

# Ellwood Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY271719
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Cole
<b>Setting Address</b>	Old School House, Bromley Road, Ellwood, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 7LY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01594 835624
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<b>Registered person</b>	Helen Elizabeth Cornock
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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](http://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?

Ellwood Nursery was registered as a private group in 2003 and is one of three settings owned by the manager. It is set in a rural area two miles from Coleford in the Forest of Dean. The nursery operates from a building on the primary school site that was previously the head teacher's house. The premises consist of five rooms on two levels with indoor and outdoor toilet facilities. There is a fully enclosed, outdoor space with sensory garden, natural materials play area, physical play equipment on a safety surface and weather protection under a wooden gazebo. The setting has shared use of some school facilities, including the hall, junior playground and infants' grassed area.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 50 children aged from two years to under eight years on roll. Of these, 44 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local, rural area and some families come from further afield. The staff have experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery opens each weekday for 48 weeks of the year from 08.30 to 17.30, except on Fridays when the setting closes at 15.00. After school care is provided for children under eight year from 15.00 to 17.30 from Monday to Thursday. Children not attending Ellwood Primary School are welcome if their families arrange transport.

There are three staff working in the nursery and follow the High/Scope approach to education. Two of these have Level 3 qualifications, one is working towards a similar qualification and two are studying towards further qualifications. Additional staff are available for lunch time and extra cover. The setting has close links with the school and receives support from the Playgroup and Toddler Association.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children have very good opportunities to learn the importance of exercise and fresh air. They climb and balance in the garden where they set their own challenges, such as finding different ways to negotiate the slide. Children play outside each day, controlling a variety of wheeled vehicles and digging the planting area. They gain very good personal independence, for example, in dressing, and skilfully use small tools, such as hole punches and scissors.

The children are cared for in very clean, warm premises. Staff and children follow good personal hygiene routines, for example, wearing gloves and washing hands before eating and after playing in the garden. Children benefit from good continuity of care regarding accidents and administering of any long-term medication. Those who become ill are very well looked after by the caring staff and their parents are informed immediately.

Children learn the importance of regular drinks as they help themselves to water and pour their own milk or water to go with their food. They recognise healthy fruits on cafeteria cards and staff prepare the foods with the children. They benefit from healthy snacks as they choose from the varied breads, fruit and vegetables available. Parents are advised of special menus and of some foods to avoid for the children's packed lunches. The food complies with all special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Children's play environment is entirely safe and secure. Staff are pro-active in identifying potential hazards to children and taking steps to minimise all risks. Children are well protected from harm as staff continuously review the detailed risk assessment. They carry out daily checks to ensure indoor and outdoor areas accessed by children are safe and suitable for their purpose.

The children safely access well-maintained play areas. These are attractively resourced with huge quantities of high-quality equipment and age-appropriate toys stored at children's level. Children spontaneously take responsibility for their own safety, for example, as they keep play areas clear by sweeping and tidying the floor. They tell each other how to move around the building and heed photographs on how to safely negotiate the stairs.

Children's welfare is given very high priority. All staff have first aid training and current, child protection certificates. They are fully aware of the importance of promoting open discussion

with parents about children's existing injuries. Adults attend further training and share details of this with staff through discussion and individual copies of the information. As a result, they are extremely knowledgeable about child protection issues and confident in their ability to address any concern.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children greatly enjoy their play at the nursery. The routine includes their care needs, challenging outside play and times to sit quietly snuggled up to an adult with a book. Children benefit from a good balance of adult and child-led activities. These begin with a social time, followed by small-group activities, such as finger painting, which children can choose to revisit later in the day. Children are highly involved in a broad range of activities. They are closely observed by adults who maintain detailed records of their interests and of the development taking place. As a result, staff skilfully plan future activities that are highly relevant to individual children and their progress. Staff make very good use of their clear understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' and Foundation Stage frameworks to support children's achievements. They are highly interested in the children and their play and so respond warmly, using much praise and encouragement.

Children competently plan their own initial activities through varied methods, such as deciding upon a toy from a playroom or leaving the 'choosing train' at the play area of their choice. They develop confident speaking skills as they speak enthusiastically about the play they have enjoyed. For example, they tell about adding water to soil and porridge and focusing on whether the materials float or sink. Children at the out-of-school club enjoy deciding on activities for future sessions and request resources at free-time. For example, they decide to complete a group painting and engage in challenging activities, such as playing musical rhythms, cooking pizzas, sewing material, creating door plaques and making masks. Children gain a good sense of the world around them as young ones paint wooden structures with water and the older group makes a block model of the village.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Very good teaching meets the requirements, needs and interests of all children as staff effectively use their in-depth knowledge of stepping stones to plan their teaching. Assessment is very well used to help children make progress toward the early learning goals. It identifies children's achievements, gives a clear picture of their progress and is effectively used to help move children to the next stage in their learning. The environment and activities are very well planned to be suited to needs of the children and to provide a broad, balanced range of activities and experiences across six areas of learning over time. The staff's teaching truly interests children, helps them to become focused, able to resist distractions and persist for some time. For example, a child returns to look at seeds previously planted and this develops into a long, group activity of digging and watering the growing shoots. Staff skilfully offer comments and open questions that challenge and support children to achieve as much as they can. For example, when children dig for buried treasure, adults successfully extend their thinking by asking, 'What treasure might you find?' Children make very good use of the challenging resources available to them, including outdoor 'writing' materials and construction materials for making complex bridges and towers.

Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. They receive a high level of support to develop their communication and listening skills as they

take turns to join in the conversation. For example, they explore meanings of new words, such as 'spine', and recall using tools at home over the weekend. Children enjoy rhymes, such as 'Brown Bear' and notice repeated use of letters for themselves, as in 'pink pin'. They eagerly 'write' their names on drawings and on a whiteboard. They listen enthralled to group stories and some 'read' their own in the accessible library areas. Children play in an environment that is rich with print and help to 'read' book titles, such as 'George and the Dragon'. Children make very good progress in relation to their starting points in their mathematical development. They become very familiar with number words to count to high numbers. They use these to solve problems in their play, for example, to say how many more bricks are needed to make five. Children gain a meaningful understanding of shape, space and measure as they sort their shaped cushions, recognise the story's 'end' and make symmetrical patterns with pegs.

Children gain very good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They are fascinated to investigate objects and materials, including how a sand timer and a rainmaker work. They use many tools for their own purposes, such as wide paintbrushes. They effectively support their learning through use of technology, choosing computer programs and taking photographs of their creations. They are very interested in the wider world as they learn about special days of people they know, for example, dressing in clothes worn by Turkish people and tasting Turkish delight. Children have very good opportunities to handle a wide range of media to explore texture and colour. They willingly respond through all their senses, for example, as they notice crockery that is 'dark blue' and touch a satsuma that they say feels like a lemon. Children's creativity is highly valued as they imitate adults in extended role-play with household objects and 'doctor's' instruments. They eagerly join in with favourite songs and access quality musical instruments to gain a good sense of rhythm as they explore loud and soft sounds.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children receive a warm, personal welcome from staff so they feel valued. They settle quickly and relate well to the small group of adults and to other children. They gain good self-esteem as staff create frequent opportunities for them to make decisions about their play. The staff ensure that resources, such as posters, books, dolls and small-world figures, positively represent the children who attend as well as people in the wider community. This helps children to develop a positive attitude to others.

The children are well-behaved as they are occupied in interesting play and receive consistent support to share and take turns. The atmosphere within the nursery is positive so that children are willing to help each other, for example, to remember the details about a story. Staff are good role models so children learn to be calm and polite. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Any child with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified and receive very good care from the skilled staff. The adults are experienced in working closely with parents and staff at other agencies, including a nearby centre, to implement appropriate plans to support such children.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the approachable staff's friendly, relationship with parents. Their care is consistent as parents' wishes are well implemented, including arrangements for collecting children. Families understand the detailed verbal and written information they receive about the nursery and curriculum followed by their child. Staff keep them up-to-date on the children's development and they receive half-yearly reports. New parents contribute a detailed profile about their child which staff find very useful to get to know and settle the children, though their comments are not included in children's records to

support their progress. Parents have effective opportunities to be actively involved in the children's learning as their voluntary help is welcome and home-link sheets suggest activities children and parents can share.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children receive good care and education as a result of highly-competent, organisational skills. There are robust procedures to vet adults who are new to the nursery, though there is no system to check the on-going suitability of current staff. Children are well supported by an experienced team of staff who operate under a detailed operational plan to ensure the highest levels of safety and protection for their welfare. The premises have been carefully adapted so children have a wide variety of well-equipped indoor and outdoor play spaces, and benefit from ample adult support from their keyworkers.

The nursery's documentation is accurately maintained and confidentiality is well kept. The policies are regularly reviewed by staff and parents are always invited to add comments. The setting has sheets to set up a log to record any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements. Staff keep a clear record of the attendance of children and all adults in the nursery. They regularly share records with parents to effectively support the children's health and well-being. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are good. The staff are very well supported by knowledgeable and conscientious management so that they and the children are highly motivated to learn. The adults share responsibilities and work very well as a team so they effectively plan together to support children's progress and individual interests. Through close monitoring of the effectiveness of the educational programme, the management sets clear direction to further improve the organisation and the outcomes for children. The nursery is highly committed in promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The previous care inspection recommended that the setting improved opportunities for children to have access to an appropriate range of resources that promote anti-discriminatory practice regarding disability. Children now play with toys showing positive images of disability, including books and small figures. This helps them to be aware of differences and to value other people. In the previous education inspection, no significant weaknesses were noted and the nursery was asked to further consider children's links with the wider community. Staff have successfully extended opportunities for children to strengthen local contacts. For example, children welcome many visitors, including a music specialist, a lorry driver with his vehicle, parents showing old toys, a member of the armed forces and others telling the children about their work. Children regularly go out into the community, for example, to the school, chapel and a farm. As a result, children effectively gain a strong sense of themselves as a member of different communities.

## **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 the 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

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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 that there are effective procedures in place for checking the on-going suitability of staff to work with children.

#### **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 opportunities for parents to actively contribute to their children's assessment throughout their time in the nursery.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)