



Asquith Nursery - Wilmington

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY307170 |
| Inspection date | 28 September 2006 |
| Inspector | Sarer Marcia Tarling |
| Setting Address | Common Lane, Wilmington, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7EU |
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| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Asquith Court Nurseries 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

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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?

Asquith Nursery Wilmington is a purpose-built nursery situated in the grounds of Wilmington Grammar School, close to Dartford. It is one of a large chain of nurseries owned by Asquith Court Nurseries Limited. The nursery has three group rooms, an office, kitchen and a staff room. The baby room, for children under two years, has its own milk kitchen and nappy changing area. The toddler and pre-school room share a bathroom area. All children have access to an enclosed outside play area. All food is freshly prepared on the site. The nursery provides a curriculum based on promoting the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum using mainly child initiated activities.

The nursery is registered to receive 51 children from three months to under six years, of whom no more than 16 may be under two years. There are currently 85 children aged from three months to six years on roll. This includes 20 funded three-year-olds and one funded

four-year-old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports a number of children with a learning difficulty and some who have English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 07:30 to 18:30.

The nursery employs 17 permanent staff and 11 supply staff. Of these, 12 staff are qualified, including the manager, and three are working toward gaining a recognised childcare qualification. The setting receives support from an Early Years Advisory Teacher from ASK (Advisory Service Kent) The nursery is a member of The National Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is safeguarded as staff follow clear hygiene routines. For example, they are vigilant in ensuring bathroom areas are clean and regular checks are carried out. Tables are sanitised after messy activities and before meals. Toys and resources are routinely cleaned and bedding is changed daily. Staff have to work hard to try and keep carpet areas clean in baby and pre-school room. Management have acknowledged this and there are plans to replace some of the carpet with more appropriate flooring. Children are protected from cross infection as all staff wear disposable aprons and gloves when handling food or changing children.

Children are learning the importance of personal hygiene through the daily routines of washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Staff talk to children about why hand washing is important and children told me that they were "washing away dirt and germs". Older children can independently use the bathroom, affording them privacy. Fresh flannels are used each time children wash their faces helping to prevent the spread of infection. Younger children are accompanied to the bathroom and supported sensitively by an adult in their toilet training. Babies are changed routinely and as often as necessary. This information is recorded and shared with parents.

Children's health is effectively promoted as staff are well informed about individual health care issues and draw up care plans. A high proportion of staff hold a first aid certificate, which helps ensure children's welfare in the event of an accident or emergency. Children are protected from cross infection as there are good arrangements in place to exclude children with infectious illnesses and to care for children who may become unwell. Parents permission is sought before administering medication and a record is maintained.

Children benefit from a varied and nutritionally balanced menu which has been drawn up in consultation with a children's food expert All meals are freshly prepared on site and contain a wide choice of fresh fruit and vegetables. Vegetarian options are available and special dietary needs are catered for. Children enjoy lunches such as; chicken curry with rice, roast loin of pork, cottage pie and jacket potatoes. Tea options include tuna and cheese melts, vegetable and lentil soup with wholemeal bread, pitta pockets and banana bread. Children further benefit and develop awareness of their physical needs as they help themselves to water throughout the day.

At snack time children have a choice of fresh milk or water to drink and a wide range of fresh fruits. Pre-school children have the opportunity to pour their own drinks although they have few opportunities to participate in the preparation of any food or snacks. Staff talk about the benefits of eating healthily which helps promote children's understanding and develop healthy habits. Babies individual feeding patterns are followed and they are held and cuddled whilst being bottle fed. Staff work in consultation with parents to provide a safe and nutritionally balanced diet using a comprehensive weaning menu.

