

Crouch Hill Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY287945
Inspection date	25 July 2007
Inspector	Maggie Thorp
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Registered person	Asquith Court Nurseries 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets 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?

Crouch Hill Day Nursery registered in August 2004 and is one of 108 nurseries run by Asquith Court Nurseries Limited. It operates from the basement and ground floor of a large building in Islington. Children are grouped by age and cared for in one of three group rooms on the ground floor, in the basement and in a modular building in the garden. There is a kitchen, an office, toilets and staff room. Children also have an outdoor play area. The nursery opens five days a week, 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8:00 until 18:00 hours.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 36 children under five years and there are currently 58 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are 18 children receiving funding for nursery education, no children attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and 10 children who speak English as an additional language.

A maximum of 10 staff work directly with the children at any one time but in total the nursery employs 21 staff including seven supply staff. There are eight staff, including the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from an early years education manager employed by Asquith Court Nurseries, and a early years teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health care and well-being is protected and supported effectively by some aspects of provision for example, the good practice regarding nappy changing and cleanliness of toys. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet and low sinks are provided so that children as young as 18 months are learning to do this independently. However, children's health is not promoted in relation to food safety and garden maintenance. Part of the garden is in need of attention as many small flies are attracted to this area and they come into the areas children and staff use too. The children's cooked lunch is brought in from outside caterers and the systems in place to ensure safe, appropriate food temperatures are maintained are not effective.

The systems in place to support children who are hurt or need medicines are well organised. Many staff have first aid qualifications, first aid boxes are at hand in each group room and accidents, medicine administration and even the handover of medicines are carefully recorded and shared with parents.

Older children enjoy meals times and eat well. A good balance of different types of food and meals from different cultural backgrounds is provided for example, Turkish meat balls and spaghetti. Fresh vegetables and fruit is included each day and similar meals are offered as a vegetarian alternative for children who require this. However, babies and toddlers do not have the continuity of being supported by their key person at meal times and the toddlers' lunch time routine requires them to sit still and wait for periods longer than they are comfortable with.

Children enjoy fresh air everyday, but the garden is not well set out to encourage children's enjoyment and physical development. On one day as many as 20 children share three bikes some chinks and a climbing frame so some children become bored and fractious. There is water play, but it is not well resourced to make this a stimulating activity.

Nursery education funded children enjoy climbing, using the wheeled toys and the space they have to run around. However, more challenging activities are not regularly planned and provided to help children develop new physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are made to feel welcome in this child-friendly environment. There are lots of photographs displayed and the resources in each of the three age group rooms are set out to be accessible to children. This creates a stimulating environment and lots of choice. Older children enjoy moving from one area to another, combining different resources as they develop their play. Toddlers enjoy water play and paint and get involved in pretend play as they move around the toddler room. Babies have a cosy modular building to play in within the garden. The outside space is secure and is used by all the children. Pre-schoolers have direct access

and enjoy times of free flow play between indoor areas and the garden. However, outdoors is less well planned and resourced.

The children have ample suitable furniture to enable them to eat and play comfortably. Lots of natural materials are available so children enjoy good sensory experiences as they play for example, babies explore different fabrics in one basket and cool shiny metal objects in another. Older children have a workshop area to stimulate their creative play and a very well set out home corner. Toddlers have lots of fun on the permanent indoor climbing frame.

Some aspects of safety are well provided for and they keep children secure. The access to the nursery is carefully monitored and good systems are in place to ensure children only leave the nursery with those they are authorised to. However, risk assessments are not regularly updated and so some risks are overlooked or there is delay in dealing with hazards for example, the system for checking food temperatures and the problem with flies in the garden.

Children are safeguarded by the staff's knowledge and understanding of the types and signs of abuse. They are clear about how to proceed if they have concerns and the importance of recording any concerns and maintaining confidentiality.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young children are generally enthused by the activities provided and they are interested to learn and explore. Babies have rich sensory experiences. They play in the black and white area, they mouth and feel the different items they pull out of low level baskets and they explore sand, water and flour. Staff sit on the floor or at the table encouraging their play, chatting and singing to them.

Staff know individual babies interests and they provide for these and encourage them to try new experiences for example, in feeling the softness of flour, then the stickiness of flour and water. Babies enjoy these times. However, activities are not always well planned to ensure children get the most out of them and that all resources are at hand and well organised particularly to bring messy play to a calm conclusion.

