



## **Building Blocks**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY330875
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 November 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Close
<b>Setting Address</b>	81 Fulwell Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0RJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 545 0054
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Building Blocks Child Care Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Building Blocks completed registration in 2006. It is one of three nurseries operated by Building Blocks Child Care Limited. The nursery operates from a converted two storey building, situated in a residential road in Teddington, Middlesex. The local authority is Richmond-upon-Thames. The nursery is open every weekday from 08:00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. Children from the local area attend the setting. Staff collect some children from local schools and bring them to the nursery for after school care. The nursery currently employs 14 staff. Eight of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are currently 43 children on roll aged from six months to five years. Twenty-one children between the ages of six months and four years were present at the time of this inspection. Children up to the age of eight are accepted into the nursery for after school care and during school holidays.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's continuing good health is well supported in the nursery. Parents know that their children should not attend if they are unwell which helps to prevent the unnecessary spread of infection. Parents are kept informed if there are infectious diseases in the nursery such as chickenpox. Children are only given medication if their parents request this in writing. The medication policy is clearly documented and included in a welcome pack for parents. Children's nappies are changed when required and staff consistently maintain good standards of hygiene. Children learn about good hygiene from an early age. They wipe their own hands with wet wipes before eating and staff talk to them about the importance of having clean hands.

Children have frequent drinks throughout the day. They enjoy healthy snacks which include fruit and crackers with cheese. They eat a well planned range of tasty meals with relish. Menus are based on predominantly fresh ingredients and a vegetarian option is provided every day. Staff are well informed about children's individual dietary needs and they ensure that children only have food that parents approve of. Fresh food is purchased often and refrigerated although the storage temperature is not always recorded.

Particularly good opportunities are offered for children of all ages to enjoy healthy exercise every day. Specialist teachers lead music and movement sessions and delightful dance/drama sessions are also provided. Children also go on weekly outings for swimming lessons. Children play every day in the fresh air in the nursery play area. They pedal their wheeled toys confidently and manoeuvre backwards and forwards very well. The nursery has an appropriate range of outdoor toys that are suitable for most children although the oldest are not challenged by their existing climbing equipment because it is quite small.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into a bright nursery environment. The building has been redecorated and refurbished in recent months and the re-arranged accommodation is child-friendly, suitable and attractive. Closed circuit television cameras help to safeguard children and staff in all rooms. A coded lock on the door between the reception area and the nursery rooms helps to keep children safe. Air conditioning and central heating ensures that the children's rooms are kept at a comfortable temperature at all times. Older children have easy access to clean toilet facilities which have low doors to offer a sense of privacy. Children in all rooms have access to a good range of toys and resources. Staff have a budget to replenish materials and to replace worn toys. Children's toys judged to be too worn have recently been removed from all rooms and the outdoor play space. Children's toys are maintained in clean condition because the staff wash them on a regular basis.

Children's safety is promoted well in many respects in the nursery. Staff conduct regular risk assessments in all rooms and they take steps to remove or minimise most potential hazards. For example, sockets are kept covered unless they are out of reach or in use and radiators are

kept firmly covered to prevent accidents. Finger guards have been installed to prevent children from trapping their fingers. However, a redundant hook fixed in the wall at a low level in the toddler's room is a hazard that has been overlooked. Fire evacuation procedures are known to staff but the displayed notices of this routine have not been replaced since redecoration. Fire evacuation is practised and logged but this has not been carried out in recent months. Children are protected in relation to child protection issues because the staff are well informed. They are aware of what steps to take if they have concerns.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Babies and children under three years of age enjoy their time in the nursery. They are involved in a varied range of interesting activities that suit their ages and stages of development. Staff have not all had the opportunity to attend training courses as yet to raise their knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework. However, the provider has advised and supported them successfully in-house and they now plan and provide a range of worthwhile activities that are clearly linked to this framework.

From observation it is evident that the children in the baby and toddler rooms are gaining confidence, learning to communicate and enjoying the company of others. They are making generally good progress in their learning and development. Staff carefully observe and note children's responses to planned, adult led activities. In general terms they use the information gained effectively when they are planning the next activities to ensure that they meet the children's needs. However, notes are not always made of children's progress when they are involved in activities other than those led by adults. Without these observations the staff are not sure to plan to meet the needs of every child in all respects.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All of the children in the older groups are making good overall progress in all six areas of their learning. They are gaining confidence and independence. The oldest children manage their clothing, toileting and meals with the minimum of assistance. They serve themselves at mealtimes and make decisions about how much they would like to eat. Children listen well in groups and they respond positively to staff when directions are given. They understand the boundaries set for acceptable behaviour and staff often praise the children for being helpful and for behaving well. Children benefit from the staff having a good understanding of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff find ways to help children to learn within general discussions and everyday routines. Children are well behaved and content. They respond well to the staff who are firm but pleasant in their management of the children.

