



Blackburne House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	322362
Inspection date	07 November 2006
Inspector	Sheila May Price
Setting Address	Blackburne Place, Off Hope Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L8 7PE
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Registered person	Blackburne House
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Blackburne House Day Nursery is privately owned by the Blackburne House Group and has been registered since 1994. It occupies part of a listed building within Blackburne House Technical College for Women in the city of Liverpool. The nursery has a baby room, a toddler room and a pre-school room. There is a secure outdoor play area. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 30 children at any one time aged under five. It operates Monday to Friday from 08.15 to 18.00 for 51 weeks a year. During the summer months, a holiday club is also provided for 16 children aged from four to eight years.

There are currently 38 children on roll, of whom 15 receive funding for nursery education. The provision employs eight members of staff to work with the children. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Routines adequately support children's physical and emotional well-being. Young babies are looked after according to their individual routines for eating and sleeping. Older babies generally rest after lunch according to the nursery routine and there is flexibility for older children to do quiet activities or rest rather than sleep if they do not wish to. Comfortably furnished areas for babies to withdraw to for peace and quiet when they feel the need are limited.

Children follow a good programme of activities to promote their physical development. They have regular access to the outdoor play area to get fresh air and exercise. They learn to negotiate steps safely and move about restricted spaces with generally good control. Planned activities include use of both small and large equipment to develop strength and co-ordination. Babies learn to move about independently with staff support. All children use good equipment for developing hand to eye control and manipulative skills.

Older children learn a little about healthy choices through topics about food and they are aware that they need to wash their hands and brush their teeth to keep them clean. Staff are not consistently following good hygiene practices during nappy changes or always observing promptly when children need to blow their noses. Arrangements with parents over giving medication and dealing with accidents in an emergency are satisfactory. However, staff are not regularly checking medication for expiry dates or using suitable storage methods. Although a good number of staff are qualified to administer first aid, the first aid boxes are not checked regularly to ensure they are suitably stocked.

Children eat food which is nutritious and suitably prepared. The cook bases her menu on a mostly vegetarian diet in respect of the differing cultural needs of children. Children eat fruit every day and vegetables are freshly prepared. Children's food is plated up at lunch times which limits their options for choice and older children are not learning to pick up their own toast from a plate in order to practice good hygiene procedures. Children generally enjoy their food and there is good partnership with parents over meeting children's individual dietary needs. Children have good access to water to quench their thirst.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are suitably maintained and secure to keep children safe. Children, using the central and pre-school room, enter a welcoming environment full of colourful displays of their own work and suitably laid out to make the best of limited space and the unusual architectural features. The baby room is less welcoming because it lacks cosiness in its layout and décor with insufficient use of canopies, soft furnishings and low level display.

Children use a suitable range of equipment for their needs and capabilities. They learn to avoid tripping hazards and are warned to use the slide safely. Staff check the safety of the rooms and the outdoor facilities before children arrive and report any safety concerns to the facilities

manager. Written risk assessments and records of accidents are not reviewed with enough frequency to be of practical assistance. Staff generally supervise children well for their safety.

Staff have sufficient knowledge of signs and symptoms of abuse and reporting procedures to keep children safeguarded should they have a concern about a child. The manager has yet to examine how she will adapt a standardised child protection policy to the specific needs of the nursery, so that procedures are clear to all concerned, should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy participating in a broad range of activities which staff have planned to promote their all round development. Babies spend time playing with musical instruments, trying out the different sounds that they make or pressing buttons on activity centres to watch or listen to what happens next. They are supported well by interested staff who make good eye contact and use simple words or phrases to communicate with them. Those that are distressed are cuddled appropriately for reassurance. Toddlers select their own activities confidently, choosing their own books from the book corner and playing sociably together in the role play area. Staff engage children in conversation about what they are doing and set challenging questions to make them think. Relationships are warm and friendly and children throughout the nursery respond well to the staff's good humour and positive attitudes.

Staff are unsure of how to organise their observations, evaluate what this tells them about children's learning or development, and use this to plan what to do next. The new records of children's progress and achievement linked to this system, which will be shared with parents, are yet to be started. Staff are, in the meantime, continuing to take good account of information about children gained from parents and they are satisfactorily meeting children's individual needs.

Nursery Education

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make steady progress towards early learning goals. Staff have sufficient knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance and use this to plan and provide a generally good range of activities and experiences under each of the six areas of learning. Despite limited recent observations, staff who work with funded children have enough knowledge of what they can do from working with them previously, which has helped them to plan activities at the appropriate level. Staff, however, are not taking a systematic approach to making assessments, monitoring progress and planning next steps for individuals or groups. Daily records shared with parents serve little purpose as they show only what children do rather than what children learn through the process.

Staff have a good understanding of some children's interests and approaches to learning. Very positive relationships have been established which foster children's self esteem. This is reflected in the confidence with which children communicate with others and the pride they take in showing off their work. Staff keep children absorbed in activities through good intervention which sustain their interest. They are able to arouse children's curiosity and sense of fun and

still maintain good control when children temporarily become over excited. Children develop enquiring minds and enjoy learning.

Children listen and respond well during circle time and make up stories during role play. They eagerly select their favourite book for reading and can name key characters. They learn to read their names with confidence from where they are displayed and some know the letters of their name to write. Staff are aware of children's different levels of achievement in writing and letter recognition, but do not plan next steps. Children count during every day activities and use good equipment for making number patterns, such as dominoes and peg boards. They use mathematical language, such as 'this one is bigger', and learn what comes next in a number sequence. Staff do not always pick up on opportunities to set children mathematical problems to solve during play activities.

Children enjoy moving to music and playing musical instruments and sing favourite rhymes and actions songs with confidence. They explore different ways to represent fireworks in paint and collage. They use their senses to explore the colour of autumn leaves, make different mixtures during cooking activities and taste different food. They talk about the days of the week, changes in the seasons and do a sequence jigsaw for getting dressed which helps them understand the passing of time. Children make particularly good use of the computer to play a game of cause and effect which helps them learn problem solving skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally well settled in the nursery because staff are sensitive to their needs and there is some continuity in each room through the key worker system. Children are given sufficient choices to help them learn to make decisions. They gradually gain increased independence in their personal care, such as hanging up their own coats in the pre-school room and getting their own drinks.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. They learn how to be kind and caring through the example set by the staff who act as good role models. Children help with putting equipment away to make a contribution to the cleanliness and safety of their environment. Pre-school children have a good understanding of the rules which are well displayed for them in pictures and words. Staff make it clear why children should not swing round the pillars or jump off steps for every one's safety and children remind others of these rules showing their understanding of boundaries.

Children develop positive attitudes towards diversity through discussions, activities and resources which raise their awareness of similarities and differences. Pre-school children learn that significant events are often celebrated by the lighting of candles in different cultures. Staff manage facilities, timetables and grouping well to ensure all children have equal access to resources and activities. There are suitable systems for identifying children with learning difficulties and giving them support.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are welcomed into children's rooms where they have the opportunity to speak to children's key workers on a daily basis. Good information is

exchanged to help new children settle in. Parents receive adequate information about how the nursery operates, although not all of this is kept up to date. Some parents comment very positively on the good relationships established between staff and themselves and are reassured by the staff's genuine concern over their children's welfare. Systems for involving parents in supporting children's progress along stepping stones towards early learning goals are adequate. Parents' opinions are sought over any improvements to running the service and these are acted upon.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All staff employed by the nursery have an early years qualification which ensures that they have good underpinning knowledge to meet children's welfare and development needs. Training is targeted well to the roles of senior staff who oversee the work of others. Policies and procedures are followed well by most staff for children's health and safety. New planning and record keeping systems are yet to be fully implemented to support children's progress.

Recruitment procedures involve appropriate checks on staff suitability to protect children, although not all reference numbers and dates that would help verify this are kept. Staff are adequately deployed to meet ratios and the key worker system helps to provide continuity over children's care. Written information given to parents and provided for staff guidance is not always up to date. Record keeping is generally satisfactory, but there is no system in place yet for recording a suitable complaints summary for sharing with parents.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Staff generally use space and resources well to support teaching and learning. There is a good balance between staff-led and child-led activity and whole group activities are kept suitably short. Staff working directly with children have adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage and suitable opportunities for training. They are able to get assistance from the more experienced manager and the early years advisor. The system for monitoring how well the educational programme is being carried out has weaknesses. This is because aims are often not specific enough or targeted in relation to individual children to gauge what learning has taken place. Efforts to explain to staff how to evaluate their observations and link these to planning next steps have yet to fully bear fruit.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides

Improvements since the last inspection

There were six recommendations arising from the previous combined care and nursery education inspection. Most of these related to policies, information for parents, and record keeping. The nursery has made some improvements in relation to these recommendations, but not always very effectively, therefore, aspects of these appear again in the recommendations for this report. Improvements are as follows.

The nursery now has a more effective system for recording the presence of children and staff by indicating their times of arrival and departure each day. This acts as a better safeguard for children. Staff now have a system for checking children's temperatures and recording this

before administering medication that has been authorised by parents for children's better health and safety. The organisation has obtained a standard child protection policy that now meets the requirement to include a procedure for when it is alleged that abuse has taken place on the premises or that a member of staff is not suitable. This policy has not yet been adapted to show specific procedures the nursery will follow for the information of staff and others. This could have an affect on children's safety and, therefore, is included in a further recommendation.

The operational plan, which includes policies and information for parents, is still disorganised. Policies are not regularly reviewed and where some policies have been updated, old policies are not removed and other documentation is not revised, such as the pack for parents. The complaints procedure was amended to include information about how to contact Ofsted, however, the policy needed subsequent further amendment following introduction of new regulations, which has not been carried out. A further recommendation in relation to this and regularly reviewing policies is made in this report.

The completion of assessments to plan next steps and the sharing of records of children's progress with parents has only been partly addressed. Parents have access to the record of progress and have informal discussions with staff over children's progress, but this is not a systematic process that ensures all relevant information has been shared and to help parents make a contribution to children's learning. Achievements are highlighted on the record of progress, but how these have been assessed is not always clear. This is linked to a new recommendation in this report.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004, Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standard 2: Organisation. This involved concerns about the number and ages of children looked after in different rooms, the ratio of staff to children, and the quality of care being provided. Ofsted investigated these concerns by visiting the provision on 7 April 2005. As a result of the visit, one action was raised in relation to National Standard 2: Organisation. The provider responded appropriately to the action raised. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking this step the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 that first aid kits are suitably stocked and medicines stored safely
- record specific procedures to be followed for the nursery in relation to the standard child protection policy obtained from the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the guidance in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' summary
- devise a system for reviewing policies and procedures in line with changes to regulations and guidance, with particular reference to the summary of complaints and keeping disclosure notice reference numbers and dates.

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 staff understanding of how to evaluate what they see during observations so that children's learning and development is recorded and next steps can be planned more effectively for individuals and groups. (This recommendation also applies to the quality and standards of care)

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