Toddlers enjoy exploring paint, glue, sand and water. Many move confidently around the room choosing from the toys set out from the low level shelving. They enjoy the freedom they have to play quietly or engage in very active play. Some toddlers select books and climb onto staff laps to listen as stories are read to them. Others climb and slide on the large apparatus in their playroom. However, unsettled children are less confident and are less able to make use of the opportunities provided as they do not have the security of a key person that they feel secure with beside them. Many toddlers are becoming confident communicators, they chat as they play and enjoy song times and stories. However, some children's enjoyment for example, of stories, is interrupted when the routine takes precedent and a story has to be stopped midway to tidy up.

There are times when both babies and toddlers vocabulary is not encouraged effectively by staff who do not spend sufficient time talking to children about what they are doing as they play.

Nursery Education

The teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are confident in their play and staff are at hand to join in and to encourage children to follow their interests, especially in imaginative play. Staff chat to children as they play and children learn from these conversations. An example of this is imaginative play with dough which staff and children developed into making and selling pizzas. Children learnt about baking, the concept of shops having opening and closing times, and, buying and selling.

Each child's particular interest is noted by the child's key worker and additional ways the child can explore this are planned. Some children's interests are well planned for. Informative photographic displays are made of what staff and children did together so that parents are informed and children and staff can reflect on what they have done. Observations, work samples and photographs are also collated into child profiles to record what children have been doing. However, planning does not ensure that children access all the learning areas and use what is provided to make progress across the stepping stones of learning. Some children come to the nursery with quite a lot of existing knowledge for example, of the alphabet or count well and recognise numbers. Ways of developing this further are not regularly planned. Records and monitoring does not ensure children regularly spend time being read to and that more able children can listen uninterrupted to more complex stories.

Children are very confident and independent. Their personal, social and emotional development is progressing well. They greet each other with pleasure and have obvious friendships. Children call to each other to join them in play. Older children help younger or less confident ones and children who get cross with each other are learning how to resolve their disputes through the support staff provide. Staff listen to and respect children's wishes and this provides a good model to the children about how to relate to each other.

Children have a wide vocabulary and engage in long conversations with staff and other children. They have plenty of time to talk and discuss. Many children are able to write their own names and all the letters of the alphabet. They know the names of letters, but are not getting consistent help to notice the sounds of letters and to identify these sounds in words. Children are beginning to read their own and others names, and there is lots of text around the room to encourage literacy. However, the daily routine does not include ensuring all children are read to, and children listening to staff read stories are often interrupted.

Many children are confident in counting and some recognise written numbers. They count out coins when playing shop and read the numbers on the weighing scales. Activities like cooking include weighing and measuring. However, further exploration of maths concepts such as making patterns, simple addition and subtraction or learning the names of three dimensional shapes are not deliberately planned for more able children.

Children are gaining a knowledge and understanding of the world through some of the interests explored. They have learnt about babies and the care they need, they have cared for African snails, explored travelling by bus and the names and characteristics of different dinosaurs. Children have lots of opportunity to explore sand and water. They frequently build with blocks and different construction play sets. However, children mainly only have use of a Compact Disc player to develop their interest in technology. The computer is broken and there are few other resources to encourage this.

Children are very imaginative and creative. They enjoy using the workshop area to make things. This is permanently set out so children have plenty of opportunity to cut, glue, paint and draw. They really enjoy imaginative play in the home corner and all over the nursery. Children become

tigers, they switch the bathroom light off and call it their dark den. They play shops, spies, and many other pretend play games. This is encouraged very effectively by staff who join in their games and offer them ideas of on how to resource or extend them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Pre-school children are happy and confident at the nursery they move around purposefully and are very comfortable and secure in their relationships with staff. Babies receive lots of attention and cuddles. However, the younger children are not always helped to develop confidence and self-esteem by the weak key person system. Key workers are not consistently free to support new children. They do not provide the majority of young children's care even for new babies and toddlers. An example of this is a young child being changed by one person fed by another and put down for a rest by another. Therefore, children do not have continuity of care and time to build strong relationships and trust with just a few people.

Some toys, books and activities help children to learn about the world they live in and the beliefs of other people, although these are limited. Staff know their key children's backgrounds and chat to children and make links between home and nursery. However, staff are not secure in their understanding of how to help children develop an appreciation of other children's cultures and languages. Boys and girls play with all the resources and all children are encouraged to participate in what is provided. Systems are in place to support children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, none of which currently attend, but staff's knowledge of how to put these into practice is weak.

