



Apple Tree Day Care Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	650048
Inspection date	12 September 2006
Inspector	Barbara Ann Bush
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Registered person	Just Like Home Day Nurseries Ltd
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?

Apple Tree Day Nursery opened in 1997 and is one of two nurseries run by Just Like Home Day Nurseries Ltd. It operates from a converted bungalow and mobile classrooms. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. It is situated in a residential area of Braintree. A maximum of 51 children may attend the nursery at any one time, this includes 12 children who attend the after school club. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:45 until 18:00 and the after school club

provides care from 15:00 until 18:00 all year round. The nursery has pets; one hamster, American snails and a goldfish.

There are approximately 98 children on roll. Of these 27 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider area. The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 staff. Of these, eight members of staff, including the manager have early years qualifications and five are currently on training courses. The setting receives support from the local authority, the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA), the local Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and the Essex Day Nurseries Association (EDNA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is adequately promoted. They are encouraged to wash their hands after toileting, messy or garden play as part of their day to day routine. The older children are given independence to use the toilets and hand basins on their own, taking responsibility for their own cleanliness. However, this autonomy leads to some children not washing their hands to a satisfactory standard to remove germs and dirt. Children receive appropriate medical attention as staff members have a sound understanding of the group's policies and procedures for dealing with illness, accidents and administering any medication. There are a number of staff on site who have trained in first aid and who are confident about dealing with any emergencies that may arise.

Children are well nourished and have regular meals, snacks and drinks throughout the day. Children's dietary requirements are provided by the nursery and recently parents have been consulted about a change in the menus to reflect a healthier eating programme. Children have grown vegetables in the garden and occasionally are able to cook cakes or snacks. Children have little input influencing their daily diet and there are lost opportunities to discuss the benefits of eating healthy foods, particularly during the lunch time period. Children enjoy sociable meal and snack times, using real cutlery and learning how to behave at the table.

All age groups have access to a large, enclosed outside play area. Children's physical development is generally fostered by the provision of equipment and activities available to enhance movement and flexibility. Access to the garden is limited to designated times during the day and this limits the benefits children derive from the facilities on offer. Funded children have opportunities to use tools and equipment that promote manipulation; eye and hand coordination and competence on the large garden apparatus.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into premises that are bright, welcoming and suitable for their purpose. Children are based in a series of rooms that they identify with their own groups. The premises is safe, secure and well maintained. Children's artwork is appreciated and decorates the walls along with posters and mobiles. The children are able to access a range of toys and equipment in their rooms, stored a child height to facilitate choice. Children benefit from using resources that are clean and in good condition. However, there is limited use of core activities such as sand and water and this reduces the promotion of fun and challenge as the children play.

Children's safety is adequately promoted as staff minimise the hazards and any risks on the premises to prevent accidents. Policies and procedures are in place to further protect the well-being of the children. Although staff members have undertaken training on child protection issues, they remain unsure about their personal responsibility for safeguarding children and the correct referral process. This lack of knowledge compromises children's safety. In addition, the group's policy does not reflect the change from Area Child Protection Committee to Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Children are learning the basic principles of keeping themselves safe. Children learn about road safety for their trips outside of the nursery and are given instructions by the staff when using sharp tools such as scissors. Children understand the importance of practising fire drills and the procedure is carried out on a regular basis. Younger children and babies know their boundaries and are able to move around with confidence.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to play happily together and are provided with a range of activities during the day that are appropriate for their stages of development. They enjoy participating in games, using floor toys and have opportunities to climb, jump and run in the garden. Children are making friends and have developed a rapport with their key workers and staff members working in their rooms. Older children are aware of the daily programme drawn up by the staff and occasionally they are able to make requests and add some spontaneity. Children's models and paintings are praised and care is taken to keep them safe for collection by their parents.

Younger children are making themselves heard and their communication skills are encouraged. Older children make themselves understood and readily ask the staff members for help and assistance. Children demonstrate the ability to share, take turns and cooperate. Children show the ability to take time to finish projects such as designing and laying down a train track; negotiating with each other where the pieces fit together and showing satisfaction with the end result. The theme on the day of inspection was Autumn. All age groups had collected leaves and took part in printing with a variety of colours including gold and bronze representing the season. This pastime produced laughter and conversation. Some staff members are clearly able to praise and encourage the children's efforts although this is not consistent across the

team.

Staff members have acquired an understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and implement the information to develop the children's play and learning experiences. The daily programme for the babies and toddlers is designed to fit in with their personal sleeping and eating patterns.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make adequate progress towards the early learning goals. Staff members have varying degrees of understanding about the Foundation Stage. Further training for staff delivering the curriculum benefits and improves the learning outcomes for children. Plans have been drawn up based on observations made of what the children can do and know. However, evaluations of the adult-led activities require development to reflect the differentiation in learning by ability and age. Children's records of assessments are updated regularly and the information is available to plan the next steps. The objectives of the daily activities are not always clear and other staff are unsure of what the children are working on or how to help them achieve the aims.