The oldest members of the group can recognise their own names and they happily go over dots on the page until they can write their first names unaided. They learn the sounds and shapes of the letters of the alphabet systematically using a commercial scheme. Children are helped to hold their pencils and crayons correctly using a suitable grip. They are warmly encouraged to draw and make marks to practise their emerging writing skills. They enjoy stories, listen quietly and show a keen interest in the pictures. Children know that pages turn in order and

they know which way up books are held. In adult-led and free play situations the children confidently express their thoughts and points of view.

Children can recognise some shapes such as circles and triangles. They sort accurately for colour and size in games played with staff. They show that they understand the terms more, less, longer and shorter. Older children can recognise some numbers up to five and some can count by rote. Staff are adept at using routine events in the course of the day to show children how numbers and counting are used in practical ways. For example, they ask the children to count how many children are sitting down at snack time and then to find the right number of cups to give out to the group.

Children are learning about the world around them through topic work and from their weekly excursions outside the nursery building. Their current topic about 'People who help us' helps them to learn about the work of adults and a lollipop lady is soon to visit them in the nursery. A good range of festivals and celebrations from different cultures are covered in the setting. Pictures and resources are provided that show a wide range of people. The provision helps children to understand and respect diversity. Children have a range of attractive objects to explore on an interest table. They use construction toys for building and fit together toys such as train tracks with confidence and skill. They do not currently have access to suitable technology to support their learning although there are suitable machines on order for them to use in all rooms in the setting.

Children show confidence and developing skills in manipulating small equipment. For example, they manage cutlery well at mealtimes, fit together puzzles and construction competently and can hold pencils and crayons to make firm marks. Colourful displays of children's work all around the nursery show that children's art work is valued. They use paint for printing and have access to glue, tissue, glitter and many other resources for creative work. Specialist teachers visit the setting each week to lead music activities. Children respond with pleasure to music. They delight in wearing wizard's cloaks and fairy costumes and they show imagination in their movement and dance.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the good working relationship that has been established between the staff and parents. Parents are consulted about all aspects of children's care. They are welcomed into the nursery rooms to settle their children and at this time they exchange day-to-day information with the staff. For example, parents tell staff if children have or have not slept well and they tell staff if children need to eat breakfast on arrival. Parents are kept informed about what children are covering each week through discussion and displayed planning documents. Consequently they can extend and enrich children's learning at home. More formal meetings are arranged for staff and parents to share reports and children's records of progress.

Staff are well aware of any allergies or special health needs for individual children. They take heed of parental preferences and other important information about the children that is shared at registration. Children who speak another language at home are supported well in the setting

with more explanation given if required. Staff ensure that all children are treated with respect and they have equal access to all activities. They give sensitive encouragement to all children to help them join in and gain the most from their play. The only area where specific information about children's learning may be limited is linked to the lack of observations made when the under three-year-olds are involved in day-to-day routines and in activities of their own choice.

Behaviour management strategies are suitable and successful throughout the nursery setting. Staff are firm but they do not raise their voices. The children are content and well behaved. There are very few children attending who have identified learning difficulties. Staff are aware of any difficulties that children may experience and they support the children effectively. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

All members of staff are checked for their suitability before taking responsibility for children. Senior staff supervise them closely and they offer their advice and support. Recruitment procedures and induction methods are thorough. More than 50 per cent of the staff are suitably qualified. Staff are given a very good level of support to assist them in their professional development. They are actively encouraged to attend training courses and given effective support to enable them to plan and provide care and learning experiences that relate directly to the Birth to three matters framework. Staff rotas are drawn up with care to ensure that the ratio of adults to children is correct at all times and that a first aider is always on the premises during opening hours. Detailed risk assessments are carried out and they help the provider and staff to provide a safe, comfortable environment for the children in most respects.

Leadership and management are good in relation to nursery education. Staff are given valuable support to enable them to help children to develop and make progress. The provider has a thorough knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. She shares her knowledge and understanding with the manager and staff. The provider has a clear vision of how she intends to develop all aspects of the provision for children in the setting. She has devised a detailed action plan showing when and how improvements will be made. She has already refurbished the setting to a high standard and has re-arranged the accommodation to make it more comfortable and child friendly. The provider and the manager work together successfully in partnership to ensure that the educational provision for children meets their needs. They check that plans are suitable and cover all six areas of learning. A recent initiative has improved planning in that staff now plan activities with specific learning intentions in mind.

The manager ensures that all records and documents are maintained according to regulation. Attendance is recorded correctly for staff and children and visitors sign in on arrival at the setting. Accidents and medication are noted and records are retained although a few entries in the accident records have not been signed by parents. The setting meets the needs of the range of the 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 action 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:

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 good.

### **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):

- minimise or remove a minor hazard in the toddler playroom
- note children's development and progress in the younger groups, beyond adult-led activities, to provide better information for planning the next steps in children's learning
- display the fire evacuation procedures and practise emergency evacuation on a more regular basis.

#### **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 that the older members of the group have access to sufficiently challenging equipment for climbing and balancing

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)