



The David Nicholas Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	138224
Inspection date	07 November 2006
Inspector	Gillian Cubitt
Setting Address	Bond First School, Bond Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3HG
Telephone number	020 8687 1356
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Registered person	London Borough of Merton
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Crèche

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The David Nicolas Nursery Centre opened in 1991. It operates from one room in a building situated in the grounds of Bond Primary School which is based in Mitcham, Surrey. A maximum of 18 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 17:30 during school term times. Children may attend full day care or morning sessions from 08:00 to 13:00 and/or afternoon sessions which are from 12:00 to 17:30. There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 20 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. Of these, five children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel in to work. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications, including one member of staff with a Foundation Degree in Early Years. The nursery has successfully completed the Effective Early Learning (EEL) quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is protected through well planned daily routines. They receive good support in learning to manage their own personal care. The recently refurbished children's bathroom is bright and inviting, with all facilities at child height. This helps their independence as they become confident when going to the toilet themselves and they understand the reasons for having clean hands especially before meals and after toileting. Babies have their own changing area and happily smile as staff play music on the overhead mobile and chat to them, making nappy changing time a warm comforting experience.

The premises and equipment are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and children enjoy helping with appropriate tasks to keep the rooms clean and tidy. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have attended first aid training and can administer treatment in the event of an accident or when children need medication. Parents are informed at the end of each day in the event of any accidents so that they can monitor their children's welfare. Parents, however, do not sign the permission forms after medication has been administered so does not ensure the continuity of children's treatment. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection through a good programme of cleaning and, when children become ill parents receive relevant information about infection control.

Children enjoy freshly cooked, nutritious meals which includes fresh fruit and vegetables. Babies enjoy meals that their parents make and staff adhere to strict heating and cooling instructions to ensure meals are the right temperature before serving. Savoury items and prepared fruit encourage good eating habits, although the organisation of meal times does not always encourage children's independence. Meal times are a sociable time where staff take all the initiatives for preparing tables and serving food. Staff are all trained in food hygiene and are competent when handling and preparing food for children. All children's dietary needs are noted and respected. Children are offered a range of drinks from apple juice to milk at tea time and water is available throughout the day.

All children at the nursery have regular opportunities to exercise in the fresh air to develop their skills for climbing, sliding, running and manoeuvring. Babies enjoy their own space where they can crawl when inside and whilst outside they can join in the fun, moving around, in their baby walkers. Older children benefit through the well planned physical games and activities. The outside play area is used to its full potential so that children can enjoy the fresh air whilst taking part in a wide variety of activities which appeal to all children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright, welcoming, secure and safe environment. They see plenty of attractive posters that they relate to, including photographs of themselves and their own art work. This warm, friendly environment makes children feel relaxed and safe. All space available to children is well utilised. They benefit from being able to move around safely, freely and independently in designated areas for different types of play.

A high priority is given to the condition and safety of the equipment. Children benefit from access to a good range of resources covering all areas of development. Toys are rotated and stored at low level to encourage freedom of choice.

Children are kept safe as a result of staff's awareness of health and safety. The manager oversees the risk assessment of the premises and staff are vigilant in their daily checks to ensure all equipment is safe. External doors are secure and admission is only permitted through an entry phone system. All visitors are checked and accompanied whilst in the nursery. Children are well supervised and have a developing understanding of how to think and act safely. For example, they learn to walk down the small incline that leads to the garden and they are accustomed to the procedures in the event of an immediate evacuation because practise sessions are held regularly. Sleeping babies are monitored regularly and parents are informed of their child's sleeping patterns.

Staff have a very good knowledge of procedures to safeguard children; they attend regular training and are clear about the known indicators of abuse. Children are therefore well protected and safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have positive, warm relationships with staff; they are confident, well settled and comfortable in their environment. Staff are interested in the children and have a good knowledge of their individual personalities. Children benefit from the care and teaching of dedicated and enthusiastic staff who continuously implement new ideas to further improve the care and learning opportunities for all. Children are self-assured to work and play independently or in groups and are very interested and involved in a wide range of imaginative and worthwhile play opportunities both inside and outside. This promotes their emotional, physical, social and intellectual development. For example, children are encouraged to use their imagination to build and construct using a variety of materials which are easily accessible inside such as cardboard tubes, boxes and glue to stick, whilst outside they use large interlinking blocks to build towers and build castles in the sand.

Children are forming positive relationships with each other and behave well. For example, older children are mindful that babies may be unstable when they are just finding their feet. Staff also have good guidelines in place which are based on the Birth to three matters framework. Careful thought has been given to the planning and design of the nursery. This gives babies their own intimate soft play area with sufficient space so they can explore treasure baskets and

crawl and access their toys; even very young children learn where toys go and all enjoy periods of helping to tidy up, guided by simple instructions from staff which relate directly to their actions. Children feel an experience of collaboration and sense of self as staff smile and say thank you for the assistance.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Key staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a range of interesting activities across the six areas of learning for three and four year old children. Staff routinely carry out observations on children engaged in activities and these are used by the key members of staff to plan the next steps in the children's learning.

Children benefit because although staff are key working, they also interact well with each other and all know each child well. Children are grouped appropriately and staff organise time effectively to allow children independence to organise their own day and help themselves to resources that appeal to them. This motivates children to learn and helps with their emerging level of concentration. They spend time watching snails, observing the way they move and how they use their antennae. Children learn about the life cycle of aquatic creatures in their outside pond as well as caring for their goldfish and handling many natural objects such as shells and gourds. Children also spend time playing with sand, feeling the warm sand sieve through their fingers and, working harmoniously together, children experience team work and friendship as they build castles and make shapes in the damp sand, which is fully supported and encouraged by staff.

