



Gospel Oak Nursery Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY263455
Inspection date	27 June 2006
Inspector	Elizabeth, Claire Price / Jan Healy

Setting Address	5 Lismore Circus, London, NW5 4RA
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Telephone number	020 7267 4517
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Registered person	Camden Council
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care
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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

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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?

Gospel Oak Centre first registered in 1994, and is one of several settings owned and managed by Camden Education Department. It reopened on the original premises in 2003 following refurbishment and started services as a children's centre in 2004.

It operates from purpose-built premises adjoining a health centre. This is situated centrally to local housing. Facilities include four childcare rooms with connecting bathrooms, a soft play and bounce rooms, two offices and staff room, two kitchens

and two parental and drop-in rooms, with connecting facilities. There are two fully secured garden areas.

A maximum of 85 children under eight years may attend the children's centre at any one time. There are currently 69 children on roll aged from one year to five years, of these, 46 are funded three and four-year-olds. The crèche offers a maximum of 12 places and operates as required to support various adult groups that meet in the centre. Children who attend the crèche are mostly under three years of age. The centre welcomes children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and provides for children who speak English as an additional language.

The centre opens five days a week from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round apart from a two week break in August and one week in December. It also provides after school and holiday play scheme facilities during school term- times and holidays, for children who attend nursery classes as well as additional children from the local community.

Other facilities include a drop-in group on two mornings a week, adult education classes, health employment and housing advice and a crèche facility which operates for two days a week while parents attend parenting skills classes. The crèche is provided by the centre for parents attending courses.

There are 20 full-time and four part-time care staff who work with the children and six non care staff. Over half of the staff are qualified to required levels and all have access to a regular training programme. The centre receives support from Camden local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to understand the importance of personal hygiene and wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet. There are effective procedures in place to protect children's health, for example, wearing disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies and the application of creams supplied by parents. Children sleep on folding floor mattresses which are named and have clean top and bottom sheets to ensure children are safeguarded from cross infection.

Children begin to understand about the importance of a healthy diet as they choose from a good variety of fruits at snack times. Children enjoy the main meal at lunch time. This is freshly prepared using fresh ingredients. The menu takes into consideration children's individual dietary requirements and the cook has advice from a dietician to ensure children benefit from a healthy, nutritious diet. Children benefit from advice given to their parents on healthy eating when they attend the health services at the centre. Meal times have a homely feel with table cloths on the table and all children, including the babies, sit together with staff in small groups for meals. This encourages interaction between their peer group and adults. Older children can access fresh drinking water at all times to refresh themselves. Water is not freely available for the younger children and relies on children asking for drinks and the

refreshments at snack and mealtimes. Babies' nutritional and individual needs are met by staff preparing or supplying bottles brought from home. Staff use nearby kitchen facilities to reduce children's food to the required individual texture. Written records of babies food intake are supplied to parents for the first six weeks of settling, after which clear verbal feedback is given at the end of each day to keep the parents informed that individual needs are being met. There are fully stocked first aid boxes stored in each room and staff take a first aid kit if going on an outing. All accidents and injuries are recorded, with parents signing every entry which enables them to watch for any further symptoms which may develop.

Children enjoy a well planned range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They have regular access to fresh air as good use is made of the two well equipped outside play areas. These both have shaded areas to protect children from sun and rain. Children learn about their bodies, and about how they feel when they are tired and hot after running around. They regularly practise their large muscle skills as they competently pedal and steer bikes, use the climbing equipment, kick and catch balls, and dig in the sand. Indoor activities take place where the children enthusiastically use rolling pins, paint rollers, scissors, sticking, fitting puzzle pieces and drawing ensuring they are able to develop and practise their small muscle skills. Children have opportunities to learn about body awareness through such activities as yoga and lyenger, where they use small mats and lights are dimmed so they can concentrate and be aware of their body. This is reinforced with a picture display in the room.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and well maintained environment. Children choose from a wide range of good quality toys and resources that are organised to enable self-selection in a clean, safe environment. Children are cared for in premises where vigilant staff identify and minimise risks; this enables children to move safely and freely. For example, a staff member stands by the door as the children leave and parents sign the children out and a high gate at the entrance before the front door ensures children do not leave unaccompanied or with the wrong person.