Children benefit from fresh air and opportunities to be actively physical. They enthusiastically explore the environment which offers opportunities to run, jump, climb, slide, crawl through and balance on climbing equipment. Children have planted a 'herb' garden, watched as their tomato plants grow and enjoyed eating the fruits as part of a tea. Although children have scheduled times to use the outside area this does not always happen on a daily basis, or throughout the year, for all children. Children greatly enjoy taking part in adult initiated music and dance. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of how to implement the Birth to three matters framework. Children's emotional well-being is supported as they freely go to staff for a cuddle or reassurance. Children begin to form positive relationships outside the family home. As a result, they show confidence and a sense of belonging.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to create a welcoming and stimulating environment. Information for parents, posters and photos are displayed, along with examples of children's craft work. Children confidently play and explore. They benefit from the organised environment with access to individual coat hanging and personal storage trays, which helps them feel welcome. Staff greet children and parents and welcome them with a smile, creating an inviting environment. Babies are able to rest according to their needs and good procedures ensure they are closely monitored whilst asleep.

Children are developing a sense of space as equipment and activities are organised to enable children to negotiate and avoid obstacles. Play and learning resources are all safely stored at the children's level, enabling children to freely and independently choose what to play with. This helps encourage decision making skills. Children use the toys safely and they are learning to take responsibility for tidying up after they have finished playing. This encourages the children to take some responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their peers.

Children benefit from good security on the premises. The entrance bell is answered by a member of staff who checks the identity of visitors and ensures they sign in and out. This enables staff to monitor unvetted adults on the premises. Clear procedures ensure children only leave the premises with a suitable adult. Robust and regular risk assessments minimise accidental injury and enable any identified risks or hazards to be dealt with promptly. Staff are vigilant in ensuring toys and equipment are safe and suitable to promote children's safety. Toys and resources are of very good quality. Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely.

Children are safeguarded and protected as staff demonstrate a good understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. They are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child and there is a system in place to refer any concerns about child protection to the appropriate agencies. All staff are scheduled to receive further training in child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of the developmental needs of children under three years. They have set out the baby and toddler rooms in areas which incorporate all of the 'Aspects' from the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Nearly all activities are child initiated, with staff making daily observations of children and using these to plan adult initiated activities based on individual children's progress.

Routines are flexible and are aimed at meeting individual needs. Very young babies are able to explore using their senses and movement. Good quality resources support children as they learn to sit-up, stand and walk safely. 'Treasure baskets' enable babies to explore natural materials and household objects. A black and white display stimulates and helps young children focus and see contrasts and shapes. Activity centres, musical instruments, mobiles and different textured resources, including sand and water, help stimulate babies.

Young children are able to make choices and learn from doing rather than being told what to do. Children spend the majority of their time eagerly initiating play opportunities and showing curiosity when freely exploring the range of resources and activities available in the toddler room. For example, pretend play in the role play area, digging in glitter sand, exploring bubbles, playing with zoo animals, construction, chalking and painting. Children enjoy opportunities to experience independence and responsibility, selecting their own resources and helping put away toys when they have finished. Staff respond well to children's needs by encouraging them to become involved in their chosen play. They do so with skill and consideration for children's individual needs and stage of development. Staff ensure activities offer differentiation to ensure the range of needs are met. For example, puzzles include inset and jigsaw puzzles to allow children challenge and success. Younger children particularly enjoy spontaneous singing sessions, using musical instruments and joining in with action songs.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They have attended training and continue to develop their knowledge of the stepping stones and early learning goals and strive to put these into practice. The nursery has recently implemented a new system of delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum. The pre-school room has been re-organised. There are a wide range of resources set out, in defined zones, covering the six areas of learning. The focus is largely on child initiated activities and learning. All children benefit as they have a key worker to help them settle and plan for their individual needs. Staff make incidental observations of children's play and learning throughout the week and use these to identify progress in line with stepping stones in the early years Foundation Stage curriculum. Observations are used to identify the next steps in a child's learning and to plan some adult initiated activities for all children.

Observations show that children are making steady progress in relation to the stepping stones. They show good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Friendships are forming, children play in small groups and relate well to each other, engaging in play and conversation. Children show independence in choosing what they would like to play with. Children are further developing independence, for example, in dressing themselves, as they help to put on their boots and do up their own coats to go outside to play. Children show an understanding of the needs and feelings of others, for instance, when a child is hurt other children crowd round, another child touches his arm and tells him not to cry. Children are extremely well behaved. They are familiar with the rules and are generally able to take turns and share.

