



Cedars Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY235059
Inspection date	21 September 2006
Inspector	Susan Marriott
Setting Address	Mentmore Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 7PA
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Registered person	Child Base 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 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?

Cedars Day Nursery opened in 1991. It is one of 32 day nurseries operated by Child Base Ltd. The nursery is located in a purpose built building on the edge of Leighton Buzzard. It has four large airy units, each comprising of more than one room and a large fully enclosed and secure garden. Each age group has their own enclosed patio or decked area. All ages have access to the grassed area. Children are drawn from a very large catchment area, as the parents either live or work around the town. The children's hours of attendance vary to suit the working needs of their parents. The nursery follows the Sound Foundations approach to education, which has been developed by the company.

The nursery is open all year round from 07.30 to 18.30. There are currently 149 children on roll, of whom 26 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery accepts children from birth to

five-years-old. The nursery has suitable support systems in place to support children who have learning difficulties or disabilities or for whom English is an additional language.

There are 33 staff working with the children on a regular basis, plus other holiday cover staff. Of these, 17 hold an appropriate early years qualification. The staff also receive support from company advisors and a development worker from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, together with support from other professional bodies in relation to children with learning difficulties and specified needs.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff diligently follow highly effective health and hygiene policies and procedures. Sick children are excluded from the provision to minimise the spread of infection and the premises are maintained in a very clean state. For example, all staff, visitors and parents remove their outdoor footwear before entering the baby room. This effectively minimises cross-contamination. Children receive appropriate treatment in the event of a medical emergency because all staff hold suitable first aid qualifications and the first aid box is accessible. Staff record accidents and include the relevant details to protect children's welfare. Staff always remind children to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and usually before food. However, children do not always learn about germs through the daily routines because staff do not always remember to promote discussion about the reasons for hand washing and keeping noses clean.

Children benefit from a healthy diet where all snacks and meals are nutritious and prepared on site. Menus are devised and overseen by the company dietician and special diets and preferences are competently accommodated. For example, food is served in red dishes for children with allergies. The nursery closely consults with parents regarding milk and meals for babies and new foods are gradually introduced with due deference to age and stage of development. Food is safely stored in temperature monitored fridges. Snacks include a healthy range of fruits and children have constant access to drinking water in drinking bottles.

All the children enjoy daily indoor and outdoor activities, which enables them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills through a highly appropriate level of challenge. Children practise their hand-eye co-ordination as they play with hockey sticks and small balls. Children have access to a range of appropriate wheeled toys and there is large climbing equipment which provides plentiful challenging opportunities to climb, stretch and balance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff give exceedingly high priority to the security of the premises and the supervision of the children. They are extremely vigilant and ensure that unauthorised persons do not gain access to the provision. Staff record fire evacuation procedures and carry out drills with suitable frequency to rigorously ensure the safety of the children. This includes genuinely testing the staff, by occasionally practising drills at inconvenient times such as when the children are

sleeping. Staff effectively monitor visitors to the setting through the thorough use of a visitors record. Relevant risk assessments are completed on a daily basis and this includes a daily check of the garden to ensure children's safety. All staff attend regular mandatory safety training which includes manual handling, health and safety and fire awareness. Children learn to keep themselves safe in the setting because staff give good explanations as to why, for example, the children should tidy the toys and not climb on the furniture.

Children are warmly welcomed and well-cared for in an attractive, suitably safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment which is expertly thought out to facilitate children's choice and developing independence. The setting uses space creatively and areas are set aside for dedicated activities, reflecting the six areas of learning. Equipment and resources are safely stored and clearly labelled so that children and staff can access them easily. Toys are well-organised, labelled and displayed on low-level trolleys and shelving units which enable children to have easy, independent access to a wide range of quality resources which effectively promote their care, learning and play. The staff put up posters and pictures to make the rooms attractive for children and set out the equipment enticingly before the children arrive. Bright displays of children's work enhance the environment and reinforce and consolidate topical learning. For example, many professionally presented displays show how the children learn from the six areas of learning, the company's Sound Foundations programme and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Laminated booklets of photographs demonstrate what children are learning from their play and planned activities.

Children's welfare is robustly safeguarded because they are protected by informed adults who understand current child protection policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All staff receive regular update training in this field as part of the mandatory training scheme.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The staff follow the younger children to the activities which attract their interest and provide effective support to draw learning from play. This promotes positive outcomes for children. Staff provide positive role models and give sensitive support to all children. Staff interact and engage with children, for example, supporting a little baby to sit up and have a different view of the world. Staff give excellent eye contact as they feed babies and give immediate attention to a child who wakes up and begins to cry. They demonstrate a genuine affection for children, they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. For example, the staff complete 'Praise books' in the baby room to demonstrate to parents that their child is acknowledged and valued by the staff. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff. Staff encourage and build children's vocabulary through constant praise and recognition. Staff adapt their questioning to reflect each child's stage of development. This helps them meet the needs of all children. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to underpin the foundations of the educational programme for younger children. For example, babies and toddlers benefit from the introduction of 'treasure baskets' and 'heuristic play' to encourage them to use their senses to explore natural and man-made objects which feel and sound different. Babies are happy and settled because staff are welcoming

and give them lots of cuddles and attention. They benefit from a very good relationship with the staff, which increases their well-being and sense of trust. Younger children happily play together, and are beginning to take turns, share and to talk to others. They experiment with crayons, pencils and chalk, and explore sand, paint and dough. For example, children print with paint wearing woolly gloves to observe the texture and patterns made on the paper.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children actively participate in purposeful activities and clearly enjoy the harmonious atmosphere. They become confident, independent learners as they freely access the activities set out for them. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff. Practitioners encourage and build children's vocabulary through constant praise and recognition as they support play. Staff skilfully adapt their level of language and questioning to reflect each child's stage of development. The staff have an increasingly confident knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a varied programme of play-based activities which provide an overall balance across all six areas of learning. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their ages and starting points because staff are confident, enthusiastic and skilled in their childcare practice. Children generally display high levels of involvement and gain a sense of achievement, self-confidence and self-esteem through self-chosen activities.

