



## Bluebells Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	403707
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 September 2006
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<b>Registered person</b>	Nurseries UK Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 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?

Bluebells Day Nursery was registered in 2001. The setting is registered for 47 children under eight years of age, out of school care is provided for eight children.

The setting is based in a Victorian house and has sole use of the premises. It is open every day from 07:30 to 18:00, with the exception of one week at Christmas and Bank Holidays. There are five playrooms, an office, kitchen, children's toilets and a conservatory. Children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 47 children at any one time. There are currently 43 children on roll including seven children who receive funding for nursery education. The setting is participating in a 'Free for 2' pilot scheme and as a result six children receive government funding who are aged two years.

The setting is owned by Nurseries UK Limited. There are 15 staff, 13 of whom are appropriately qualified and experienced. One staff member is working towards a level 3 play work qualification. The nursery manager is not counted in staff ratios and a chef is employed. Two long term students are apprentices.

The setting is a member of the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the National Day Nurseries Association. The setting is working towards a recognised quality award namely Quality Assurance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing the confidence to become independent within daily hygiene tasks. Younger children try hard to toilet alone, pulling up their own clothing and experimenting with lather on their hands. Older children enjoy the challenge of squeezing the soap and take pleasure from hand washing. Children are protected in emergency medical situations. The setting has sufficient staff that are first aid trained and sound procedures for administering medication. A sick child policy ensures the children who are unwell receive close care and are monitored to make sure appropriate action is taken. Windows, heating systems and an appropriately sited air conditioning unit ensure the temperature of all rooms is suitable. As a result, children's good health is effectively promoted and they are free to enjoy their play.

Children thrive on healthy, nutritious food. At lunch time, fresh vegetables are incorporated within meals. Snacks such as melon help children to eat their recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. They benefit from food being cooked fresh on the premises, such as home made rice pudding. Children eat at their own pace with babies being fed according to their individual routines and preferences. Each child's dietary need is accommodated for through close working relationships with parents.

Children enjoy daily access to fresh air and exercise through a well-designed outdoor play area. Younger children thrive on the challenge of pushing double pushchairs whilst caring for their dolls. More able children ride cars with skill, turning and parking the cars with ease. They play imaginatively and have fun together, for example when holding the hands of a soft bodied doll to help her walk. Through the appropriate use of equipment such as jigsaws and shape sorters, children are learning to control their finer movements.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. Their art work is attractively displayed and a wealth of information for parents is instantly visible. Equipment is arranged to provide children with sufficient space to move freely between activities, for example staff make good use of both the floor and table tops to present toys. Children belong to a set room and care group. They develop familiarity with the space they are using and know where resources are kept, such as books. This helps them to be confident and feel safe.

Children are cared for in a secure environment where access to the premises is closely monitored. They are safe when playing indoors and outside. A range of bolts on the exterior gate prevents unauthorised persons entering and hazardous substances are kept out of their reach. All resources are maintained in superb working order. Any defects regarding the premises or any fittings are notified immediately to the 'handy man' who ensures swift action is taken to reduce any hazards. Staff ratios are maintained on outings, for example when babies are taken for local walks and when children are collected from the local school.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a consistent approach to child protection issues. They are aware of the importance of sharing any concerns they may have with the management team and inform parents of their duty to protect all children.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children take part in a suitable range of activities which they find mostly interesting and enjoyable. Young babies touch, feel and explore objects presented in a treasure basket with curiosity. They respond well to staff and experiment with their voices as they play freely. Children aged one to three years have suitable access to resources and activities, such as sand and a play kitchen. However, the planning for these children is not specific enough to provide stimulating activities at all times and the quality of staff interaction varies between rooms. Some children are beginning to grasp language and mathematical concepts as staff talk to them, naming shapes as they play with dough. They show great pleasure as they sing, linking actions to words as they move their hands to signal the horn on the bus. In some rooms, children do not have as much access to resources and staff's knowledge and understanding of child development is implemented less successfully. During key times, such as after midday sleep not all children have full access to a wide range of resources, the quality of staff interaction dips with significantly less conversation and this hinders children's learning.

