to children's understanding and progress. Children excel in a rich environment, given a wealth of opportunities to learn and develop at their own pace.

Children achieve very well overall because there is a good emphasis on them establishing strengths in their personal, social and emotional development from the very first day at the school. Children are involved and active participants in all activities. They are learning to value each other and to appreciate differences between individuals. Children learn about different beliefs, people and places through a variety of multi-cultural topics. For example a child from another country attending the school may produce interesting artefacts to examine and to discuss with the other children.

Children are becoming confident and proficient in communicating their ideas and thoughts in language. They listen well and are able to follow instructions, some quite complex ,for example children listen for their name at afternoon registration, they answer yes when its called and then name their favourite food. They are learning to link letters and sounds and can recognise their own names and other words. All children use marks to represent their own ideas and children who are able can write their own names.

Children enjoy using books for stories and to locate facts as part of a topic. This is supported by the very good range of books on offer. Number skills are developed through a variety of games and everyday opportunities which enable children to count, to find out about shapes and to understand simple calculations such as how many items on a tray? Children answer correctly five. They are then asked to show five with their fingers and then count five teddies into a box.

The range of topics followed over a two year rolling programme gives children plenty of opportunities to find out about the world about them. Use of the local environment,

as well as the garden, stimulates their instinct to ask questions, to observe and to find out. Children have been looking at growing. The role play area is a flower shop and they have produced individual books where they have each drawn pictures of themselves and written about what they could do as a baby and what they want to do when they grow up.

Children enjoy expressing their creativity through a variety of media. Children enjoy seeing their works of art named and displayed on the walls. The school is bright and well decorated with photographs and children's pictures and craft. Music is linked to topic work and children have access to a good range of instruments and tapes. Imaginative play is fostered well as children have access to a good range of resources including dressing up clothes, a role play area which converts to a shop, a home, a doctors surgery and post office which are often linked to topic work.

The range of adult led and child initiated play is well balanced. Staff deployment is very good and effective team working is clearly evident. The excellent use of time, resources and space creates days which flow well and children who are seen to be busily occupied. Staff are aware that children need to stand and watch at times and with skilful intervention are able to involve a child in a game or activity at the right moment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children needs are met very well and interests fostered effectively as staff collate a comprehensive set of information and records regarding their needs and support this with intelligent assessments. The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The nursery operates an open door policy which allows parents the freedom to come in to talk about their child and this, together with formal written assessments and daily updates in the form of school - home diaries, helps to create a very good level of communication at all times. Children receive a very good continuity of care between nursery and home as all needs are discussed. Children's special needs are catered for very well. Children receive a positive welcome when they arrive and are quickly involved and included in current activities.

Children have extremely high self esteem which is unmistakably fostered in every aspect of the provision. Children's work is displayed prominently so they can see how their contributions are valued. Children are confident to speak out as they believe what they say matters. The staff always focus on the positive, as a result the children learn to celebrate differences. Children understand the rules for acceptable behaviour at the school and from the earliest age are encouraged to practice good manners. They play well together and are able to help each other, to share and to take turns. This is demonstrated in both the younger and older children.

Behaviour management by staff displays a sensitivity to each child's age and ability and good behaviour is always praised, much to the children's obvious pleasure. Certificates and stickers often accompany the positive language to celebrate their achievements. Children thrive in a nurturing environment with the ethos that "everyday is a new day". They are involved in their own planning, what they would

like to do, are given help to make decisions and offered choices. Children are involved in the class rules so that they take ownership of them and this enables them to feel good about themselves. For example, in the nursery room there is a kindness tree. Children receive recognition for being kind to one another, which contributes to their respect for one another.

The children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world about them, through planned activities, visitors to the nursery and outings. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Leadership and management is outstanding. This underpins the success of the school. Established systems ensure that the management and staff are continuously monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the care and education on offer. Management and staff set high standards regarding the service offered which includes the partnership with parents, the safety of the environment and the aim of producing children who are well rounded individuals with an enthusiasm for learning and life. In order to do this there are systems in place which enable the management team, to assess and monitor their practice beginning with a very good induction process and continuing with staff appraisals. The Principle also observes lessons as part of the evaluation process. The dedication to offer an outstanding service and continuity to strive for improvement is demonstrated in their continuous evaluation of services provided, for example the review of food and menus for all children. It is evident that the school is achieving its aims very well and demonstrates the commitment to continuous improvement.

The Principle puts the positive ethos of creating a welcoming and happy school for both children and staff alike into practice. To this end she maintains excellent communication and working relationships with all staff. There is a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere which is evident throughout the school. A beautiful, positive environment has been created, including detailed mural's painted on the walls and a sensory garden for the children to enjoy.

Documentation is very good. All required policies and procedures are in place and these are supplemented by additional documents which reinforce the commitment to excellence at this school. These include up to date information regarding early years care and education, early years publications and the wealth of courses that staff attend. Staff are well qualified and experienced in early years, and supported to consider their individual development. The Principle actively seeks involvement of other professionals, links with other nurseries, independent schools and the village school. They are highly dedicated and committed to improving practice and sharing ideas.

The high quality of the provision means that the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the provider was asked to review and update the complaints procedure, ensuring parents are aware of contact details of Ofsted. This has been updated and includes the required contact details.

At the last Nursery Education inspection there were no key issues, but a point for consideration was to develop the staff's provision of opportunities for parents to share with staff what they know about their child, to aid initial assessment. The school uses a detailed questionnaire with parents to obtain information about each child, in order for them to plan and care effectively for their individual needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. The provider is required to keep a records 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 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 *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk