



Nene Valley Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219904
Inspection date	11 September 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	Cliftonville, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN1 5HL
Telephone number	01604 628444
E-mail	
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?

Nene Valley Day Nursery is run by Child Base Limited. It opened in 1998 and operates from eight main rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated within the grounds of Northampton General Hospital. A maximum of 84 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 07:00 to 18:30 and is closed only for public and bank holidays. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 113 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for early education. The nursery provides childcare for staff who work at the hospital and for the wider community. It is able to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 23 members of staff. Of these, 17 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a varied range of physical activities and regular opportunities for fresh air which contribute to the promotion of their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in adult-led activities such as a music session where they hold onto a large elasticated rope, lifting it up and down, in and out and moving it from side to side. They regularly use the outdoor play areas where they access play equipment such as ride-on toys, balls and the slide, showing their enjoyment as they learn new skills such as walking along the balance beam and selecting balls to put down the ball run. Younger children's development is consistently promoted as staff have a good understanding of child development and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This ensures that they provide appropriate activities and resources to support the children's physical and emotional development. For example, a baby is encouraged to reach out for toys on the mat and another is encouraged to crawl after a beach ball, laughing as the ball bounces away again.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. Their health is enhanced because attention has been paid to details, for example, there are clear policies regarding the exclusion of children who are unwell and the control of infectious diseases. There are good daily hygiene practices in place which prevent the spread of infection, for example, staff wear appropriate protective clothing and children wash their hands before snack and meal times. However, children's independence and their understanding of the relevance of these practices is not consistently promoted because staff carry out some of the tasks such as washing younger children's faces, and do not always discuss the practices with children to reinforce their understanding and learning. Children's health in an emergency situation is very well promoted because all staff have received the appropriate first aid training.

Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are well documented and observed, with clear procedures for dealing with allergies and special diets. They are offered healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. These are prepared daily on the premises and contain a balanced range of fresh ingredients and all food types, promoting children's growth and development. Snack and meal times are viewed as social events, with children sitting together and using the time to discuss current topics and events. Children are encouraged to be independent as they help themselves to drinking water throughout the day, identifying their own container by

the attached photograph.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where resources are well organised, clearly labelled and easily accessible. Their daily safety is given a high priority and staff are well trained in this area. There are comprehensive procedures in place covering all areas of work, for example, visitors are closely monitored and there are clear procedures regarding emergency evacuation and dealing with major incidents. Children's safety is further enhanced because an extensive risk assessment has been completed and covers all areas of the building, the outdoor play areas and taking children on outings. Children are developing a good understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves safe. They are given clear explanations by staff so that they understand the importance of safety practices and have also covered topic work such as 'road safety'.

Children's safety and comfort is further promoted by the provision of equipment which is always appropriate for the age group using it. Children are able to select toys and activities independently from a wide range of good quality resources. Their welfare is promoted as all staff have attended child protection training and have a thorough understanding of these issues and the relevant procedures. They are therefore able to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They enjoy their time at the nursery and are enthusiastic about the activities and play opportunities provided. Their self-esteem and confidence are consistently promoted because staff are sensitive to each child's needs, offering appropriate support and encouragement. This is further enhanced as the nursery follows the 'Sound Foundations' principles. All staff have received appropriate training in this and are able to use this knowledge alongside the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the curriculum for the Foundation Stage to promote children's social, emotional and intellectual development. Children's work and photographs are displayed throughout the setting, promoting their sense of belonging and value. They are able to make choices about their play and learning because all areas are well planned and resources are easily accessible, for example, a young child chooses rattles and shakers from a clear, low-level storage container.

Babies and new children settle well and become secure in their relationships with staff because staff take time to get to know the children, making sure that they are aware of all routines. Particular attention is paid to ensuring that the staff have all relevant information from parents and that the parents are kept well informed of their child's daily progress and activities. Children feel confident and valued because staff are very caring and demonstrate their genuine interest in the children. For example, whilst playing outside, a young child goes to the window of the under one's room

which he has just moved up from, and calls out the name of a member of staff who comes out to see him and talks to him about his new shoes, making the child smile and laugh.

The careful planning of activities for all age groups ensures that children are consistently offered a range of opportunities which are linked to their individual needs and capabilities. Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and utilise this in their planning and assessment for younger children, ensuring that their play is fun, purposeful and stimulating. Children are encouraged to explore and express themselves, for example through digging in the earth and planting seeds, and exploring messy paint with brushes, spoons and hands. Staff are particularly skilled in providing heuristic play opportunities, understanding the basic principles of this play and allowing children to explore and use their senses as they play safely with items such as bottles and corks, putting beads in and out of a basket, and exploring sponges and scented objects.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, planning and adapting activities appropriately. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use clear methods for assessing them, using some information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered. However, there is minimal assessment of children's starting points and this would result in a delay in highlighting potential areas of concern and in including appropriate activities within the planning.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they choose their activities from the wide range offered. These include regular opportunities to engage in role play, sand and water play, group activities and a variety of crafts and construction. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a range of themed topics, enabling them to look more closely at subjects such as 'Traditional Tales', 'Growing', 'Under the Sea', 'Fantastic Creatures' and 'Patterns'. Children are offered good opportunities to develop the appropriate attitudes and dispositions that will enable them to achieve in their future learning. They are motivated, keen to participate, confident to try new activities and speak in a group. For example, during a music session children follow instructions, enthusiastically joining in and requesting additional songs, with even the newest children feeling confident to state what they would like to sing about.

