



Pumpkins Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402106
Inspection date	15 December 2006
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	49 Papenburg Road, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 9NZ
Telephone number	01268 514415
E-mail	
Registered person	Gail Boland
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Pumpkins Day Nursery is privately owned. It opened in 1993 and operates from a purpose built premises in a residential area, within walking distance of schools and shops on Canvey Island. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Operating times are from 07:30 until 19:00.

There are currently 86 children aged from nine months to eight years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions, full day care or out of school care. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 staff, of whom five of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority, the National Day Nurseries' Association (NDNA) and the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn about healthy eating and the importance of a balanced diet. They can choose their sandwich fillings for lunch and enjoy eating a variety of fresh fruit. A nutritious cooked meal is provided for children at teatime. Drinking water is provided for the oldest children so that they can help themselves when they are thirsty and babies' covered cups are kept within their eyesight. Children benefit from the social occasion created at mealtimes as babies and young children sit together in groups to eat their lunch. The older children's independence and self-help skills are fully encouraged as they enjoy using the snack bar for a mid morning drink and biscuit. Babies are sensitively bottle fed in comfort with plenty of eye contact given by staff. Staff gather information about any allergies or special dietary requirements so that children's individual needs are met.

Children stay healthy because staff follow sound health and hygiene procedures. Staff have well established routines to prevent cross-infection such as cleaning tables and nappy changing mats with anti-bacterial cleanser. Although food preparation areas in the kitchen are kept scrupulously clean by the cook, careful attention is not always given to food handling by the staff. There is a clear sick child policy to enable staff to protect children from illness and infection. Children's welfare is generally promoted as appropriate accident and medication records are kept and there is one member of staff who holds a current first aid certificate. Other staff are currently attending a first aid training course.

Children learn about basic hygiene practises through the daily routine. They are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and usually before they have something to eat. Individual flannels, liquid soap and paper towels are provided and children learn about the need to dispose of used tissues hygienically in the bin.

Children benefit from a range of physical activities, which contribute to their good health and all round development. They look forward to going outside to play in the garden and enthusiastically practice their climbing and balancing skills on the range of outdoor apparatus. Indoors, space is cleared so that children can take part in circle games and use movement to express themselves in action songs. Equipment such as hoops, cones and stepping stones have been purchased so that children can further practise their physical skills indoors during poor weather. They develop their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination as they carefully thread beads and cotton reels onto strings. Babies learning to walk are given appropriate support with their mobility using furniture and play equipment under the watchful supervision of staff. The sleeping routines of babies and the younger children are carefully followed. They rest peacefully and undisturbed and clean individual bedding is provided.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, suitably safe and secure environment. The rooms used by children are warm and well maintained. Children's art and craft work is creatively displayed throughout the nursery. A wide range of good quality toys and play materials are stored where children can freely access them and make choices about their play. Play equipment is checked frequently for cleanliness and damage and any toys within reach of babies are safe for them to explore using their hands and mouth.

Children are kept safe because risks of accidental injury are generally minimised. Good use is made of safety items such as safety gates and electric socket covers to protect children from harm. Although a general risk assessment of the premises is undertaken, staff are not yet formally checking the safety of the playrooms prior to use each day. The staff are vigilant about the security of the children. Doors are kept locked and the gate to the garden is bolted to prevent unauthorised access. All visitors are closely monitored.

Children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe. They practise fire drills with the staff and understand how to evacuate the premises in an emergency. Children are encouraged to pick up tripping hazards as they tidy up. They are reminded that if they cover their heads with material then they might bump into the furniture and hurt themselves. School-age children are safely escorted as they walk to and from school. They are closely supervised and children wear fluorescent jackets so that they are easily noticed on dark winter mornings and evenings.

