



The Alphabet House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	132241
Inspection date	01 March 2007
Inspector	Shaheen Belai
Setting Address	37 Windmill Lane, Stratford, E15 1PG
Telephone number	020 8519 2023
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Registered person	The Alphabet House Nursery School
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Alphabet House Nursery School registered in 1994. It is situated in the London borough of Newham. It is part of a private organisation. Children have access to six rooms in a converted Methodist Church, and an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting operates from Monday - Friday, 08:00 - 18:00, throughout the year. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting also provides a crèche service for children aged under five years, term-time only. The crèche facilities, resources and early years staff are provided by the setting, however the funding is provided by Sure Start, Newham. This allows for parent's living in the community to attend adult educational classes at an off-site venue

A maximum of 78 children may attend at any one time, at present there are currently 40 children on roll. The setting receives funding for nursery education, at present eight children in receipt of early years funding attend the setting. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The setting supports children who have English as an additional language. The nursery provides a curriculum that includes a Montessori influence in its teaching methods.

The setting employs 11 members of staff, 10 of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted through being cared for in a well organised environment, where good hygiene procedures and routines are implemented by staff and encouraged in children. Children follow good routines, for example they wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet. They have access to low level hand washing facilities, which enhances their self help and independence skills. Simple explanations from staff allow for children to understand the importance of good personal hygiene. Babies' nappies are changed as and when required, this helps towards making them feel comfortable and clean. Children have their own bedding which is laundered regularly, this ensures the spread of germs is minimised. These practices and the policies put into place relating to infectious diseases and illnesses, contribute to safeguarding children against infections.

Systems are in place for gaining prior written parental consent for the administration of medication. This ensures children only receive the correct medication and dosage according to their needs. Children's health is further promoted as a number of staff hold a current first aid certificate, this allows for appropriate care to be given in the case of an accident. Accidents are recorded to allow for relevant information to be shared with parents, as well as for staff to risk assess the incident to allow for children's safety to be addressed.

Staff gather all relevant information regarding diet and medical history. This ensures children's individual dietary and medical needs are met. Children benefit from nutritious meals and snacks which are prepared within the setting. Good hygiene practices are implemented by staff, for example staff wear aprons and gloves when serving the children. Designated staff trained in current Food Hygiene practices are only allowed to prepare milk feeds and snacks for children, this minimises the spread of germs and infection. Staff encourage good eating habits as they encourage children to try certain food items, they provide explanations of why certain foods are good for their bodies. Children make independent choices and address their own personal needs as older children have free access to drinking water and a range of healthy snacks during the daily routine.

Children play outside in the garden regularly, this allows for them to develop a positive approach to daily exercise and to enjoy the fresh air. The outside area provides a safe and stimulating environment for children where they acquire new skills. For example, they attempt to use pedals on bikes and steer scooters around the outdoor area. Babies enjoy crawling and playing freely on the floor along with their peers. They have opportunities to develop and tone their muscles as they play in the ball pond. A range of resources are provided to allow for the young babies to develop their walking and balancing skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in areas where regular risk assessments are conducted, this reduces the risks to children. This allows for children to move freely, safely and independently. Indoor space is well-organised. For example, children have quiet areas to look at books and areas for children to participate in creative play activities. Children actively play with a range of good quality toys and equipment which are set out for them.

Staff encourage children to understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, children are reminded not to go too fast on the scooter in the garden, as it may cause them to have an accident. The premises are secure and there are appropriate measures in place to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access. There are appropriate procedures in place for monitoring the movements of visitors, this contributes to the children's safety. Staff are deployed well and this ensures the safety of children at all times.

Staff understand the procedures to follow for child protection issues. Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms that would cause them concern for a child's wellbeing. Staff participate in current training to ensure they are knowledgeable in all areas of recognising abuse and implementing the policy. This ensures children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. Most arrive happy and confident, and they settle into the routine of the setting with ease. They have developed caring and trusting relationships with their key workers and peers. Children are becoming independent as they make choices in their play, choosing from a variety of play materials and activities made available to them. For example they participate in creative activities, enjoy having stories read to them, participate in group discussions and enjoy outdoor play. Staff have adopted the outcomes approach of the Birth to three framework when planning activities. For example young babies actively play with sand, water, play dough, explore sensory play using their developing senses and laugh and mirror staff as they join in with action songs. This helps them to develop positive relationships with their key worker, become creative, develop listening and communication skills. Children approach staff for support and guidance in their learning. Children work well in small groups, for example in the home corner. They use their imagination and role play skills as they take on characters. Children's independence is encouraged and supported by staff, for example in making choices in their play. However, opportunities to extend this area of learning are overseen in the daily routine. For example, older children are not given opportunities to serve food for themselves or have the correct cutlery to attempt to cut up their food.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress because staff have an understanding of how children learn and know their key children well. Children are supported sufficiently by staff who have an awareness of the Foundation Stage curriculum. However staff do not consistently evaluate observations to clearly evidence children's progress

towards the early learning goals. On the whole observations are carried out regularly to monitor learning, yet they do not link well to individual planning of the children's next steps.

Children are settled and happy in the setting. They participate in play with interest and are occupied in both adult led and child initiated activities. They are developing good self care skills, for example independently washing hands and removing their shoes for sleep. They are confident in sharing experiences from home with staff and peers as they participate in group discussions. Children enjoy looking at books both independently or in small groups with adult attention, developing their listening skills and extending their vocabulary. They have the opportunity to value other languages used in the community, as they participate in a weekly French lesson. Children's language skills are further enhanced as they participate in song time. Here, they have an opportunity to make choices of their own and are often found singing spontaneously as they play and eat.