All children enjoy books and stories. Younger children access books for pleasure. They choose a book they like and sit turning the pages, talking about what they see. Stage appropriate resources help them to learn about colours, shapes and numbers. They sort shapes with success and count with staff support. Staff are beginning to use observations and assessments to inform new planning systems and to ensure that children are making reasonable progress.

## Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a reasonable understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and early learning goals. Long, medium and short term plans are used actively to promote children's development. The large majority of activities capture children's interest and cover the desired learning intention. However, some do not make sufficient use of visual props to bring an activity to life. As a result, the full meaning of the activity, such as the moral of a story or the movement of the wind, is not captured. Staff adopt a calm and consistent approach to managing children's behaviour with group rules clearly displayed in writing. As a result, children show care and concern for others, are very familiar with the boundaries and behave well. Children's learning is enhanced as most activities are linked to a theme, such as changing seasons. Staff observe children as they play, but do not make full use of what they see to tailor each child's next steps in learning.

Children are motivated to learn. They participate well in group discussions, such as the sounds of zoo animals and also sit quietly when they need to. They show confidence and self belief as they sing the rainbow song, standing up in front of the group when they need to show their colour card. Children respond well to consistent boundaries. They know when a familiar song is played it is time to tidy up and take action immediately. They form good relationships with their peers, playing well together in pairs and groups. They respond very well to staff and enjoy the time they sit and play directly with them.

Children are confident speakers. They talk about familiar experiences as they listen to a story and recall recent events with enthusiasm. The book area is used well. Children approach the area often and settle well to read with their peers, telling the story and pointing out pictures of interest. Staff use routine times to introduce letters and sounds with children quickly gaining the confidence to link sounds to objects. However, there is a lack of both numerals and text within the environment and which children can access during free play. For example, only one out of a selection of toy trays is labelled and there are no free writing materials in the home corner. This restricts children's understanding of the range of uses for print and numbers and limits their ability to practice their early writing skills. Children enjoy counting. They count the number of blocks used to build a tower attempting to name an item for each number they count. Through working out how to fix a train track together they are learning to solve mathematical problems. They recognise shapes and learn about capacity as they serve their own lunch time meals.

Children are learning to value their senses. They try to detect the smell of their pudding and eat the cress they have grown. Through active discussions with their peers and the staff they are developing a sense of time and place. They talk about the local environment and take great enjoyment from enacting outdoor activities in the story of the Bear Hunt. Planned activities enable children to use their bodies in a wide variety of ways. For example, they move their arms to the musical sound of the wind and enjoy twirling faster and slower as they respond to what they hear. Children make good use of their imagination as they play. They cook dinners in the home corner and use the handle of a vacuum to experiment with sounds. They recognise colours through using colour cards as part of the rainbow song. Children make full

use of outdoor play to develop their large physical skills. They stop and start with increasing control as they run outside and are learning to throw and catch bean bags.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated and respected as individuals. They develop a sense of belonging through working with a key group of children in an established room base. All children have their own named coat peg and most approach staff freely within their room. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure all children's needs are recognised and met, including children with learning difficulties and disabilities. As a result, all children and parents are offered an equal service and can take part in all of the activities on offer.

Children are learning to take turns and to share equipment. Younger children sit side by side during play dough and with staff guidance learn to pass the tools happily between themselves. Older children behave well and recognise when it is their turn and wait patiently, for example when holding rainbow cards. The majority of the children are developing a sufficient understanding of right and wrong through consistent boundaries applied by the staff, including praise and a star sticker system. However, staff working with some younger children are sometimes too eager to tell the child what to do and what not to do rather than taking the time to give a reasonable explanation. This does not boost children's self esteem or enable them to grasp why their behaviour is unacceptable. Children who receive funding for nursery education behave well and are learning to negotiate between themselves. Children's spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is fostered.

