

The Gables Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254447
Inspection date	17 May 2007
Inspector	Elaine Poulton
Setting Address	15 Station Road, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 0BL
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Registered person	Mr Robert and Mrs Janet Wallett
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?

The Gables Day Nursery Aldridge is one of two nurseries run by the owner. It opened in 1995 and operates from three rooms in a detached bungalow close to Aldridge town centre. A maximum of 25 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round, except for Bank Holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 60 children aged from three months to under eight years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for early years education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery has systems in place to support a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 staff in total and this includes a cook. Over half of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff has completed a degree in early years education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned activities, discussions and consistent routines. For example, hand washing before eating and after using the bathroom. Children understand that they wash and dry their hands because 'there may be germs on them'. All children are learning appropriate hygiene procedures after sticky or messy activities, such as painting or gluing. After lunch children are encouraged to use their own toothpaste and toothbrush to help promote good dental hygiene. This means children's good health is well promoted in the setting.

There are good procedures in place for sick children, for managing accidents and administering prescribed medication. Staff are effective in ensuring that children's individual health needs are met and that children are well cared for. All members of staff are first aid trained and parents are informed should their child be involved in an accident. This means that children's well-being is well protected in the setting.

Children benefit from a healthy diet and enjoy freshly prepared meals and nutritious snacks throughout the day. Staff work in partnership with parents and share information to meet individual children's dietary needs. All meals comply with any special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. Menus are varied and planned in advance and are available to parents and children to enable them to make healthy meal choices together. Children are learning through a planned 'Health Eating' topic that 'eating fruit and vegetables makes you strong and helps your muscles grow'. Staff are attentive to the needs of babies and younger children and drinks are readily available during the session. Older children know they can ask for a drink when they are thirsty or pour themselves water from the jugs provided on the 'drinks tray'. This means that all children enjoy a range of healthy and nutritious foods and beverages.

Children are active according to individual needs and are able to take a rest if they choose; some opt to sit quietly if they wish. All children benefit from planned outdoor play in the fresh air and enjoy walks out into the local community. They have good opportunity to use a varied range of equipment and this active play helps them to develop their physical skills well. Children also join in with a good balance of age-appropriate games and free play activities indoors. This means that they are developing a positive attitude to exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe through written policies and procedures that are understood and followed consistently by staff. For example, risk assessments are completed on activities together with regular safety checks for indoor resources and equipment. Security is good with staff being vigilant with external exits ensuring that all visitors to the nursery are greeted by a member of staff and sign the visitors book. There are effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children. This means that children are kept safe and secure whilst attending the nursery.

Children are able to choose from a wide range of toys and games which are well maintained. Resources are in good condition and conform to appropriate safety standards. Children are able to play safely with a range of toys that promote their all-round development well. The

toys are well organised on low units and in clear plastic storage boxes that are clearly labelled to allow good accessibility. This means children have free choice and are able to make decisions about their play.

Children are learning about leaving the building quickly and safely through emergency evacuation procedures which are practised regularly. Children are encouraged to take part in activities that heighten their awareness of keeping safe whilst taking part in activities. For example, when making fruit kebabs they discuss how they are to 'carefully handle the wooden skewer which has a sharp and blunt end'. Consequently children are learning about keeping themselves and others safe in the setting.

Children are protected from harm because staff are knowledgeable about child protection issues. Staff are aware of whom to contact and the procedures to follow should an incident occur. The child protection policy is clear about roles and responsibilities and outlines what happens should there be an allegation made against a member of staff. The child protection policy follows the Local Safeguarding Children Boards guidelines and is available to share with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff have a good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has been implemented to offer a full range of experiences for the younger children. This means that activities are enjoyable and link successfully to plan the next steps in children's development.

Babies are comforted and held whilst being bottle fed. Routines are well planned and staff follow the wishes of parents so that sleep and feeding patterns closely mirror those of home. Staff spend their time working directly with the children. They sit and play with the children and they talk to, smile, sing and cuddle each individual child. Babies and younger children are introduced to a good variety of stimulating sensory play activities. For example, they explore the textures of a variety of materials in 'sensory boxes' and 'treasure baskets'. They grasp brightly coloured toys and enjoy the different sounds that musical toys make, which they explore with great interest. They have good opportunity to investigate natural resources such as sand and water. Singing and action rhymes contribute to children becoming skilful communicators.

The care, learning and play experiences for children in this setting are good. Younger children are happy, secure and settled. They enter confidently at the start of their day and join in with the wide range of activities and play opportunities provided. They are beginning to build good relationships with each other and with staff. They are supported well through individual attention, appropriate questioning techniques and purposeful play activities.

