

Cats Whiskers Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100462
Inspection date	19 March 2007
Inspector	Christine Coram
Setting Address	35 Florence Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH5 1HJ
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Registered person	Brian Pringle and Jacqueline Pringle
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Cats Whiskers Day Nursery is privately owned, and opened in 2000. It operates from five main playrooms in a converted three-story house. It is situated in Boscombe, near to the main town of Bournemouth. A maximum of 39 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 75 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for early education. Children that attend the setting live in the local community and surrounding area. Most of their parents work locally.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff. All of these hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a further qualification. The setting receives support from the Bournemouth Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's hygiene is effectively promoted. Hand washing routines are maintained and all children are taken to the toilet to wash their hands before snacks and meals. Older children have independent access to the toilets. Staff monitor this effectively. They carefully follow clear and hygienic nappy changing routines. Very clear procedures are in place to ensure that equipment is clean. This includes sterilising rattles and small toys on a daily basis and bigger baby equipment on a weekly basis. Cots sheets and blankets are numbered and stored separately so that children always have their own individual bedding.

Should children have an accident or need medication, they are protected through very clear and comprehensive recording. This is well thought-through and additional information is given as needed. A number of staff have first aid certificates. The emotional wellbeing of younger children is promoted very well. Children are held and supported with appropriate affection and all members of staff make good eye contact with them. Time is given to settled children who have just woken up and they are given the time, attention and support they need. All children have good opportunities for physical play and fresh air in the spacious garden to the rear of the setting. Staff make sure that all children have time in the garden.

Children's nutritional health is promoted well through the snacks and drinks offered. For example, the snack consists of a selection of fruit, with water to drink. Lunches are cooked on the premises and are varied and healthy. Processed food is limited and salt and sugar intake is kept to a minimum. Alternatives are provided at each meal for children on a particular diet. The needs of children with specific dietary issues are met effectively because records about these are available in the room where children eat. The cook has a good knowledge of individual needs and preferences. Children have good access to drinking water. The older children can pour a drink of water at any time from the jug stored at child height. Babies' cups are named, placed on a shelf for ease of access and offered as needed. Children are reminded to have a drink after energetic play in the garden.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are child orientated and colourful, providing a stimulating and interesting environment. Children's safety is promoted well through the security of the premises. The rooms used by the children are safe and child orientated. Safety equipment such as gates and hinge protectors are in place, offering effective protection to the children.

Very clear safety procedures are in place such as knocking on doors before entering rooms in case children are behind the doors. Notices remind adults of the need for this. Staff adhere to the procedures such as limiting the number of children in the garden at any one time and careful records of who is outside. A member of staff goes out in the garden in the morning and checks the area, picking up any items that could be a hazard. Risk assessments are completed. For example, during the inspection, some fence panels were damaged in overnight gales. A risk assessment was undertaken and all staff given a copy. This included sensible and safe solutions to the issue.

Children are protected from possible harm or abuse because the setting has clear safeguarding procedures. Staff are confident that they would record and report any concerns they may have about the children in their care. The setting is committed to making sure that children are safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children throughout the setting are happy and very well occupied. Babies and toddlers are given sensitive care and affection. Staff are fully involved with the children at all times and demonstrate good motivation and understanding of children's needs. Imaginative ideas and activities promote all the aspects of development. A clear format for observation of children under three years is used, including a dated chart with monthly written observations that are detailed and evaluated effectively. Summaries are sent home so that parents can add their comments.

A range of sensory activities is offered in all areas on a daily basis. Planned activities are varied and very suitable for the ages of the children. Resources are particularly accessible in all areas with even the youngest children given good independence in selecting equipment. Communication is actively promoted through talking and listening to the children. Staff respond very positively to children's sounds. Communication between younger children is also encouraged. Staff sit them close enough to touch and supervise them carefully. They are praised for the gentle contact. Children's development and learning are promoted and enhanced by the effective interaction and input from staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is a high level of qualified staff in setting. Staff have a suitable understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and demonstrated this through their questioning and assessments of the children, and through planning. They take opportunities to promote learning as they arise. For example, a member of staff is reading a book about scary shadows and notices that there is a patch of sunlight on the floor. She shows the children how to make shadows with their hands. They are consistently involved with the children in their activities and play. In group teaching sessions, they hold the children's attention well. Small group activities are focused with clear learning intentions. Staff are very encouraging and give frequent praise.

Planning is detailed and carefully constructed to take account of the areas of learning. A good variety of activities is planned. A chart is used for focused activities noting learning intentions, resources needed and how more or less able children will be supported. The activity is evaluated effectively through specific questions for the practitioner to answer including 'were the learning intentions met'. Planning is not topic-led but follows interests of the children. Observations of children's progress are carried out using a clear format. Dated observations are made, giving details of the learning intention of the activity. Clear evaluation and the significance of the observation are noted. Four-monthly reviews take place. Parents are invited to meet with their family worker. The records are presented in a professional file with a clear explanation of the process. Parents are asked to contribute written observations, photographs and pieces of work from home. Children with specific requirements are offered appropriate care by experienced staff who liaise closely with parents and other professionals.

Children arrive with great confidence and decide for themselves whether they would like breakfast or to go and play. They confidently select writing materials from a low-level draw

unit. They are involved in activities and quickly settle to play. They concentrate for short periods well before moving to other activities. They are happy to ask for help as needed. They play co-operatively at times and choose to play with their peers. Children generally behave well and negotiate between themselves with little need of staff. A group of three-year-olds discuss sharing and how they can only use the spray for a small number of times and then pass it on.

Children develop humour and laugh at their own conversations. For example, whilst planting basil seeds a child says 'Basil Bunny' and laughs. They talk as they play and use talk to link ideas. Whilst looking at the seeds, one says 'they're tiny, like a baby, babies are tiny'. They enjoy books and stories. They ask staff to read to them and gather in small groups to listen and look at the pictures. They talk about what they see, asking about the pictures and answering questions about the finer details. They make good attempts at copying their names and are encouraged to write their names on their work. They are able to identify and type the initial of their names on the keyboard. They write for a purpose. For example, in the 'shop', a child writes on the pad provided and says 'here's your ticket for your carrot'. Children count frequently during their play and can identify some numbers. However, there are limited opportunities for calculation or problem solving. They develop a good understanding of shape. For example, a child names a rectangle on request and identifies that it has four corners. Another states that piece of fruit is shaped like a semi-circle.

Children enjoy and benefit from varied opportunities for exploring and investigating. For example, they spray water into bowls of shredded paper, that they then feel and squeeze to find out the effect of the water. They experiment with shadows on a sunny patch on the floor. They confidently use information and communication technology such as a computer. They use the mouse to operate a game program and skilfully click on specific items to change the screen. Examples of their typing and drawing with the mouse are displayed. They talk about activities from home. One child describes making 'rice-crispy chocolate cakes' with his nanny. He remembers how many were made and who else was there. They develop understanding of the natural world. When asked what is needed for herbs to grow, they answer that flower pots, dirt that they find it in the garden, water and light help the plants to grow.

Children enjoy the opportunities for creative expression through the free painting offered. Their paintings are varied and they freely mix colours and talk about their pictures. They spontaneously sing with staff a song suggested by the story that they are reading. Other children enthusiastically join in with both the song and actions. They develop good imagination and role. For example, a group of children play together in the 'shop' and extend this play for some time. They work co-operatively to 'buy' real vegetables, work the cash register and handle money and shopping bags. Three-year-olds take 'money' from the shop and put it in a saucepan in the home play area. They stir it, adding other 'ingredients' and one states 'I'm putting the sugar in'.