Planning is provided by the company. It is imaginative, thorough and underpins a good programme of teaching and learning because it builds on the Foundation Stage guidance. Staff are confident about its effectiveness and share their planning with parents. Topics are identified and activities are planned to support the chosen theme. Activities cover the six areas of learning. Plans identify specific learning intentions but children's achievements are not consistently transferred to the assessment records. For example, observations are recorded but do not correlate with the next steps in learning which are identified on those records. This reveals that staff do not yet fully understand how to complete their planning cycle and this may affect children's progress in learning over time.

Staff work together as a very effective and committed team deploying themselves to support children's learning with sensitivity and respect. Staff use clear teaching techniques which they adapt to suit the age range of children at this setting. Children enjoy good, trusting relationships with staff who get down to their level and engage in meaningful questioning, conversation and discussion which develops learning through play. Suitable priority is given to the development of children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. The children recognise their names on cards on the floor and fetch these to post into the self-registration pot at the snack table. They can identify their names on their individual pegs where they keep their personal belongings. Children share books with staff and their contributions are valued and affirmed during story time. For example, during an open-air session in the garden, the children offered suggestions as to why Max went to the land 'Where the wild things are'. Children learn about numbers, use mathematical language and solve simple problems. For example, they count the numbers of boys and girls at nursery and calculate whether there are more boys than girls.

They display high levels of imagination and demonstrate their growing knowledge of the world around us as they play in the garden role-play area, set out as an outdoor barbecue. Good

emphasis is given to early mark-making as children use the mark-making area indoors and chalk on the slabs in the garden. Children explore and investigate in the outdoor environment as they dig in the soil to create a new vegetable garden plot. Children enjoy access to the computer and technological toys support their learning. The children enjoy a programme of physical development and Yoga delivered by visiting teachers once per week and this is supplemented by the staff who plan a wide range of activities indoors and out. For example, during the inspection the children improve their hand-eye coordination as they hit balls with hockey sticks. Children explore a wide range of messy play, paint and malleable materials such as clay and dough. They move to music and play musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children from the whole community are warmly welcomed and included in all activities. Children develop their understanding and appreciation of others through simple activities that promote a greater awareness of the wider world. Work about various countries and labels in different languages increase children's awareness of other cultures. This enables the children to develop a positive attitude to others. Children who may have learning difficulties receive appropriate intervention and referrals to suitable professionals outside the provision. Staff provide excellent role models for children by being calm, friendly and polite. They smile and readily provide reassurance to any anxious child. Staff praise children frequently, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. This positive approach actively fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are well-behaved in response to the consistent expectations of caring practitioners.

Staff develop a very positive partnership with parents to support children's progress in learning. There is a wealth of information which is easily accessible which includes general care and educational literature. Regular formal information evenings are held and some private consultations are available to ensure that the nursery is accessible to all. Parents value the openness and honesty of staff. This supports the appropriate sharing of information in sensitive situations. Parents are highly complimentary about the level of service provided, their suggestions and responses on questionnaires are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken. A suitable complaints procedure is in place and meets new requirements. Staff and parents share important information about the children who receive nursery education. Parents are able to see their child's records and regularly contribute to them. This two way sharing benefits the child and enhances their learning. This underpins their progress in the nursery and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The good quality of organisation safeguards and promotes children's care and welfare. The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager is supernumerary but often works alongside her team in the setting and rigorously monitors the provision on a daily basis. The stable staff team are well-qualified and dedicated to the concept of quality

childcare and education. They follow children to the activities which engage their interest, and provide effective support to draw the learning from play. This promotes highly positive outcomes for children. The committed and friendly staff team ensure that children benefit and enjoy their time at this welcoming provision. Staff demonstrate a real affinity with children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Children benefit from innovative ideas and good practice gleaned by staff as they visit other nurseries in Europe and beyond to refresh their skills. Documentation is clear, accessible and always kept confidential. Staff clearly and confidently speak about the procedures to follow in the event of a range of scenarios and appropriate written documentation is reviewed regularly. Planning and assessment systems continue to evolve, thereby securing and progressing children's learning. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, two recommendations were raised regarding the safety procedures for the building at the beginning and end of the day and staff deployment. A new door release mechanism was installed to ensure that the front door remains secure at all times. This action has improved safety for all children and staff. Staff are deployed to every area of the pre-school unit to assist the development of understanding and learning through suitable age appropriate challenges across all six areas of the curriculum. This measure has enhanced the educational programme for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require the provider 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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop further, ways to support continuous self-assessment to underpin on-going evaluation of your childcare practice.

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 assessment records, ensuring that sufficient detail is recorded to inform the next steps in children's learning.

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