Children greatly enjoy listening to stories. They are able to join in and anticipate what is going to happen next. For example, whilst using puppets to act out the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' and 'Whose nose and toes?'. Children have opportunities to speak in small groups, be encouraged to think, recall or predict. Children are confident in using their spoken language asking questions to develop their understanding. Many children are able to recognise their name from their trays. There are lots of opportunities for mark making, to attempt writing for a purpose and form recognisable letters. For example, pads in the construction and role play area, along with the well resourced mark making area. Some children are able to write letters and their own name. Children have written labels for displays in the room. Staff are introducing letter sounds to children, encouraging them to find other words that begin with a chosen letter.

Children are developing their understanding of numbers through the use of equipment to support early counting and number recognition. They are using simple mathematical language and have a knowledge of space, shapes and measure, for example, by filling and emptying in the water tray and measuring each other with a large ruler. Their understanding of simple addition, subtraction and weight is promoted during practical activities, such as encouraging them to add 'one more' or 'one less' when counting pebbles and using the scales. Children are developing their use of appropriate language, for example, when playing a building block game they know one side is "taller" and the other "shorter". Children enjoy designing and making with the large blocks. They balance shapes on top of each other and staff support the activity by introducing positional language.

Children are able to choose from a wide range of man-made and natural materials to produce art and craft work and can select appropriate tools independently. They have frequent opportunities to explore their own creative potential, for example, through modelling with dough, painting and mixing colours on the easel and drawing. Children use the role-play area to dress up and play imaginatively based on their own experiences. For example, children dress and pat dolls off to sleep, a child put on an apron and oven glove before putting his baking in the role play oven. Children use musical instruments and enjoy singing familiar songs.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted as children have access to a range of resources to encourage them to explore and investigate. Such resources include water, sand, mirrors, magnifying glasses and magnets. The computer introduces the children to technology and they are able to select and load a game, have good control with the mouse and are able to follow on screen instructions with the support of an adult. Photos are taken and displayed allowing children to talk about activities and events and to remember past

experiences. Children gain an understanding of the wider world as they have opportunities to find out about a number of different festivals throughout the year. Children have access to a range of resources such as small world people, dressing up clothes, dolls, books, posters, play foods and utensils from different cultures which help them to learn about diversity. A group of children discovered a toad in the garden, made it a home in an aquarium and now they hunt for spiders and bugs to drop into the aquarium and watch in fascination as the toad eats the bugs! Children learn how to be kind and care for 'Frodo' the pre-school rabbit, taking responsibility for his needs when they take him home at weekends.

Children are offered a good range of resources to develop their physical skills. They are able to use a range of tools and equipment, such as scissors, pens, paintbrushes, rollers, cutters, with growing skill and confidence and this helps to develop their fine motor and co-ordination abilities. Children enthusiastically participate in dance sessions which encourage awareness of space, and develops understanding of various types of movement, for example jumping, stretching, swaying, marching and turning. Children's understanding of the needs of their bodies is developing appropriately as they understand they get hot and need to rest after running around. Staff help children to practise throwing and catching skills which supports their physical development. However, staff do not make full use of the outdoor area, so children do not always have opportunities to explore the full curriculum outdoors throughout the whole of the year.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit because partnership with parents is good. Parents are very satisfied with the nursery. They feel that staff are friendly and supportive to them and skilled at providing play and learning opportunities for their children. They receive good feedback about their child's achievements and feel able to discuss any concerns they might have. Parents are aware of the complaints procedure, which is also displayed in the entrance hall. Parents receive good quality information on the 'Birth to three matters' framework as their child enters the nursery and on the Foundation Stage curriculum when they move up to pre-school.

Parents receive a 'handbook' as their child moves from one room to the next. This outlines information about the setting and simplified policies and procedures. Copies of full policies & procedures are readily available and a selection are displayed on a notice board for parents. Newsletters detailing events in the nursery, and general policy reminders, are regularly sent home. Displays of children's own craft work, weekly plans of adult initiated activities, and regular meetings with their child's key worker help parents know how they can be involved in their child's learning.

During the settling in period staff complete a progress report for parents and use this as a starting point to discuss their child's achievements, their individual needs and to help plan future learning. Parents of babies and toddlers receive daily and weekly contact sheets detailing aspects of their child's individual routine. Parents have the opportunity see their child's observations and records at any time. There are formal open evenings twice a year in order that parents may meet with their child's key worker. A comprehensive record of transfer report completed and given to parents to forward to their child's school.

