



Blue House Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY332030
Inspection date	22 November 2006
Inspector	Rebecca Elizabeth Khabbazi
Setting Address	Blue House Day Nursery, 48 Sydenham Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 2EF
Telephone number	0208 6817579
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Registered person	Casterbridge Nurseries Ltd
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?

Blue House Day Nursery is part of a chain of 17 nurseries owned by Casterbridge Nurseries Ltd., and has been registered under this provider since 2006. It operates from a converted house and is situated in a residential street in the centre of Croydon. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

A maximum of 74 children aged under five years old may attend the nursery at any one time, and there are currently 60 children on roll, who attend for a variety of sessions. Of these, 13 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00-18:30, all year round.

The nursery employs 14 staff who work directly with the children, including the manager and deputy manager. Of these, 12 members of staff have a recognised childcare qualification and

two are currently training. The setting receives support from the Local Authority through an Early Years Advisor as well as having access to its own training programme through Casterbridge Nurseries.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children begin to learn about simple good hygiene practices when they wash their hands before they eat and understand that this is because they may have germs on. Children have their own named toothbrushes which they use to brush their teeth after meals, and have access to liquid soap and paper towels in the bathrooms. Staff follow clear procedures for keeping tables, floors and sinks clean, and for changing children's nappies. This all helps reduce risk of cross-contamination.

Children benefit from regular physical activity and exercise. All of the children go out in the garden every day, which contributes to a healthy lifestyle and supports their physical development. They enjoy running around in the fresh air, riding bikes, and kicking balls. Older children practise balancing across the logs, carefully stepping from one to the next and using their arms to steady themselves. Children rest and sleep according to their individual needs and routines, and all have their own sheets and blankets which are washed daily. They enjoy varied and nutritious meals and snacks that are freshly prepared on the premises and take into account their dietary needs.

Children are taken good care of if they have an accident or are unwell because there is always a member of staff with a first aid qualification available. There are systems in place for recording any medicine that children need to be given and making sure parents are kept well informed, but these are not always followed consistently by staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a welcoming, well maintained environment. Their risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff take steps to reduce any potential hazards, for instance by conducting regular risk assessments and daily health and safety checks, and making sure the building is secure at all times. Children begin to learn to keep themselves safe when they are reminded of the rules and the reasons why they need to hold on the rail as they walk down the stairs from the garden, or why they need to sit down while they eat.

Children play with a good range of toys and equipment that they can easily select for themselves, and which are used to create a stimulating play environment. Resources are regularly checked for damage and kept clean, which helps ensure children can play safely.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection. All of the staff team have received child protection training and are familiar with the nursery's

procedures for dealing with any concerns. This means they can take appropriate action if they are worried about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are mostly contented throughout the nursery, and those settling in are given extra attention and support. Children are well occupied throughout the day and take part in a good variety of experiences. They show developing independence and are eager to take part in activities. Staff join in with their play and interact positively with the children. They know their key children well and they have good relationships. Staff make regular observations of children's achievements, and plan activities around children's needs and interests using High Scope Key Experiences and 'Birth to three matters' as a framework.

Babies and children up to two years old in 'New Beginners' and 'Little Explorers' enjoy heuristic play and exploring sensory materials on the floor or in trays, squishing and squashing jelly cubes in their fingers at a low table, or painting with staff. They cuddle up to staff as they share a book together, and staff encourage their learning when they ask questions and show an interest in what they say and do. Older children aged two to three years old in 'Active Explorers' happily take turns on the bikes and the slide as they enjoy an outdoor play session. Indoors, they build with bricks or make tea in the home corner. They confidently help themselves to materials to stick on their collage at the craft table, listen quietly to a familiar story, and join in with songs enthusiastically, following the words and actions.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children in 'Independent Learners' are confident and settled. They show good levels of independence and the room is well organised to encourage them to do things for themselves. They have good relationships with each other and with staff, and are keen to greet one another as the day begins. Staff mostly have an understanding of how children learn, and spend time talking and listening to children and engaging in their play. Some small group activities, however, are too adult-directed and do not enable children to express their own ideas, and staff's management of children's behaviour is not always consistent.

