



Asquith Nursery - Balham

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286661
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Mauvene Burke / Pamela Bailey
Setting Address	36 Radbourne Road, Balham, London, SW12 0EF
Telephone number	020 8673 1405
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Registered person	Asquith Court Nurseries 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 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?

Asquith Nursery - Balham is one of a chain of nurseries run by Asquith Court Nurseries Limited. It opened in 2004 and operates from three rooms in former school premises refurbished to accommodate the nursery. It is situated in a residential area on the borders of the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Wandsworth. A maximum of 63 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 07:30 to 18:30 for 51 weeks per year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 70 children under five years on roll. Of these, five children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with disabilities.

The nursery employs 18 full time staff and seven supply staff. A total of 13 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children follow good personal hygiene routines as they wash their hands before eating their meals and snacks and after using the toilet. Older children often do this without any prompts from the staff whilst the younger children are beginning to understand why they need to do so, as staff gently reinforce this throughout the day. However, good hygiene practices for the babies are not fully promoted because staff use the same water to wash all the babies hands and they use the same flannel with which to dry them, this exposes children to cross-infection. Although the kitchen appears to be of a good standard of hygiene throughout, recommendations made at the last inspection by the environmental officer over a year ago have not yet been addressed. For example, the safe disposal of rubbish does not prevent the spread of disease because the bin is not fitted with a lid.

More than half the staff hold first aid certificates. Appropriate procedures are in place for sick children, for accidents and for the administration of medication. Parents are aware of the procedures and adhere to them, this ensures children's health needs are satisfactorily met.

The staff are aware of the need to promote healthy eating. Children receive a nutritious range of meals and snacks including fresh fruit and vegetables, and they enjoy the meals thoroughly. The cook prepares all the meals freshly on the premises. Staff work appropriately with parents to ensure they are aware of, and meet, any special dietary requirements. Children are offered drinks with their meals and have direct access to fresh drinking water at other times.

Children's physical development is supported well, with opportunities for the toddlers and pre-school children to play outdoors each day. There is an enclosed dedicated outdoor play space and children over three years can plant seeds and explore nature. However, babies do not receive the same opportunities as older children as they do not have access to fresh air on a daily basis. Staff's good understanding of appropriate types of activities and levels of support gives children confidence to try new skills and build on existing ones. Children can rest or be active according to their individual needs and are able to recognise changes in their bodies when they are not well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The physical environment is organised to ensure that it provides a safe place for children to play in and explore. Security of the building and garden is good, ensuring that children cannot leave unsupervised and that uninvited persons cannot gain access. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire because these are written and clearly displayed and fire drills are carried out periodically. Children are beginning to learn about

the importance of keeping themselves and others safe as staff talk to them about the potential consequences of unsafe behaviour. As a result, they are beginning to use their knowledge and apply it to different situations such as cleaning up sand and water spillage.

Children benefit from the warm and welcoming way in which the staff greet them, they arrive happily into this environment and settle very quickly. Children have plenty of space to move around safely and securely mainly because of the way the activities and resources are organised. For example, there are rest areas in each room where children can relax and be quiet and children can independently access activities and resources very easily. The equipment is plentiful and of good quality and is well maintained.

Children's welfare is mostly safe-guarded because core staff have a sound knowledge of issues relating to child protection. However, the supply staff do not have the same opportunities to attend child protection training as full time staff and as a result their knowledge of child protection procedures is not as secure as that of the core group of staff, this compromises children's overall welfare. The child protection policy for the setting is currently not in line with new guidelines.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They arrive happy and are eager to participate in the activities and are making good progress. Close and caring relationships with staff increase the children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children are developing good relationships with each other and their communication skills are well supported through good adult-to-child interactions. Staff use appropriate language when talking with children about activities they are engaged in such as the oats and jelly activity, they use language such as "smooth" and "rough". Staff are skilled at asking meaningful questions to children which makes them think. Children enjoy listening to and joining in with familiar stories, staff make these interesting which ensures children's full attention is gained as children listen carefully. Staff working with children under three are using the 'Birth to three matters' programme generally well. However, the assessment's made of children following observations do not clearly identify the next steps of learning for individual children. As a result of this, any progress that the children are making is not clear. Children have many opportunities to develop their senses through well planned sensory activities, for example, through playing with corn flour, jelly, treasure baskets and other natural materials such as oats. Activities and play opportunities are purposeful and developmentally appropriate, resulting in all the children being highly motivated, occupied and interested.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing extremely well, supported by the staff team's confidence and secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The staff are good role models and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning by presenting activities in an interesting and enthusiastic manner. They work diligently to inspire, praise and encourage children to try new things. They continue to develop children's skills and use good questioning techniques to stimulate thought and challenge children to make progress in all areas of learning.

On-going observations identify children's learning and are used well to plan a range of activities based on children's interests.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff on arrival. They are actively involved in play and activities throughout the sessions. They have a high level of independence, freely selecting equipment for themselves and taking care of their personal needs. For example, they dress and undress themselves for outdoor play and choose when to have snacks or a drink of water. Their independence is built on as they help with routine tasks such as setting the table for lunch, serving themselves and helping to tidy up. This also encourages children to have respect for each other, the environment and the resources. Children are very well behaved, confident and have a high self esteem. A good range of role play activities, routine tasks alongside staff's support and encouragement help children to learn to negotiate, share and take turns.