Children are safeguarded because staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection policies and procedures. Information relating to child protection procedures is displayed in each room and staff attend training so that they know the steps to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and eager to take part in the range of fun and interesting activities each day. They enjoy a well planned routine, which they understand. This gives them a sense of security and helps them separate from their parents at the start of the day and settle down to purposeful play. Activities are well paced. Children are grouped according to age, therefore, account is made of their differing attention spans. The nursery environment has been organised to allow children to become independent and even the youngest children can find and select play materials for themselves.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem through the interaction, care, love and attention they share with the staff. Plenty of cuddles with reassurance are offered and children enjoy the close contact with both staff and students. Staff encourage the children's verbal skills from a very early age by asking questions, reading stories and singing songs. Children greet staff warmly by name as they enter the nursery. They enthusiastically learn and practise a wide repertoire of Christmas songs. Staff are flexible and allow children to initiate activities for

themselves. For example, children spontaneously make a bus with a line of chairs and continue singing as they travel on their imaginary adventures.

Children enjoy a wide range of sensory toys and creative play. The use of treasure baskets allows babies and toddlers to investigate different textures and materials. They show fascination as they explore pine cones, kitchen utensils, keys and glittery fabrics. The staff competently use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities and chart the development for the youngest children in the nursery.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. A broad range of activities are provided for the children so that they make sound progress in all areas of learning. A variety of learning strategies are employed. Children work in large groups, in smaller focussed adult-led activities, or in independent free-play where they explore, develop their ideas and consolidate new skills. They behave well and are beginning to understand the need for self-discipline and consideration for others. Staff have recently reviewed and developed the planning of the curriculum and have only just started a new system to chart the progress of the funded children. As a result the staff team are not yet confidently linking their observations of the children's achievements with the stepping stones. The children's next steps in learning are not yet consistently identified and as a result some of the older and more able children are working within their capabilities and are not fully challenged to achieve as much as they can. The learning environment and resources are used well to provide stimulating learning experiences. However, at times the low partitions between the areas in the upstairs playroom prevent the funded children accessing the full range of activities. Although staff plan physical activities for children in the garden, they have not yet included within the written plans other outdoor projects linked to the other areas of the curriculum.

Children independence skills are developing well as they take part in self-registration each morning and pour their own drinks at snack time. Children handle books confidently and choose to read for pleasure, pointing out what they see in the pictures to their friends. They enjoy mark-making and practising their writing skills. Children write letters to Father Christmas and read back from their lists. Children form letters correctly as they write their names and are starting to link letter sounds to words they know.

Children use numbers and count within their everyday play. They count the number of children present at register time and recognise numerals on the calendar. Children enjoy recreating puzzles with the coloured pegs and recognise and name simple shapes as they play with the computer. Opportunities for exploring weight, volume and capacity are provided in sand and water play.

Children are given the time and encouragement to use all their senses to investigate a wide range of materials. They explore what happens when cornflakes are mixed with water and notice and describe the changes in texture and smells. Magnifiers are provided so that children can observe bugs and mini beasts and learn about the living world. Each day the children develop a sense of time as they use vocabulary such as 'yesterday and tomorrow' and they learn the days of the week and months of the year. There are very good opportunities for children to

learn about and use information technology. They independently use the computer and can adeptly move the mouse when using educational software.

Children are given a variety of opportunities each day to develop their creative and imaginative skills. They enjoy painting and mixing colours and show pleasure when demonstrating how a handprint can be changed to represent a Christmas tree. Children enjoy singing, play musical instruments with gusto and express themselves by moving rhythmically to music. A wide range of themed resources are provided so that children can act out role play scenarios based on their own experiences. For example, children enjoy cooking in the home corner and spend time explaining to the staff the best way to make a milk shake.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident and play happily together. They behave well due to the consistent, positive strategies that staff throughout the nursery employ to help them understand right from wrong and how to get along with others. Staff speak sensitively and use respectful language with children and present as calm role models. As a result the children learn about politeness and social skills such as sharing and remembering to say please and thank you. Children's individual needs are met well. There is a strong system in place to support children that may have additional needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is committed and enthusiastic about her role and ensures that the nursery provides the best possible care to meet the needs of all children.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There is a range of play resources that support children's understanding of the lives of others. Children learn about the wider world as they celebrate festivals such as Diwali. Activities are planned to encourage children to explore and show respect for the differences and similarities between themselves and others. For example, they draw self-portraits and discuss what they can see in the mirror. Children learn to help the staff by being a special helper and carrying the register or by tidying away the toys. Rewards such as stickers to encourage good behaviour and a sand timer that promotes turn taking help raise the children's confidence and self-esteem.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the very friendly communication between staff and their parents. Good verbal feedback is given each day. A wealth of written information is displayed for parents in the entrance and hallway of the nursery. The parents of babies are given daily diary sheets that cover the care routine for the day and keep them informed about sleep times, nappy changing, mealtimes and activities the children have taken part in. Regular dialogues with parents ensures that children's on-going needs such as potty training or moving to a new room with the nursery, can be achieved smoothly for the child. Open days are held where parents can discuss their child's progress and achievements. Although general information about the Foundation Stage is displayed in the hallway, parents of funded children are not kept fully informed about the activities and themes the children are covering. Further home-links to encourage parents to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways have not yet been set up. Parents speak very positively about the care and education their children receive in the nursery and appreciate the efforts of the staff team.