Children develop an awareness of health and the effect of activities on their bodies. For example a child says 'feel my head – I'm hot'. When asked why, she adds 'because I've been outside. I've been running and jumping'. They adjust their position as needed, to work more effectively. For example, a child half stands to get a better angle to spray water into a bowl. She moves her feet apart to balance as she reaches. They develop skill in using equipment and work hard with trigger spray until they succeed in spraying water. They use tools effectively and very carefully fill flowerpots with soil with a small trowel. They succeed in pouring from a small watering can, and pick up and sprinkle tiny seeds.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a welcoming environment. They demonstrate a sense of belonging in their familiarity with the routine and their confidence to help themselves to toys. Positive and accessible images of diversity in society help to foster open attitudes. These include a Chinese New Year display with images of celebrations, food and other symbols. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of individual children so that their needs are met. Children are encouraged to demonstrate their own personalities and their individuality is celebrated. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is managed in an age appropriate manner by staff at all times. Methods and expectations vary according to the age of the children and staff are sensitive to the children's level of understanding. For example, staff caring for two-year-olds count to three after giving the child a warning that the behaviour is not acceptable. Her tone of voice is changed effectively to re-enforce the message. Four-year-olds are asked immediately to comply. Staff listen to the children but firmly correct as needed. Staff provide good role models for the children and are polite and thoughtful in their work.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are consulted about their child's routine. They meet with staff prior to their children starting and there is a further induction for parents when children move down-stairs. Letters are sent home frequently for varied reasons and plenty of information is given. A daily information sheet is used to keep the parents of children under three informed of their day. It includes a section headed 'what have I been curious about?' as well as information about nappy changes, feeding and sleeping. Parents report that they were given good information about the curriculum at the parent's evenings, including how children are taught. They see the children's records and discuss issues with them. They feel confident to add their own comments from their knowledge of their child. They speak about the conversations with their family worker, the 'meticulous' records kept about their child's progress. They report that staff always have time to listen to them and remember what they have to say. They are more than satisfied with the good partnership concerning issues such as behaviour difficulties.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by suitable adults because the setting has very clear and robust systems in place to recruit and check new staff. All new adults in the setting know their roles and what is expected of them, as well as the required procedures through the clear induction processes. There is an excellent level of qualified staff and they have good opportunities to undergo further training. They are involved in the process of discussion and assessment of their training and development needs are at the annual appraisals.

Space is organised effectively so that the needs of the children are met and there is sufficient space to play. Children have base rooms and an additional room is available for small group work and meals, which gives flexibility. Outdoors space is used well. Deployment of staff is generally suitable, but there is sometimes confusion and difficulty in finding staff to supervise toileting and move children around the setting, especially at break and lunchtimes. However, the required ratios are met. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. The required documentations are in place and staff read and abide by very comprehensive policies and procedures.

The leadership and management of the setting are good. There is a clear vision for nursery education based on the principle of children making choices. The manager influences staff through working alongside them as a role model and through questioning and suggesting ways of working. She seeks to inform and teach them, developing their practice from the starting point of their existing experience and understanding. Peer observations have also been introduced as a further tool for improving practice. The provision for nursery education is monitored and evaluated through various methods. These include observation and questioning, evaluation of specific activities, the self-evaluation form, and the move towards more formal reflective practice. The commitment to improvement is very clear.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the setting agreed to include children's full names in accident reports and ensure the safety of play equipment in the baby unit. Records are now more detailed and can be traced to specific children through the inclusion of full names. All items of play equipment in the setting are checked as safe and appropriate for the age and group of children using them.

In Nursery Education, the setting was asked to make further use of the indoor facilities to extend and develop physical play opportunities, to maximise children learning relating to linking sounds and letters and solving practical number problems within play. Children have greater opportunities for physical play through the acquisition of new equipment and the imaginative use of indoor space to support this. Plenty of opportunities are now given for linking sounds and letters through writing names in work, using the computer and discussions when reading, for example. Good opportunities for counting are provided on a daily basis, but opportunities for more complex use of numbers are still limited.

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 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):

- consider the deployment of staff when children are moving around the setting at lunchtimes and when toileting to ensure that staff are always readily available to monitor the children

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):

- consider ways to encourage calculating and use of numbers in the various activities offered

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