Children can access and share books. They are invited to anticipate what happens next and some children are very able and vocal in their responses. Children are beginning to recognise letters and names through the use of labels, signs and posters around the rooms. Writing tables are provided with mark making equipment however opportunities are missed to develop their skills to write lists, take messages or write their own words on a picture. Children can use numbers and can count confidently when asked to do so. Children are able to recognise numbers and demonstrated a degree of problem solving when constructing three dimensional models. A group of children were able to work out 'where should this go?' and 'how does this fit?', when building with bricks. However, children are not being asked to use numbers for everyday activities, like counting out the cups and plates at snack time. They are also missing chances to use their calculating skills, to explore capacity and quantity during sand and water play. Children know about the use of everyday technology and can use the computer equipment to support their learning. They have some opportunities to observe and identify features of the natural world by growing vegetables in the garden and collecting leaves to make prints. Children are not using all their senses to explore the natural world; looking closely at similarities, patterns and change or understanding why things happen and work. They are beginning to learn about their own culture and the beliefs of other people though the use of books and posters. Children are able to join in with simple rhymes and can sing songs from memory. They do create their own pictures but much of the art and design is adult-led. The role play areas are not used extensively and children's imaginative play is not fully supported by the staff. Children can express their enthusiasm playing in the garden; making up games, using equipment that extends their physical skills and exploring around the trees and bushes. However, free access is limited by the daily timetable.

Children are willing to engage in activities and clearly want to learn. Staff are working together to improve the standards in all areas of learning. Children respond to praise and encouragement; developing their independence and confidence to try new

things. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Older children are beginning to be aware that we have similarities and differences and are starting to value each other's abilities. There are some resources on site reflecting diversity in the community such as dolls, books and small world figures. Boys and girls have equal access to resources. The manager has extensive knowledge of equal opportunities; this benefits the team and information cascades to the children. Discriminatory remarks are challenged through discussion.

There is an awareness of the needs of children with disabilities and learning difficulties. There is a designated member of staff who has completed training and she liaises with the local authority area worker.

Children behave well, respecting each other, their surroundings and the boundaries set by the staff. There is a general emphasis on positive instructions that acknowledge helpfulness and courteous behaviour. Staff members understand the behaviour policy and this ensures that they deal with children of all ages consistently.

Parents are made welcome and access information from the staff, letters and notice boards. As yet they have not been informed of the change to the complaints procedure which facilitates a quick resolution of any concerns between parents and carers.

Partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded education is satisfactory. Parents express satisfaction with the setting and the education their children are receiving. Information is shared regarding the curriculum and parents are given regular updates on the children's progress. They can attend open evenings and approach the staff about their children's development. Information about the early learning goals and everyday plans are on view in each classroom.

Children are learning right from wrong and demonstrate patience and respect for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The recently appointed manager is initiating a fresh approach to the way the nursery is run and the team are beginning to respond to the new working practice. The manager is well qualified and has extensive experience of working in a day care setting.

Training is a top priority and courses have already been identified for staff to improve the care and education offered to the children. The company has a robust recruitment policy ensuring that children are safeguarded. Staff members have

induction training to familiarise them with the group's expectations of good practice.

Children and parents benefit from a range of policies and procedures that are implemented by the staff and these are being reviewed and updated to reflect recent changes in legislation. Records are kept confidential and are generally in order. However, the daily register fails to record accurately the times of arrival and departure of each child or the whereabouts of staff during the day. This inaccuracy compromises the safety of the children.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The manager has concentrated her attention on the care aspects of the setting and has just begun to address nursery education issues. The manager is experienced and has identified weaknesses within the provision and is drawing up plans for improvement. Staff have regular meetings, individual assessments and highlight future professional development issues. Systems are not in place yet to evaluate and monitor nursery education or the effectiveness of the curriculum planning. There are links with outside agencies who can support and help the team.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was required to ensure parents signed accident forms. Parents are now acknowledging accidents and signing entries thus ensuring that there is continuity in a child's care from nursery to home. It was also required that confidentiality was maintained when the incident book was used. Again, this has been addressed and parents now sign individual sheets ensuring that any record is private. The provider was required to update two policies; the behaviour management policy to reflect an anti-bullying statement and the child protection policy to include students and volunteers. Both have been reviewed and these policies protect the children's

well-being and safety.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- expand the promotion of healthy growth and well-being to ensure that all children are learning about the benefits of a nutritious diet and the importance of good personal hygiene routines
- provide sufficient, suitable toys and play materials to provide stimulating activities and play opportunities
- ensure that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put child protection procedures into practice and that the policy reflects the change from the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- revise the complaints policy to comply with the National Standards and ensure parents are informed of the procedure
- ensure that the daily register accurately records the times of arrival and departure of children and staff.

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):

- maximise the use of the outside play areas to promote the children's good health, physical well-being and development; (this also applies to care)
- extend children's learning in all areas, ensuring differentiation between age groups, providing opportunities for challenge, curiosity and investigation
- increase the practitioner's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to maximise the results of the children's learning programme.

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