Children are generally well-behaved. Older children are given lots of praise, they are very co-operative and relate well to each other. An adequate behaviour management policy is in place, but it is not always implemented consistently throughout the nursery. Very good support is given to older children to sort out their own disputes and to listen to each other. Babies are offered gentle guidance and given alternatives when their play brings them into conflict with each other. Toddlers are less well supported and some of the routines do not take account of their keenness to be active and not have to sit still for long periods.

Children's social, moral spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Pre-school children enjoy close friendships, the social times that meal times provide and they are learning about each others cultures. Older children are fascinated by the tiny babies in the nursery and how they develop. Children are learning about right and wrong and how to negotiate for their needs.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents attend parent/staff meetings when they can chat to their children's key person and look at their child's profile which include observations of what children have done, photographs and children's work. Displays with photos show parents how children's different interests have been followed. However, specific information on how children are progressing in each learning area is not provided.

Lots of information is collected about children so staff know their needs and all the appropriate parental consents are obtained. Parents are kept informed by a brochure explaining different aspects of the nursery. Regular newsletters, notice boards and the individual diaries that staff keep on younger children's feeds, nappies and rests provides on going information for parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children share good relationships with staff who have been thoroughly vetted for their suitability to work with young children. Many children are happy and secure at the nursery. Children's welfare and individual needs are generally well met at this setting and appropriate records are in place to support their understanding of each child. However, weaknesses in the key worker system lessen this for some younger children and especially those who are new.

There is a committed staff team who obviously enjoy their work. However, children do not always benefit from the combined knowledge in the staff team. Staff have been delegated roles to ensure that all aspects of care are covered for example, room leading, behaviour management, special needs and equal opportunities. However, not all have a good knowledge and understanding of their roles. There are sufficient qualified staff overall but the staff are not always deployed to ensure each group has experienced trained staff on duty. This has an impact on the quality of care. There are monitoring systems in place but these are not consistently effective in developing practice. The organisation of resources and how each room is set out encourages children's independence effectively. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory and some aspects of this works well to support the staff team in providing nursery education. Staff are given time to record their observations of children and to plan. The whole staff team meet every four to six weeks to discuss their work and a staff appraisal system is in place. The company carry out their own unannounced inspections, they organise training for staff in-house and send staff on training organised by the local authority.

However, the monitoring and evaluation that is carried out is not effective in identifying some weaknesses in the provision of nursery education. This includes the lack of challenge in outdoor play and that children's progress is not recorded and planned in a way that ensures children are making good progress across the stepping stones of each learning area or that more able children are challenged by what is offered.

The manager ensures there is a wide range of suitable equipment and toys for many aspects of the six areas of learning. Exceptions to this are resources for developing children's interest in technology, different cultures and large physical skills. Play materials are well organised indoors and children are confident in accessing them.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection satisfactory progress has been made in implementing the recommendations. Children's creative play has been developed by the provision of a workshop area where different art materials are provided and children enjoy spending time drawing and making things in this area. The safety of the bathroom, fire evacuation and supervision of access to the garden are now safely managed. However, insufficient improvement has been made to the systems for planning, observation and assessment to ensure that they are rigorous enough to clearly identify how children are to be supported to move to the next stage of their learning. Plans and observations record what children are interested in but still do not ensure that children are being encouraged to progress across each area of learning.

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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- develop a more effective key person system to ensure children have good attention from their special person as they settle in and that all children have continuity of care
- ensure staff know what the temperature of the cooked meals supplied to the nursery should be to ensure food safety and that food is the correct temperature
- deploy and train staff more effectively to ensure a sufficient level of qualified staff is maintained in the baby room and that decisions about moving staff to cover absences are made to minimise the disruption of key person relationships for children
- develop more effective monitoring and evaluation so that weaknesses in care, maintenance and risk assessment are identified and systems are put in place to address these, and to ensure that staff with responsibility posts have enough specialised training

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):

- provide a more stimulating and challenging environment for children's outdoor play [this applies the quality and standards of care for younger children too]
- develop the way children's progress is recorded and planned for to ensure children are making good progress across the stepping stones of each learning area and more able children are challenged by what is offered

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