Safety and security systems such as the buzzer entry for all parents and visitors and the daily risk assessment checks, contribute to children's safety and well-being. The building is child orientated and secure, which ensures children have a safe environment in which to play; they show a sense of belonging and are aware of daily routines, for example, some children are using a temporary room whilst building work is finished. Ventilation in some internal rooms is currently insufficient. This does not ensure circulation of fresh air for staff and children in, for example the bounce room.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of child protection and procedures. There is a programme in place to ensure staff attend appropriate training. They know who to contact if they have concerns about a child in their care and good recording systems are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies and toddlers are happy and settled within the environment. They readily approach staff who are affectionate and responsive to their needs, for example, giving cuddles. They enjoy a range of activities which are very suitable for their development, such as, sponge painting, corn flour and physical play and children have good concentration spans for their age when engrossed in activities such as music, rhythm and paint. They enjoy a story of the 'Hungry Caterpillar' with props whilst eating fruit and at the end of the story children join in clapping, smiling, 'flying high with hands' and vocalising. Staff currently use Camden Key Times and are training for Birth to 3. The systems are very similar and children benefit from the planning, assessment, knowledge and wide range activities provided for them. Babies hand paint and use chalks freely developing creative skills. Toddlers use spoons, plates, tins and 'cooker' when playing with 'Rice Crispies' and one child says "I'm cooking sausage rolls and cook them". The child previously had sausage rolls for tea. This shows development of children's' imagination and encourages the use of life experiences.

Children's language development is continually extended by staff use of language, for example, "this is pink, this is yellow, do you want to share, 1-2-3". Children have opportunities during the day to meet with siblings and children from other rooms which ensures family bonding is maintained. Children have opportunities to use and familiarise themselves with different rooms, staff and equipment. This helps prepare them for transition as they get older and gives different play opportunities. Activities are provided for wrap around care as most children leave at 15:00. Children who stay or any children who arrive from school are provided with tea and different activities appropriate to their age and the time of day to ensure children's needs are met. Other facilities such as the crèche and holiday care are not operating at present.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage for children's learning. They are committed to providing the best for each child, and have the training and experience to satisfy children's curiosity in learning. Each child has a key worker who knows them well, with whom they share a warm relationship, helping them to feel safe and secure. Staff plan for children's individual needs, using a detailed record system, and keep parents fully informed about their children's progress and achievement. Children are provided with a broad range of activities, encouraging their imagination and creativity. They are taught to respect, take turns and cooperate with each other through sharing and negotiation. Staff are good role models, aiding children in learning right from wrong. Staff are interested in what children do and what they have to say, encouraging their motivation and enhancing their social skills. Children make strong progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They greet both their friends and staff upon arrival and are eager to participate in the activities available.

Children show extensive progress in communication, language and literacy. They chat freely to their friends and the staff, often using their first language when playing

with each other, which is accepted by all, helping to enhance their self-esteem and confidence. An extensive range of languages are spoken by the children, which are respected by the staff. Labels are written in children's first language as well as in English, providing children with a sense of importance. Language develops through the use of stories, as they learn new words and extend their vocabulary. During snack time, children listen to each others' contributions and say 'thank you' when offered fruit, helping to support their social graces. Most children hold pencils correctly, making marks on paper, whilst other children write their names clearly.

Children make good progress in their mathematical development. Younger children learn to say and use number in order and in familiar contexts, such as during singing sessions. Older children count with reasonable accuracy practising their counting when climbing the steps of the climbing frame. Children learn to recognise numerals up to ten and attempt to write numbers using a wide variety of medium, including chalk, pens and writing in the sand. Children solve practical problems using a measuring tape and construction cubes to help them count with accuracy. They play mathematical games, for example, dominoes, starting with matching pictures and then counting dots. During water play, children learn about capacity and recreate simple patterns using threading beads. Children begin to learn about the concept of time, using timers and clocks. Older children recognise simple shapes and make 3 dimensional shapes from an assortment of recycled boxes. Children learn to describe position and to follow directions from staff.

Children make effective progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. First hand experiences encourage them to explore their environment, planting fruit and herbs, helping them to learn about living things that grow and change over time. Their senses are challenged when listening to music and playing simple instruments. They explore colour by sight, and look closely at mini-beasts they find in the earth. Children use their sense of smell when playing with corn flour, which is mixed with a variety of fragrances. Visitors to the group help children understand the roles of the adults in their community, such as fire fighters, providing them the opportunity to ask questions. Children learn to appreciate different religions and cultures through a wide range of festivals included in the activities.

Children are making good progress in creative development. They select the paint of their choice, mixing two colours together to see what happens, helping to enhance their self-thinking skills. They have the opportunity to play with corn flour when mixed with water, squealing with delight, when they notice it looks runny but is stiff upon touch. They use small world toys to make up and adapt stories, but their imagination and independence skills are not further promoted with free access to dressing up clothes in all playrooms.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children. They work in partnership with parents, recording their individual needs, such as the care of their hair, religious dietary needs, and first language, so they are

able to plan for their requirements. There are many languages spoken by the children, which are respected by the staff, as they are happy to learn and use frequently used words, helping to settle children into the group and feel valued and supported. Staff speak some languages fluently, aiding to communicate and involve parents in their children's learning. A wide range of images are displayed, which reflect positive images of culture and ethnicity, including a wide range of books, dolls, posters and cooking utensils, helping children appreciate and value each others' similarities and differences. All children are included in all the activities on offer, and share their experiences with each other and with staff, for example, significant events that are happening at home.