Children benefit from friendly and approachable relationships between staff and parents. A wealth of written information is displayed to them. Parents are free to take the time to read the information at their leisure. Newsletters and parents evenings further enhance the exchange of information as do written diaries which children take home each day. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Children take home daily dairies which indicate what areas of learning their child has covered during the day. Activity plans are displayed in the children's room base which parents are free to read at any time.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff have satisfactory regard for children's well-being. There are effective recruitment and vetting procedures which make sure all staff are suitable to work with children, for example police and medical checks. The large majority of the staff are qualified to work within the early years arena and actively attend training. This helps to broaden children's horizons and to focus on specific aspects of their care. Documents are in place and reviewed regularly with the support of the local authority. Through effective induction procedures and a close working team staff implement most procedures consistently. All of the regulatory records are in place. This

promotes children's safe care.

Children receive sufficient attention from the staff. Most staff members know the children well and respond directly to their needs. A key person system is in place for most of the time to enhance the consistency of care they receive. However, it is not implemented swiftly when children change rooms. As a result, the care is not always specifically tailored to individuals and parents are not kept up to date with who their child's key person is. Children who receive nursery education benefit from adequate use of time, space and resources. Some younger children also benefit as downstairs rooms are well laid out and staff interact well with the children. However, staff and space upstairs are not always used sufficiently to ensure a good balance of activities is provided for children who wake earlier than others from their midday sleep. As a result, these children do not receive a fully stimulating programme of early afternoon activities.

The leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. The senior management team provide a supportive environment in which staff are encouraged to progress their skills. Some monitoring of the nursery education programme takes place. However, it is not wholly effective. As a result, weaknesses in the education programme have not been fully identified. This hinders children's learning. Staff are forward thinking and receptive to advice and support offered by the early years unit and the quality assurance team.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection, the setting was asked to improve the system for recording fire drills and children's attendance. The effectiveness of fire drills is now logged in written format. Children's times of arrival and departure are now recorded accurately and stored in the child's room base. This helps to promote their overall safety.

The setting was also requested to improve resources to reflect positive images. Children now learn more about the wider world through wall displays, such as children around the globe and through the celebration of religious festivals. Books and small world toys ensure an inclusive environment is provided where diversity is respected.

At the previous education inspection, the setting was asked to improve children's understanding of mathematics and the natural and technological world. There has been some improvement in children's understanding of mathematics. Children count as they play and solve problems as they locate the handle of a toy vacuum. However, mathematical concepts are not used sufficiently within free play. This restricts children's learning and the issue is carried forward as a recommendation from this inspection. Children are developing an adequate understanding of the natural and technological world. They use musical equipment to indicate when it is time to tidy up and have some access to a computer. Through growing and eating cress they are learning more about living things.

The setting was also requested to provide more opportunities to enable children to gain greater control of their bodies. Through planned and spontaneous activities, children now coordinate their body movements with increasing control. They manoeuvre cars with skill and are challenged as they tread along the lines of a skipping rope.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Ofsted received three complaints in September 2004, January 2005 and February 2006 all relating to staff:child ratios which raised concerns in relation to National Standard 2 (Organisation). Ofsted investigated the 2004 and 2005 concerns by asking the provider to investigate and report back within 10 working days. No evidence was found to suggest that the National Standards had been breached on these occasions. In February 2006, Ofsted undertook an unannounced visit to investigate the concerns raised. Ofsted found evidence of a breach of the National Standards and the provider was issued with an action as follows:

Standard 2 -'ensure that adult: child ratio is met at all times' and 'ensure that the system for registering children and staff attendance on a daily basis is completed accurately'.

A satisfactory response to this action was received on 28 April 2006. The provider remained qualified for registration in all three instances.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made to 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 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 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 the key person system is implemented at all times
- improve the outcomes for children by implementing the 'Birth to three matters' framework more effectively



- make good use of staff, space and other resources so that children are well cared for and supported, particularly in the first floor rooms after the routine sleep period
- improve the quality of staff interaction and make sure staff understand and implement the procedures for behaviour management consistently.

### **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 children's access to numerals, text and mark making within free play and daily routines
- extend the use of visual props during focused learning and story times to make activities more meaningful
- ensure children's next steps to learning are identified more clearly through a rigorous monitoring system.

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