The special needs co-ordinator, is familiar with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the procedures for accessing external assessments and support for children as necessary. This helps to ensure children with a learning difficulty or a disability are welcomed into the setting and appropriate systems put into place to support them.

Children are beginning to develop an awareness of others and their beliefs, as parents are encouraged to contribute by sharing their home and cultural experiences. For example, a parent has provided a lot of Chinese equipment which children now use in role play areas. However, opportunities for children to learn about positive role models in the local community are not always fully explored. The nursery does not currently arrange for people to routinely visit and speak with children or for children to go on local trips/outings to places of interest in the community. Staff regularly set up a selection of displays and interest tables which help children find out about how other people live. For example by learning about a festival or celebration from another culture. Dual language books and posters depicting positive images are available throughout the nursery.

Children behave very well and are able to remind each other of the rules. For example, "You mustn't take that, he's playing with it. Wait your turn." Staff implement strategies such as using an egg timer to show younger children when it is time to let someone else take a turn on the computer. Children's self-esteem is fostered as staff routinely praise them and recognise their achievements. For example, they are proud to receive a sticker. Children's social skills are developing because staff encourage them to have good manners, for example, they remind them to say please and thank you. If a minor squabble over a toy does occur children are encouraged to apologise and helped to understand what they have done wrong. Parents are kept informed if staff have any concerns about a child's behaviour. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Most of the staff hold a recognised childcare qualification or are working toward gaining one. All children benefit as there is a system in place to ensure all staff receive training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and/or the Foundation Stage. As a result staff have a good understanding of child development and how children learn through play, which in turn, enables them to meet individual needs. Children are protected as the manager has rigorous procedures in place for the suitable recruitment and vetting of all staff and ensures that all new staff receive a full induction. Staff are supported in their work through an appraisal system and ongoing training is actively encouraged, promoting their professional development and ensuring their on-going suitability.

The premises are organised so children feel secure and comfortable as they independently select resources. Staff work to clear routines to ensure children's health and safety. Staff work well in their base rooms and support each other as a whole team. Confidentiality is maintained as children's records are carefully stored. All documentation relating to accidents, medication, children's care and registration are well maintained and effective in keeping children safe and healthy. The nursery has a generally well-written set of policies and procedures which provide clear information on all areas of operation for staff and parents. Asquith Court Nurseries draft

and distribute these documents and minor details, in some documentation, is not up-to-date or does not reflect the practice of the individual nursery. Adult to child ratios are adhered to as the setting complies with their certificate of registration and the daily attendance record consolidates this. The registration certificate is displayed in line with regulations.

Leadership and management is good. Regular team meetings are in place to ensure all staff are up-to-date with policies and procedures and share the same vision for the nursery. A successful keyworker system ensures consistency of care for the children. Staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and are deployed effectively throughout the day to ensure that the children are safe and well supervised. Staff work together to include all the children and enable them to participate in the activities.

The staff team demonstrate a positive approach to providing good opportunities in order that children achieve in a child initiated environment. They strive to improve the quality of care and education for children by working closely with child care advisors within Asquith Court Nurseries and the early years advisory teacher. All staff contribute in the observing, monitoring, planning and evaluating of the quality of the children's learning. This includes senior staff and the manager taking time out to observe practice, observations, planning and to encourage all staff to think about the purpose of the adult initiated activities on offer.

All staff are aware of who their line manager is and of the management structure within the nursery and Asquith Court Nurseries. The nursery manager shows a strong commitment to develop the setting and make improvements. The management in Asquith Court Nurseries have clear aims for the future of the nursery.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to experience positive role models from the local community and to visit places of interest (also applies to Nursery Education)
- review and update policies and procedures to ensure clarity of information and to reflect the practice within the nursery

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):

- review and improve opportunities for all children to access and explore the full curriculum outdoors throughout the whole of the year (also applies to Care)
- provide children with more opportunities to become independent by enabling them to help prepare simple snacks and teas for themselves

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