Behaviour is good. Staff have high expectations, to which children respond well. Staff are respectful towards both the children and their colleagues, helping to encourage children to behave in the same manner. Good behaviour is reinforced, using appropriate praise, for example, when a child drops a toy. The child picks up the toy, the staff thank him and smile, displaying positive body language. In response, the child smiles, looks very pleased with himself and begins to pick up another toy that he sees on the floor. When children display unwanted behaviour, the staff explain why it is wrong to hurt another person. This also helps children to learn about the affect of their actions on others. Staff recognise that children are learning to deal with a range of emotions and feelings, and allow for this area of learning to develop, for example, temper tantrums. Yoga aids children to relax and to feel good about themselves. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the children's individual needs, as they work in partnership with the parents and outside agencies to ensure steps are taken to promote children's welfare and development. Some children have complex needs, which require the services of a local intervention team. Children directly benefit from the additional services available at the centre to support the whole family. This supports the ongoing management of the action taken to progress children's development. Staff plan a wide range of activities at an appropriate level, so they are able to join in confidently with the play of their peers. Specialist equipment is sought if required, such as a Zimmer frame, helping less mobile children to walk independently.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents have a wealth of information available to them, for example upon entering the setting, notice boards mounted on walls, provide them with relevant information about the facility. Photographs, names and positions of all the staff are displayed, so parents can easily identify who is their child's key worker. Sure Start service information is available and leaflets are printed in different languages, to aid parents who speak English as an additional language. Children benefit from the services offered to their parents and staff note they are happier and more confident in their interaction with staff and each other. Staff provide daily information verbally, to keep parents informed and to encourage a sense of belonging. They are also encouraged to share information from home and any prior knowledge of their child. Staff and parents frequently exchange information on children's progress or about any concerns noted, both verbally and in writing. Newsletters keep parents informed about forthcoming events, and their expertise is valued, for example, parents with specialist knowledge are invited into the setting to speak to the children. Parents, however, report that the complaints information does

not include the procedure to follow should they wish to make a complaint to Ofsted.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the well organised management of the setting. The management team work together extremely well and lead a strong, stable staff team. The effective implementation of all the clearance and recruitment procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with a good knowledge and understanding of child development. The majority of staff are qualified to Level 3 or above and most hold first aid qualifications. This ensures all children's developmental and health needs can be met by centre staff. All required documentation is readily available. Staff have a clear knowledge of the requirements of the National Standards although there is no reference to these in the centre or in the local authority procedures used. Ofsted is also not referred to as the contact for significant events, for example complaints. Staff have a high regard for children's welfare and implement the centre's policies and procedures to ensure the smooth running of the setting. Good staff ratios with additional staff support all the children and provide for any additional needs. This cover positively supports children's care, learning and play.

Leadership and management are good with a supportive deputy and administration staff. The leader has a clear vision for the centre, vast experience of managing a staff team and working with young children. A high profile is given to staff training and the learning experience gained is shared with all staff. Appraisals and regular supervision ensure staff development needs are monitored and addressed through training. The provision at the centre is evaluated regularly using a quality assurance system. The group sizes and good staff deployment contribute to children's health, safety and enjoyment enabling all children to take an active part in the setting. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Additional core services

The provision of additional services is a strength of the children's centre. Groups using the centre facilities are available to support parents and children in the local community and develop skills which enhance the relationship with their children. Crèche facilities enable parents to make use of training courses that help them gain skills to return to work and to support their housing needs. This gives parents the opportunity to make a valuable economic contribution to the wider community. A good range of groups involve parents from varying cultural and ethnic backgrounds and promote inclusion. This benefits the children as their parents improve their communication skills and personal confidence. Staff note the children are happier and interact with confidence with staff and children at the centre. Parents also have opportunities to develop and improve their relationships with their children through courses run at the centre. Links with the health service have been developed to deliver a range of community and children's services bringing them together to support the children. This has a good impact on children's health and welfare. The family support teams work very effectively at times of need to avert any difficulties for

the children and their families and provide ready access to services. Parents now know what is available and the information is spreading around the community. The children's centre has been established for 18 months and is making a valuable contribution locally. Ongoing evaluation and development of the services ensures that children and adults are provided with needed services.

Improvements since the last inspection

The centre management were asked to ensure that the floor covering in the sink area of the Daisies group room was safe and hygienic. Since the last inspection in 2003 the centre has been refurbished and the floor covering has been made safe ensuring the flooring and sink area do not present a hazard to children's safety and welfare.

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.

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 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 all policies and procedures are updated to include reference to the National Standards for under eights and to include notification to Ofsted of any significant event
- ensure children have easy access to fresh drinking water at all times

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):

- ensure children have regular opportunities to develop their independence skills with particular regard to access to dressing up clothes and preparing their own snacks

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