Children are learning about themselves and the wider community. For example they learn about their body parts, celebrate different festivals, visit local venues and learn about the changing seasons. They have opportunities to use the computer and use this form of technology to gain information and play simple educational games. Children are beginning to count confidently, which staff encourage through using Montessori equipment to support their learning. Children learn about weight and volume as they play with sand and water, using a variety of containers. However, advantages are not taken within the daily routine to introduce simple addition and subtraction to extend children's thinking and problem solving.

Children have access to a range of creative play activities in the weekly planning. This is reflected in the work displayed within the setting and work stored in the children's individual folders. Children have opportunities to explore a range of mediums and textures to develop their creative skills and to develop their ideas using their imaginations. They have free access to tools to develop their mark-making skills and be confident in using tools, such as scissors. Imaginative play is encouraged through the variety of scenarios organised by staff, for example children have opportunities to take on roles using props in the shop or office area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a positive attitude towards diversity. Children become aware of their own identities through the provision of resources, planned activities and the celebration of festivals. They develop good levels of self-esteem and self-awareness as a result of staff gaining appropriate information from parents. Children are happy to share information with staff and peers about their home life, this reflects the trusting and safe relationships developed. The staff team are able to provide support to children who have English as an additional language, for example they learn the significant key words to ensure the child is understood, feels welcomed and acknowledged in the setting. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcome and named staff take on the role of supporting parents and working with external professionals who may be involved. This in practice supports consistency of care and learning. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children are very well behaved. Staff provide children with good gentle reminders of expectations and provide simple yet clear explanations for the implications of their actions. For example, the importance of sharing and turn taking. Staff supervise children well and are active in re-directing any unacceptable behaviour at an early opportunity. They engage children in play most of the times and ensure they are supervised. Consequently, children's behaviour is generally good, and they play well together.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents are given information about the planning of the activities in relation to all six areas of learning through clear displaying of plans in the designated room and entrance area. In addition they receive regular newsletters, parents' sessions held once a term and daily verbal feedback from staff. This contributes to consistencies in the children's care and learning. Children's work is displayed throughout the nursery and clearly labelled with dates, and work is also sent home regularly. This allows parents to view their child's learning and monitor their progress. Parents expressed their satisfaction of the service provided by staff. They felt their children are happy, developed good relationships with the key worker, learn with a purpose when playing and staff ensure parents are kept informed on a regular basis.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by qualified and experienced staff, who have a good knowledge and understanding of child development. This allows for staff to meet the children's needs appropriately. The staff work well as a team and the implementation of the key worker system is effective in ensuring consistency of care. The registered person follows appropriate recruitment procedures, which ensure staff are appropriately qualified and vetted. An on-going programme is followed to ensure that unqualified staff are working towards gaining a recognised early years qualification. Staff have opportunities for professional development and management actively encourage staff to attend training. The setting receives the support of the local authority advisor. This contributes to the care and learning of children.

The nursery is well-organised, where children are cared for in a child-friendly and welcoming environment. Information kept about children is relevant and helps promote their welfare. All required documentation is in place, this contributes to children's health, safety and wellbeing.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are supported by the management through regular room, team and planning meetings. However, although management have appropriate systems to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery, the weakness in teaching has not been recognised. As a result, teaching is not consistent amongst the staff team and this is evident in the absence of the lead worker. Therefore, children are not being given sufficient challenges, and learning opportunities are missed due to poorly planned activities at specific times of the daily routine. This impacts on children making good progress in all areas of learning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting agreed to: increase resources in the area of diversity and update the child protection policy to include procedures to be followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff.

The setting has developed resources to address diversity and this area is continued to be developed that is in the area of disability. This allows for staff to provide children with experiences to learn positively about diversity. The staff team have reviewed and updated the child protection policy and procedures. This now includes appropriate procedures that would be followed by management if an allegation should be made against a member of staff. Staff demonstrate an awareness of the steps taken to protect children and themselves.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the quality of nursery education was judged as very good. The setting was asked to: strengthen activity plans for nursery funded children to include regular opportunities for outdoor and role play and give more opportunities for children to explore information technology.

The activities and resources are now organised to ensure children participate in regular outdoor physical play to develop their physical and large motor skills. They visit the local park, indoor education play area and take walks within the local area. The children have access to a well resourced home corner. In addition they have access to a shop and an office area. Children have access to a computer as part of the regular activities. They use this to engage in educational learning exercises and develop hand and eye co-ordination.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 Ofsted have received four complaints relating to National Standard 1 -Suitable Person, National Standard 2 - Organisation, National Standard 7 - Health, National Standard 8 - Food and Drink and National Standard 12 - Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers. The first two complaints were regarding the general hygiene of the setting, food handling and preparation. Ofsted investigated the complaints and as a result three actions were raised in relation to National Standard 7 and National Standard 8.

The other two complaints were regarding inadequate staffing levels, sterilising procedures not followed for the preparation of babies milk feeds and parents concerns not addressed. Unannounced visits by an Ofsted inspector were carried out to investigate each complaint and at both visits Ofsted found that National Standard 7 was not being met. Following the first visit a recommendation was made regarding the sterilisation of babies bottles. As a result of the second visit a compliance notice was issued under National Standard 7. A follow up visit found that the compliance notice was met. However, at this visit a further recommendation was made under National Standard 7. No further action was taken and the provider remained qualified to remain registered.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to develop self help and independence skills; this includes opportunities to have access to tools to feed themselves and serve themselves

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):

- review the organisation of the routine to ensure opportunities of missed learning do not arise due to poor organisation of activities
- develop on current systems to ensure children's observations and assessments are linked consistently with the evaluation of activities and identify the next steps for individual learning
- increase the knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage for all staff working with children in receipt of nursery education funding, to ensure they work consistently and aware of implementing the planned activities and aware of the learning outcomes.

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