Younger children are learning by taking part in first hand experiences promoted in the setting. Staff use different mediums such as soft toys and puppets to encourage children to speak during circle time. For example, children tell 'Barney Bear' out loud what musical instruments they would like to play. Children are keen to shake and bang the musical instruments to make sounds and a few become overly excited. This results in them not always being encouraged to learn how to use and handle resources appropriately. Children are beginning to learn how to take a turn with their favourite small world toys and games such as the penguins and the trains. This means they are beginning to gain an understanding of sharing popular resources.

Younger children confidently use a wide range of equipment indoors and outside to promote their muscle development and are beginning to understand how exercise helps to keep them fit and healthy. Children use the outdoor equipment with skill and they negotiate space well. They are encouraged to take part in energetic play although there are ample alternative activities and games available for those who choose to be less active.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning for children in receipt of funded nursery education is good. There is an experienced and well-organised staff team who have developed their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage well. Staff plan and provide a consistent and varied range of activities under each of the six areas of learning, so that all aspects are covered. There is little by the way of assessing the level of attainment of new children on entry to the pre-school room provision. However, ongoing assessments show how children make good progress and informs planning to ensure all children are moved on to their next steps in learning.

Staff use effective methods to maintain children's curiosity and interest and spend their time working directly with them. Staff are skilful in questioning children's understanding and discussions are lively and engage children in purposeful conversation. Organisation of small group time encourages children to build their concentration skills. Adult-led activities are explained clearly to the children and are well promoted through imaginative and fun activities. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour consequently this results in children having a positive attitude towards their learning.

Children are interested and absorbed in their free play as they select and carry out activities. They are building good relationships with staff and peers and approach an activity with enthusiasm. Children's independence skills are growing and they can make their own way to the toilet, pour out their own drinks and put on their own outdoor coats. They are selected to be 'helpers' and enjoy being valued and receiving attention and praise this brings. Children are encouraged to help tidy activities and resources away after use and often do this spontaneously. This means they are assuming responsibility for managing and initiating routine tasks on their own.

Children speak clearly and confidently in their small groups and listen intently to stories and independently select books for pleasure. They recognise their name cards and some copy write letters. Younger children practise mark-making skills with different materials and resources. For example, at the writing table with pens and pencils, with water buckets and mops outside and with their fingers making lines in sand. Children design and make their own 'books' with a front page that shows the title and author.

Children are beginning to understand and use numbers. They count meaningfully to 10 and beyond. For example, they compare numbers when they count how many boys and girls there are or how many cups are needed at snack time. They are gaining awareness of mathematical concepts. For example, they match and sort using mathematical language such as bigger, more than, and use number rhymes and songs to develop a further understanding of addition and subtraction. They talk about how to make 'patterns' and are able to 'sequence' and recognise and name a range of different shapes accurately.

Children are developing a keen awareness of the world around them through activities such as celebrating different events and festivals. They take part in activities that celebrate other people's cultures and religions. For example, children are learning about Shavuot. This helps

them to develop an understanding of other people's lifestyles. They also have ample opportunity to explore and investigate living and growing things in the natural surroundings. Children also have good opportunities to use a range of Information and Communication Technology, such as computers, battery operated resources and programmable toys.

Children are developing their large and small physical skills well. They take regular walks to explore their local community. They have daily use of the secure outdoor play area where they make good use of the equipment. This outdoor play provides them with fun and exciting physical challenges to develop their climbing, pedalling and balancing skills. They move freely inside and have a good sense of the space around them. Staff talk to children about the way physical activity affects their bodies. For example, through discussions, themed activities and topics such as 'Being Healthy'.

Children initiate and participate in their own imaginative games and activities. They access a wide range of equipment that allows them to create and expand their own ideas. They are active participants in music activities as they become aware of loud and soft sounds and differing tempos. This is done using a range of instruments including tambourines, rain-makers and maracas. Children explore the natural learning environment using all of their senses. For example, at snack time when making fruit kebabs they hold, smell, talk about shape and colour and then taste the fresh fruit. They learn how to carefully handle seeds, small plants and bulbs. They sow runner beans in soil and learn that water and sunshine is needed to make their beans grow. Children enjoy tending the 'sensory garden' which contains a selection of scented plants and herbs such as lavender and mint.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are learning about their local community and the wider world around them. Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities. They use this knowledge to introduce activities to interest children in different people's cultures and family lifestyles. There are good procedures to ensure that children have meaningful opportunities to learn about different beliefs. For example, they take part in festivals and events such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff have arrangements in place to work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure all children are included. There is a good level of support available to ensure that all children receive individual attention so that their needs are effectively met.