Children's spoken language is developing as they enjoy adult-read stories and talk about what has happened and what the story means to them. Children are able to recognise their names and associate meaning to print. For example, when children role play for a birthday party, they write out invitations and post them to their friends.

Children have opportunities to recognise different shapes, measurements and numbers during their play. Children measure themselves on the height chart, they notice sizes and shapes of bricks as they make towers and proudly count each piece as it is added to the top. Counting is continually promoted through number songs and children see numbers and pictures plus many resources that extend children's understanding of quantity.

Children's independence is promoted especially with respect to children's personal care. However, there are limited opportunities for more able children to develop their skills and independence at meal times due to staff's preference to serve and clear away plates. Children are learning to be sensitive to the needs of others because staff talk about being caring and kind to each other. Children fully co-operate with each other and are learning the rules and codes for good behaviour within the group.

Children have fun dancing, singing and playing musical instruments. They eagerly take part in making music to the calypso tunes, shaking African rattlesticks, playing the drums and listening to the sounds of the rainmaker. Children move confidently to music and when outside extend

their physical skills on the obstacle course which develops their climbing, sliding and balancing skills.

Children have some resources that promote their awareness of technology such as small programmable toys and calculators. Children have the use of a computer although this is limited in its effectiveness due to its age. Children learn about their immediate world about them by visiting nearby shops and local library and staff extend this to discuss what children do in other countries, especially during cultural festivals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are known and well supported. For example children who speak another language see the printed form of their own languages put aside words in English on signs around the room. Also children's special diets are noted and nutritious alternatives are provided. All children are included and the nursery is proud of the recognition it has received from Early Years for its posters and policy for inclusion which greets children and parents in the reception area. Children enjoy and benefit from celebrating a range of festivals and cultures throughout the year as they learn about diversity in society. Effective strategies are in place to identify and support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and other professionals are welcomed into the setting to work in partnership with parents and staff. Children share toys and work well in groups. For example in the role play area in the garden children have a tea party and use sand to make cakes patties and strawberries. Children show delight and wonder when looking at the lives of mini beasts; they enjoy helping others and are kind and polite to staff and their friends. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff know the children well because a settling in programme involves parents and children to visit a few times before the child is finally left. Children then make good progress because information is exchanged between staff and parents which help staff to build on what children already know. Information about the pre-school is available to parents in a range of written notices, newsletters and on the notice board where parents can view the planning and activities for the week. There is an open-door policy for key staff to share information with parents on their child's achievements and parents have an annual feedback meeting where staff share assessments of the children's progress and parents are able to contribute to children's ongoing education. Parents speak positively about the staff, the activities and their children's achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in an organised environment where all persons looking after them are suitable to do so. They are cared for by sensitive staff who are keen to reflect on their practice and enhance the experiences of the children by attending further training. They come back from training enthused and they complete full evaluations and give feedback to other members of staff and this usually results in changes being made to their practices. Staff ratios ensure

that children are well supported in their activities and that they have regular opportunities to interact with staff to develop their learning. Most staff are qualified and all are experienced which ensures that children's care and development is appropriately fostered. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed which underpins children's health, safety and wellbeing however, some aspects have been overlooked, especially with regard to information on the complaints policy. Records of children's registers are well maintained, procedures for keeping medication and accidents records are in place although some aspects lack detail.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The manager and deputy work hard to support each other and the staff. One other full time member of staff takes responsibility for planning and she is committed to continually improving the quality of the care and education of the children. Part time staff, however, do not participate in the current system of recording children's next steps. The key member of staff and manager work well together and are committed to improving the provision for children and have a clear vision to ensure they are happy and prepared for school. Through her good knowledge of the Foundation stage she is able to support staff appropriately. Regular meetings ensure that the nursery curriculum is well maintained and the manager continually evaluates and monitors the educational provision.

There are good systems in place for recruitment, induction and appraisal, although there has been no movement in staff structure for some years. This is because current staff are very settled and work co-operatively as a team, supporting each other in all aspects of the nursery organisation.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Day Care inspection the provider was asked to make improvements in their methods of recording and role play areas plus reorganise the deployment of staff. As a result, improvements have been made with regard to the recording of children's arriving, leaving, sleep and eating times. Role play areas have been developed to enable children to extend their play and staff are well deployed with specific duties each day. It was also asked for the policy on complaints to state Ofsted's address and number. This was done but the address of Ofsted and number have since change so requires further updating.

At the last inspection for nursery education, staff were asked to review their planning and improve staff deployment, linking in children's individual learning needs. They were also asked improve resources for physical and creative development. The provider has made good improvements to the overall planning and this now links into children's individual needs, based on regular assessments on children's achievements. Children have good opportunities to develop their creativity in both role play areas as well as building, painting and construction. Children play in a well designed garden where they can climb, ride bikes and access various activities that promote their physical development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- maintain a record of information given to parents that ensures that they are aware when medication has been administered
- devise a system of recording accidents to ensure children's confidentiality
- update the policy on complaints and make this available for parents

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):

- provide more opportunities for more able children to take on more responsibilities to extend their independence, especially during meal times
- develop all staff's understanding of the Curriculum for the Foundation Stage so that they are all proficient in linking in their observations to children's next stages in their learning

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