Children are confident in using language to organise and explain their thoughts, for example, talking with each other about siblings in other parts of the nursery and the time they spent in these areas when they were younger. They enjoy books and show a good understanding of elements such as main story characters and the role of authors. This area of learning is reinforced as children enjoy a group story each day and then participate in associated discussions and activities, for example, making crowns and trees from a story about wild creatures. They are beginning to see connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. An example of this is two children playing at the water tray. They carefully line up the water wheels and pour water into each and then spend several minutes working out which container

makes the wheels go faster, with one child concluding 'this one's good, it's really big and all the water makes them go fast'.

Children have opportunities to observe, explore and question through a stimulating range of activities that form the foundation of their later learning in subjects such as science and mathematics. For example, whilst covering a topic of 'Growing', children grew beans and kept diaries of their observations of changes, looked at different seeds, looked at parts of plants, made their own flowers and looked at flower shapes. Children's physical development is well promoted and they have learnt about how our bodies change and about healthy foods through topic work and discussion. For example, they have visited the nursery's baby room and talked about what babies need to grow, looked at photos of themselves when younger, talked about healthy foods and about learning to do things as we grow. Children show a growing appreciation of music and rhythm. During a music session they are able to clap and beat instruments in time and can identify changes in the tempo.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing a good understanding of the values and needs of others as they participate in a wide variety of activities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Diwali and Chinese New Year, and topical work such as 'The World Cup' where children looked at the flags of the different countries participating. Their understanding of their community is enhanced through activities such as local walks and visiting the nearby theatre to watch a pantomime.

Children are well-behaved throughout the sessions and are kind and considerate to each other and to staff, confidently choosing their activities and organising turn-taking and sharing. They show care and concern for each other, for example, a child arriving is given a cuddle by another child who then discusses what they are going to play. Children are beginning to take responsibility for their own behaviour because staff give them clear explanations, enabling them to understand the implications of behaviour and make decisions about this. They respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children feel welcome and valued because staff respect their individuality. Their self-esteem is promoted and they are developing a positive self-image as a result of the appropriate praise given by staff, and the encouragement to discuss their views and to listen to others. For example, when participating in a music session, children discuss what they did at the last session and say what they would like to sing about, listening carefully to the quieter, less confident children. Although there are currently no children on roll who have special needs, there is a comprehensive policy in place which details how the service will be provided to children. The good levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive appropriate individual attention so that their needs are effectively met.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. There is an

active commitment to involving parents in the setting, supported by good staff relationships and a parents' forum which is invited to give feedback and become involved in issues such as outings and fundraising. Parents are given ongoing information about current topics and themes so that they are able to be fully involved in their child's learning and continue this at home. They are kept well informed of their children's progress and activities through regular discussions with staff, parents' evenings and the use of white boards outside each room which state what activities have taken place that day. This area is further supported by events such as 'stay and play' sessions where parents are invited to try out the play experiences offered to their children. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and appropriate care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the care provided by experienced staff and from the attention to detail in all areas of organisation. Their daily care and safety are promoted because there are stringent procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. A comprehensive staff induction process, regular supervision and ongoing monitoring ensure that the nursery's policies and procedures are understood by all and are consistently applied.

Children's play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space. Designated rooms for each age group mean that children are able to move safely and freely between activities, enabling them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Good organisation within each of the designated areas ensures that children are offered a wide range of activities and opportunities and their varying needs can be met. For example, the routines of babies and younger children are accommodated and they are able to play, eat and sleep comfortably because the space and equipment are organised efficiently. Children benefit from staff's good organisation of time. There are clear daily routines which staff adapt as needed in order to accommodate children's individual routines and additional sessions such as the regular music session for older children.

Leadership and management is good. Children's learning and development are enhanced and their overall welfare promoted by the clear understanding that the manager and deputy manager have of their roles and responsibilities, ensuring that they are fully informed of all regulations. They act as good role models and demonstrate their genuine enthusiasm for their work and show staff that they are valued. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting, in which children can learn and develop. All sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of activities throughout the week. Good forward-planning ensures that children are given sufficient time and resources to complete their activities and tasks.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the nursery was asked to develop resources which help to

promote children's understanding of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. They have purchased additional resources such as dolls, books, play figures and puzzles. These are available on a daily basis, providing children with information and positive images. They were asked to make sure that activities are appropriate for the age group and level of maturity of the children, and to ensure that staff are aware of how to tailor plans to take account of individual children's needs. Staff have attended additional training which includes appropriate interaction and the adaptation of activities. They are therefore now able to ensure that all activities are appropriate for individual children.

The nursery was also asked to provide greater opportunities for children to choose what to play with and to enable them to operate independently. Resources have been re-organised and are now arranged in low-level storage containers and shelving. All resources are clearly labelled with words and pictures, enabling children to see what is available and make choices about their play. As part of the inspection of funded nursery education, the setting was asked to provide regular opportunities for children to use their skills to enhance their own creativity. The majority of activities are child-led and children are now able to select their own activities and resources, promoting their independence and their creativity.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted where the provider had already taken action in order to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to Standard 2: Organisation, Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play, Standard 11: Behaviour and Standard 12: Working in Partnership With Parents and Carers. Concerns were raised about the supervision of children and behaviour management. Ofsted investigated and found that the provider had already investigated the concerns raised by the complainant and taken appropriate action with regard to all issues, including the supervision of children. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider remained qualified for registration at the time the investigations were closed.

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 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):

- promote children's independence with regard to hygiene practices and further develop their understanding of this area.

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):

- further develop assessment methods so that these show children's starting points and can be used to highlight individual needs to be covered within the planning process.

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