Children's spoken language and listening skills are developing well. They express their ideas and experiences well and learn new vocabulary such as 'syllables'. They talk happily about their home life and family and are beginning to understand differences in their lives to others around them. Children enjoy books and listen avidly to stories read by staff who are very expressive in their tone. They understand that print carries meaning and recognise their names. For example, on their coat pegs and self registration system. They are beginning to recognise those of others when setting up for lunch using table mats.

Children are beginning to learn to recognise and write letters during informal and meaningful activities. They frequently attempt writing their names or initial letters during role play situations, creative activities such as making story books and when playing with the sand.

Children are confident in counting and use numbers in everyday situations such as during lunch time. They learn about addition and subtraction through practical worthwhile activities such as water play and are confident to say what is one more or one less. They are able to group objects such as sea animals and those that live in ponds. Children learn about size and using appropriate mathematical language during practical activities and use free play to promote an understanding of shape.

Children are able to freely explore their surroundings and learn through play. They use information communication technology during role play and are beginning to learn how to use the computer. They discover which objects sink and float, and discuss similarities and differences during water play. They care for living things such as feeding the pet goldfish and water plants in the outdoor area. Children are confident in discussing past and present events in their own life and those of other people.

Children's finer motor skills are developing well. They are competent when selecting and using equipment such as scissors, glue sticks and small tools when playing with clay and dough. They demonstrate good cutting and joining skills to make models and create collages. A range of different size paint brushes, pens and pencils help children to develop their mark making skills. Children play outside and extend their physical skills on a daily basis.

Children have many opportunities to use their senses and explore a varied range of both natural and manufactured materials and equipment. They have access to a good range of musical instruments and participate in singing sessions. They play listening and guessing games that encourage them to explore sounds. For example, they enjoy experimenting with sounds and rhythms as they tap out fast and slow beats to their names. They express themselves creatively through a range of mediums as they paint, draw and make collages that represent their ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are cared for on an individual basis. Their care needs are discussed in detail with their parents and are met well by staff who get to know the children's individual needs. The daily routines include enough flexibility to enable children to have time to follow their own interests as well as work together in small groups. Children with special needs are well cared for and given appropriate support. However, resources reflecting positive images of disability are quite limited.

Children's behaviour is good, the atmosphere in the setting is calm and as a result the children are also calm. Staff are consistent in their approach and children understand the expectations of the adults. They learn right from wrong in a supportive environment. Positive praise helps children to understand the benefits of good behaviour and motivates them to work co-operatively, for example sharing and taking turns. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Relationships with parents are friendly and parents feel welcomed. They receive information about the Foundation Stage which outlines what and how children will learn. This ensures that parents understand that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage in learning. Whilst there are both formal and informal systems in place for staff to share information about children's individual progress and development these are not always effective. As a result, some parents are not kept sufficiently informed about their child's progress or how they are able to contribute to their learning.

There is a satisfactory procedure in place for recording complaints from parents. Although some parents are aware of this, it is not available to them in writing.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Procedures in place to appoint and vet staff ensure that those working in the setting are suitable to work with children. Good ratios of staff working in direct contact with the children support their care, learning and play.

The organisation of staff, resources and accommodation mostly contribute positively to children's good health, safety and enjoyment and achievement. Most of the required documentation is in place and is of a good quality. However, the induction programme and general training for

the setting's supply staff does not always sufficiently make them familiar with the procedures of the setting such as those to follow regarding child protection issues.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Children benefit from qualified and experienced staff who are committed to attending further childcare training and development courses. Staff understand their role and responsibilities, have a sound awareness of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice to support children's development.

Management have defined roles and responsibilities. There are clear aims for the provision and effective systems in place for the continual development and assessment of staff. They have successfully identified areas for improvement such as children's assessments, planning, and partnership with parents. However, systems to keep parents informed of their child's learning and to evaluate the assessment of younger children's development are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure they achieve their aims.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection relating to care, the provider agreed to provide a range of activities to develop children's understanding of diversity and keep an accurate record of children's attendance. Further to this, the provider was also asked to improve the planning and observations of the children to make clearer links with the Birth to three framework and to ensure that parents contribute to the next steps in their children's learning. Children's attendance is now clearly recorded giving details of their arrival and departure times, this ensures the safety of all children, as the setting now has an accurate record of the amount of children on the premises and children are now involved in celebrating different cultural festivals which helps them to value and respect differences. Some of the staff working directly with children have recently attended training in the Birth to three and use the framework to plan for the under three's. Improvement regarding the use of the observations have been made, but they are yet to develop this further to ensure that children's next steps of learning are identified. Parents are currently not sufficiently involved in their children's next steps of learning, because the systems in place to ensure children's progress is effectively communicated to parents is not sufficiently developed. This has been identified during this inspection and further recommendations made for the provider to address this.

Under the nursery education part of the inspection, the provider agreed to introduce a rigorous system to monitor the quality of teaching, increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and to improve the use of assessment, planning and record systems to help to move children onto their next steps in learning.

The provider has successfully ensured that staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage has developed. Staff use assessment and planning to help children move forward in their learning. This has improved the quality of teaching and learning.

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 complaint 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 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 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):

- improve hand washing and hand drying facilities for children under eighteen months old and provide more opportunities for these children to receive fresh air
- meet all recommendations made by the Environmental Health Officer
- make sure parents are aware of the new regulations regarding the complaints procedure
- ensure all staff are familiar with the child protection procedures and up-date the child protection statement in line with the LSCB
- improve the induction programme for the supply staff.

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):

- ensure systems in place to monitor the quality of nursery education successfully address all relevant weaknesses
- ensure systems are in place to communicate children's progress to parents more effectively.

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