Children begin to show an interest in number and use their knowledge to solve simple problems, such as working out how many plates they need at the table or how many fat sausages are left when one goes 'pop' and another goes 'bang'. They are keen to communicate and they use language well to talk to their friends and contribute at group times. They enjoy listening to stories and remember the words to familiar books. However, adult-led writing activities, such as tracing over sentences, are over-directive and lack meaning for children, and they do not have enough opportunities to write and make marks independently as part of their everyday play.

Children have good opportunities to find out about the world around them, for instance when they take part in a project about the planets and learn their names, make telescopes and create their own planets with balloons, paper and glue. They enjoy experimenting in the water tray

and are delighted to discover that when they blow through one end of a piece of tubing, the water sprays out of the other. They show a particular interest in the giant construction area and enthusiastically design and construct houses, cars, and boats, using their imagination to pretend that the carpet area is an island and the rest of the floor is the sea.

Staff ensure a varied programme is provided that allows a balance of experiences. They plan activities based on the interests of the group as a whole, and this means children are keen to take part. However, written plans do not show how activities are intended to help children make progress in each of the areas of learning within the Foundation Stage, in order to guide teaching. Observations are made of children's achievements, but these are not used to identify individual next steps for children and effectively track their progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed into the setting and valued as individuals. Procedures such as settling-in visits and meetings between parents and key workers help ensure all children's needs are known before they start. Children begin to value diversity when they celebrate Chinese New Year by eating Chinese food or make lanterns for Divali. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children of all ages have good opportunities to develop independence skills and do things for themselves. As soon as they are able, they confidently select their own resources and set them out on tables or the floor, helping to tidy them away again when they have finished playing. Children in 'Independent Learners' pour their own drinks, butter their rice cake at snack time and serve their own vegetables with a big spoon at lunch. Most staff in the nursery have a calm approach and ensure children are clear about rules and expectations. 'Independent Learners' have contributed to the rules for their room, but staff working with them are not consistent in how they manage the group, and this means children are not always sure of the consequences of their behaviour.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the nursery, for instance through the Parent-Nursery Association which enables them to have an active voice in how the nursery is run and take part in regular social events. They receive clear information about the setting through the prospectus, noticeboard and monthly newsletters. Staff are friendly and approachable and ensure information about children is exchanged verbally every day. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents have the opportunity to see their child's file and talk about their progress at an annual parents' evening, but they are not currently involved in more regular reviews of children's progress or in identifying and agreeing individual next steps for their child.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Effective recruitment procedures ensure children are cared for by staff who are appropriately vetted and have a good understanding of child development. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. They are kept well-informed through regular staff and room meetings, and have opportunities to further develop their skills and knowledge through training, including an annual training week for the whole nursery. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place which mostly work well in practice. A record of all complaints and concerns has been kept, but this is not currently in an appropriate format to share with parents on request.

Leadership and management of the nursery education provision is satisfactory. There is a strong commitment to continual development and improvement, but there are not yet rigorous systems in place to effectively monitor and evaluate the nursery education provision. This means that areas for improvement are not always identified and addressed at an early stage.

Space and resources are well organised in all areas of the nursery and ensure that children are well-occupied and appropriately supported by staff throughout the day. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- update the system for keeping records of complaints in line with new requirements
- make sure staff implement procedures for recording the administration of medicine consistently 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):

- develop the system for planning so that plans clearly show how activities are intended to help children make progress in each of the areas of learning within the Foundation Stage
- improve the use of observations to identify individual next steps for children and to monitor and track children's progress towards the early learning goals
- ensure staff in 'Independent Learners' use consistent strategies for managing children's behaviour
- improve staff's understanding of how to encourage children's early literacy skills by creating opportunities for children to write and make marks in meaningful activities during play

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