Children are building good relationships with peers and staff. Most staff manage younger children's behaviour appropriately and encourage children to play together and share. Staff have a suitable understanding of the strategies to manage behaviour according to the age and understanding of the child and mainly use distraction as a tactic. Older children are polite and well mannered, particularly when engaged in circle time discussions. They wait for each other to finish speaking and they take notice when asked to follow an instruction. They are actively encouraged to participate at tidy-up time and are praised and consistently encouraged to behave well. This in turn promotes and reinforces good behaviour and builds children's self-esteem.

All children benefit from the positive relationships staff have developed with parents. This consistency is further advanced by daily verbal and written feedback to ensure parents are fully

informed about what their children have been doing whilst at nursery. Parents are invited to access their children's developmental records whenever they wish and are invited to discuss their child's progress with their key person. Newsletters and display boards are used to provide information to parents about their children's activities and current topics and themes.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery funded education is good. Children benefit from this as staff work closely with parents and carers to ensure children's individual learning needs are met. Staff are continually developing systems to ensure that parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress towards the early learning goals. This means that parents are actively involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery has robust vetting procedures in place for those having direct contact with children. Staffing levels are well maintained and exceeded in some circumstances. Over half of the staff employed in the setting hold an appropriate early years qualification and have experience of working with young children. This means that the nursery provides a safe and friendly environment where children's general well-being is well promoted.

Space is well organised, ensuring that children have good opportunities to play and develop in a secure environment. There is a good commitment to staff training. Staff at all levels are valued and respected for the skills and knowledge they bring to the setting. There is an effective key person system in place to ensure that children are cared for by a consistent staff team. Staff have a good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. They are good at identifying and creating learning opportunities and they help children to develop and extend their ideas. This means that staff plan an effective range of activities for children in the nursery which are purposeful and fun.

All required documentation complies with any change in legislation. Written documentation is clear and well maintained. For example, there are clear systems in place for recording accidents, medication and registers of daily attendance. Consequently, this means that children's welfare is fully promoted at all times.

The leadership and management is good. There is a supportive management structure and a focussed staff team who are committed to improving the quality of care and learning. Discussions and regular staff meetings take place to monitor and evaluate the funded nursery education and identify areas for improvement. Staff appraisals are carried out regularly to identify individuals strengths and areas for professional development. The nursery work closely with other professionals, such as the local authority early years unit and act upon advice given. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were six recommendations from the last inspection:

To develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour; this has been partly met, through identifying boundaries, including children in making the rules and using a number of appropriate techniques, such as rewarding good behaviour with stickers and praise. However this recommendation in part has been carried forward to this report.

To ensure all staff are familiar with the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs; a member of staff has been designated the role of special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). Relevant training has been identified and the SENCO has attended courses and cascaded information to all of the staff team. This ensures children's individual needs are well promoted in the setting.

To ensure children can access toys and equipment easily and increase the range of resources to reflect positive images of race, culture, gender and disability; resources are stored in clear plastic containers which are labelled. Rooms are organised to appeal to children's natural curiosity. Toys are easily accessible and children can choose from a wide range on offer. This means children have easy access to a wide range of resources to explore and maintain their interest.

To ensure staff listen to what children say and do and all children are involved and interested in their play; through staff meetings and sharing experiences and planning staff have made good progress in addressing this recommendation. Staff provide a good range of play and learning opportunities. All staff interact with children well and this promotes children's all-round development.

To ensure that all staff are aware of good hygiene practices when handling food; staff have attended appropriate food handling and hygiene training courses and follow good procedures to ensure good practices are promoted. This ensures that children remain healthy in the setting.

To ensure that all staff are familiar with the equal opportunities policy; a member of staff has been appointed as designated equal opportunities representative. A number of staff have attended appropriate training courses. This issue is discussed and minutes are taken at each staff meeting. An equal opportunities file has been produced as a tool to encourage the use of positive images in the nursery. Equal opportunities are incorporated in planning through topics and themes. This means that equal opportunities are well promoted throughout then nursery.

Nursery funded education.

In relation to the nursery funded education the setting was asked to increase the opportunities for children to practise writing their names and to write for a purpose as they play; to develop the use of observations to identify learning intentions for individual children and how activities can be extended for more able children; to encourage children's use of the book corner; to increase opportunities for children to select and initiate activities; to increase the range of activities and resources for imaginative play and for children to learn about other cultures and beliefs.

Children have good opportunities to practise mark-making and writing using different mediums in the pre-school room. Staff encourage children to use the writing table and involve them in activities to encourage their writing skills. For example, children make their own 'story books'. Observations and assessments identify individual learning intentions and highlight the next steps in children's learning. The room is organised well and reflects the six areas of learning. Children make good use of the book area and select books for pleasure. Resources are varied and stored appropriately for easy access. This encourages children to choose and initiate their own imaginative play. The improvements made help children to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- develop strategies to help children learn right from wrong

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 the system for keeping records of observations of children and their level of attainment when they first take up nursery funded education

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