There is a complaints policy in place and the manager is fully aware of the need to make sure that there is a complaints record that can be shared with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children have settled well into the nursery due to the caring and sensitive staff team. Children are protected because the staff have been appropriately vetted and checked and the nursery management are fully aware of the need for robust recruitment procedures for any new staff. Staff attend one day training courses to update their childcare knowledge and skills. However, due to staff recently leaving, the minimum requirement that half the staff hold a level 2 qualification appropriate for the care and development of children is not being met. Adequate use is made of space within the premises and for much of the day the nursery runs smoothly. However, the nursery has started offering out of school care before and after the school day during term times. Children and babies eat their breakfast and play together in one room and as a result there are times, particularly before 09:00, when the minimum space requirements are not being met. The welfare of the babies is also potentially compromised early morning because they are being cared for in groups of more than 12 children.

All the essential documentation to ensure the efficient and safe management of the nursery is in place. However, paperwork is not always organised in a systematic way to allow staff easily find items they need. Confidential documentation is stored securely in locked filing cupboards. The registration certificate is displayed for parents to view in the entrance hall. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of nine children aged under two years. There have been occasions during the last month where this number has been exceeded. However, the impact on the children has been minimal because the appropriate adult-to-child ratios have been met at all times.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The owner of the nursery ensures that all children are included and treated with equal concern, because she spends much of her time working directly with the children and the staff team. The manager oversees all aspects of the care of the nursery and undertakes the administrative duties. The deputy has taken responsibility for the planning of the nursery education. The deputy is new to this role and is well aware of the strengths and the areas in which the nursery needs to improve. She is enthusiastic and committed to the improvement of the provision for nursery education. Systems are in place for staff appraisal and activities are now being evaluated.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that the level of qualification for the manager meets level 3 and to review the safety procedures relating to adults carrying hot drinks in the playroom. The manager has attended further training and now holds a relevant level 3 qualification. A high shelf has been installed in the playroom so that all the staff's drinks are inaccessible to the children. Consequently the nursery has taken steps to improve the welfare and safety of the children.

At the last inspection for nursery education the provider was asked to use daily activities to increase children's understanding of simple calculation and to provide opportunities for children to use equipment to develop their larger physical skills indoors, when the garden is out of bounds. The children now enjoy daily tasks such as counting how many children are sitting around the table and working out how many cups, plates and biscuits they need. Additional physical play equipment has been purchased to ensure that children can exercise and use large movements indoors if the garden is not in use. As a result opportunities for the children's mathematical and physical development have been extended and enhanced.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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:

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make sure that babies and children aged under two years are cared for in groups of no more than 12
- review how play space is organised to ensure that the minimum space requirements per child are met at all times
- develop and implement an action plan detailing how at least half of all staff working with the children will hold a level 2 qualification in childcare
- make sure that the conditions of registration are complied with 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):

- further develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage so that they can confidently deliver a curriculum with sufficient challenge so that children achieve as much as they can
- extend children's learning by consistently planning activities for the outdoor area, which contribute to all areas of learning
- further develop the partnership with parents so that they are kept informed about the curriculum and are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk