



Minihome Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY248301
Inspection date	24 October 2006
Inspector	Chris Banks
Setting Address	14 Allen Road, Hackney, London, N16 8SD
Telephone number	020 7249 0725
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Registered person	Minihome 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

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 good. 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?

Minihome Nursery was registered in 2003. It is privately run and operates from converted premises in the N16 area of Hackney. The Nursery operates each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round and is registered to care a maximum of 70 children at any one time.

There are four main play rooms spread over two floors. Children also have access to a fully enclosed garden and occasional use of a soft play room in an adjacent building.

There are currently 90 children on roll. Of these, 23 receive funding for early education.

The Nursery employs a team of 21 staff. Appropriate qualifications in early years childcare are held by 19 of the staff.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean and hygienic surroundings. Areas used by children are cleaned twice a day which helps ensure standards are consistently maintained. Children are well protected from the risk of infection because clear and comprehensive written procedures are effectively put into practice by staff. If a child becomes ill in the care of the nursery, they are warmly comforted until parents arrive. Good account is taken of individual children's health needs and clear guidance is given to staff about how to safely administer medication or alternative health remedies.

Children are learning good self care skills. They understand the importance of washing their hands at certain times and older children are also familiar with the routine of brushing their teeth after meals.

Children enjoy nutritious meals and snacks because staff positively promote healthy eating. Menus are well planned and are prominently on display in the nursery foyer. Food is varied, nutritionally well balanced and does not include meat products. Younger children enjoy pureed fresh vegetables and soups whilst older children experience a wide range of food that includes fish, pulses, pasta and stews. Children are kept well hydrated throughout the day because water is freely available. All food is freshly prepared on the premises by a qualified cook and assistant. Meal times are very relaxed, sociable occasions for children with lots of happy chatter and good support from staff.

During outdoor play, children enjoy the fresh air and have the opportunity to develop their co-ordination and balancing skills by using wheeled toys and small climbing area. Use of the garden is carefully monitored to ensure children of all ages have equal access to the outdoors. During indoor play, the fine motor skills of children are becoming well developed as they learn to cut, shape and draw with various materials.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in safe surroundings and are well supervised. Premises are well secured and all unknown visitors are asked to prove their identity and sign the visitors book. The arrival and departure of children is also closely monitored and the good practice of reminding parents to sign out children further protects their safety.

Children are able to explore in comfort and safety because staff take good practical precautions to protect them. There is a well developed system in place for assessing potential safety risks and action is taken promptly if any are identified. Daily checklists are completed in every room used by children and safety arrangements are regularly reviewed. Sleeping babies are checked every 15 minutes and older children are well supervised during their nap.

The overall welfare of children is positively protected because key staff are extremely knowledgeable about their role and responsibility in child protection. They are familiar with the process of monitoring, recording and reporting concerns and use up to date written guidance. The procedure for dealing with any allegations made against staff is also clearly outlined and the role of Ofsted is included. The policy of confidentiality about referrals is also clearly explained in writing to parents.

Children enjoy playing with a range of well maintained toys and equipment which are regularly checked for safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children receive a warm welcome from staff and are comfortable and secure in the setting. Space is well prepared in advance and proposals for the days activities are discussed with older children at circle time. Babies enjoy warm and consistent care from staff who understand their needs well. New babies are settling happily into their routines because staff encourage gentle separation from parents and provide warm support.

Children benefit from staff's good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and their progress is well monitored. Staff keep clear, detailed observational records and use plans well to develop activities to stimulate their interest. They share the enthusiasm of the children when they learn new skills and have developed warm and trusting relationships with children of all ages.

Toys, equipment and resources are varied and appropriate for children's ages and stages of development. Most are stored at low level which means children can easily reach them. Books, however, for older children are not attractively displayed or made easily accessible.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the main, children engage in a range of activities which helps them make steady progress in their learning. This is because staff are developing an understanding of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and plan activities which motivate and stimulate them. Some staff are more confident than others in this area and effectively use plans and written observations to support children's next stages of development. The system is, however, not used consistently for all children.

Children are learning key social skills such as sharing and taking turns. Children are mostly very considerate towards each other and are learning to co-operate well. They show good concentration during activities and listen attentively to stories. Some are also enthusiastic contributors and ask lots of challenging questions.

Stories are often linked to themes such as Autumn. As the nights draw in children enjoy stories about nocturnal wildlife. Diwali is also celebrated which introduces children to concepts of light and goodness. This helps broadens their knowledge and understanding of the world in a fun and enjoyable way.

The technology skills of children are not being fully supported because these types of activities are not sufficiently well incorporated into written plans.

Children are learning good self help skills and are encouraged to link some routines with promoting good health. They confidently hang up their own coats and change outdoor shoes. Following lunch, they also brush their teeth independently and understand why this is important. Children co-operate well with adults in their daily routines and sing along with staff to a 'tidy up' song as they help clear away before lunch.

Everyday activities sometimes successfully incorporate a range of learning opportunities for children. For example, during bread making they are encouraged to assess quantity, volume and also discuss changes in its dimensions after yeast is added. Children are also learning about maths concepts. Some are beginning to understand simple calculations and staff use mathematical language well to stimulate their thinking in this area.

When children engage in imaginary play they experiment with their writing skills by composing letters and posting them to friends. After art and craft activities, they label their own work before it is displayed on the wall.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected because staff have a good understanding of their individual needs and respond to them well. They benefit from the warm and caring attitude of staff, many of whom have developed trusting relationships. Children are happily settled because the key worker system works well and the settling in process is gradual and family friendly. This includes parents being invited to join their children at tea time when they move, for example, from the baby room to the toddlers area.

Children behave well. This is because staff guide behaviour in a way that is consistent but also sensitive to the circumstances of individual children. If older children become restless or distracted, the more experienced staff successfully divert their attention to other activities. Children enjoy each others company and are positively encouraged to be caring and thoughtful towards one another.

A good range of anti discriminatory toys and equipment help children acknowledge difference and learn more about the world around them. They learn about the traditions of others by celebrating different cultural festivals such as Diwali and by tasting different foods at meal times. This helps successfully foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are systems in place and links with other agencies to ensure children with disabilities are integrated and supported.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. They are given clear information about how the curriculum is planned and are kept well informed about their child's progress. They receive regular written reports and are actively encouraged to participate in meetings with key workers. Parents of younger children receive

daily updates on their child's food and fluid intake, sleeping patterns and are kept informed about their general welfare.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory with arrangements in place to ensure it is effectively led until a new manager is appointed. Children benefit from being cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities because there is a comprehensive induction and staff development programme.

The Acting Manager gives staff clear guidance and support and is fully involved in the running of the provision. There is a clear awareness of the settings strengths and weaknesses and a demonstrated commitment to improve the overall quality of Nursery Education. Staff are developing a growing knowledge of the Foundation Stage and make some sound observations of children's progress but as yet are not clearly planning for all children's next steps. Children under three years benefit from a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework which means their overall development is well supported.

The environment is comfortable and welcoming with sufficient space for the number of children the nursery is registered to care for. Rooms used by children are well organised but there is no cosy, comfortable space on the ground floor for older children to rest and relax. Babies benefit from continuity of care because the same person looks after them for the full day. In the case of staff absence, known sessional staff step in or agency personnel are used.

Documentation is very well organised and stored confidentially. Systems are also in place to ensure records, policies and procedures are regularly updated.

The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was required to improve staff's overall understanding of equal opportunities and ensure that resources promote equality. There is now a good range of anti discriminatory toys and equipment and children are also learning more about the world around them. They explore other cultures through their everyday play activities and also enjoy the experience of trying different foods at mealtimes.

The garden area has been resurfaced following a recommendation made at the last inspection. Normally, if it rained the surface became very muddy and slippery for children. They are now able to play in safety and comfort because the ground covering is more appropriate.

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.

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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):

- review arrangements for the storage and display of books and combine this with creating a comfortable area for children aged over three years.

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 curriculum for the Foundation Stage
- further develop aspects of children's knowledge and understanding of the world by incorporating more information, communication and technology activities into the programme
- ensure assessments and written observations of children's progress are effectively used to plan the next steps in their development.

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