



Crystal Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137227
Inspection date	28 February 2007
Inspector	Denys Rasmussen
Setting Address	Schoolkeepers House, Anerley Road, Anerley, London, SE20 8BD
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Registered person	Crystal Childcare 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 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?

Crystals Early Years Centre opened in 1996. It is one of three, owned by Crystal Childcare Limited. It is situated in a residential area, close to rail and bus routes and local amenities. Parks, shops and library are all close by. The nursery is accommodated in the Old School Keepers House, which has been extended in recent years and is set out over ground and first floors. Off-street parking is available to the front of the building for dropping off and collecting children. There is a safety surface laid to the rear of the premises affording an enclosed and secure outside play area.

There are currently 79 children from five months to four years on roll. This includes 34 children funded for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The group opens from Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year; closing for one week at Christmas and one week in August. The centre

is open from 08:00 until 18:00. There are 15 staff working with the children. Of these, 10 staff have an early years qualification and three staff are on a training programme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff follow clear hygiene procedures such as using disposable gloves and aprons when changing children's nappies and having a no-shoe policy in the baby room. Children have their own colour coded sheets and blankets, labelled cups and after washing their hands they use individual paper towels to dry them. This helps prevent the risk of cross contamination. However, this is compromised when children in the baby room share a bowl of water for hand washing after messy activities. The provider employs a housekeeper who ensures the nursery is kept clean and well maintained.

The cook and relevant staff have attended food hygiene training ensuring those responsible for the preparation and handling of food are aware of and comply with regulations relating to food safety and hygiene. There are eight staff who have attended first aid training, this ensures there is always at least one member of staff with a first aid certificate on duty at all times. This means accidents are dealt with appropriately.

The nursery keeps comprehensive records about children's health needs and dietary requirements including any allergies. These are complied with to keep children healthy. Children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits by being offered fresh fruit and vegetables daily. Meals are nutritious and varied to meet children's dietary needs. Children are provided with drinks routinely and older children can access water from the water dispenser in their room. The nursery follow themed play such as 'food' and 'our bodies' which help children learn how to make healthy choices.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work and photographs are displayed attractively. Information for parents is readily available on well positioned parent notice boards. The premises are comfortably warm and has air conditioning facilities in the conservatory area to control the temperature during the hot weather. The play rooms are well organised to meet the children's needs. Staff set out the resources thoughtfully providing a range of activities to promote children's development. Children have access to a wide range of good quality play materials that are checked for safety and are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. Positive steps have been taken to promote safety and minimise accidental injury, with measures in place such as stair gates, safety surface in the garden, window restrictors and regularly tested portable electrical appliances. Although formal risk assessments are conducted, daily risk assessment in the toddler room is not always sufficiently

thorough which impacts on children's safety. Children are protected because of good security systems; staff conscientiously monitor access to the premises, children are only collected by authorised people and staff are vigilant about supervising them closely at all times.

Child protection procedures are in place to help safeguard children's welfare. Key staff such as the manager and designated staff member have attended child protection training ensuring the correct procedures are followed if there are any concerns about a child's welfare. The child protection procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they are up-to-date.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff both in the baby room and the toddler room have a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and this underpins the planning and assessment systems helping children to make steady progress. The babies' home routines are followed ensuring they receive consistent care and the effective communication systems ensure parents are fully informed about their child's day. The babies are well settled and happy. They have close relationships with the staff they are familiar with and happily approach them for cuddles and support. This increases their sense of well-being. They play skilfully, for example, they play peek-a-boo and laugh with delight, they wrap up their dolls to cuddle them and climb enthusiastically over soft play.

The toddlers are provided with stimulating and well planned activities such as making flowers out of recycled objects and making butterfly mobiles. They play enthusiastically in the water and sand trays and experiment with finger paints. The staff are skilled at allowing the activities to be child led which sustains their interest and extends the activity to a level appropriate for the child. The staff promote children's independence by encouraging them to dress themselves and by pointing out the tissues to encourage them to wipe their own nose. The children are motivated to learn and the staff consistently interact in a supportive and warm manner. This coupled with their secure knowledge of child development ensures children's needs are fully met.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Activities are planned well around the six areas of learning. The plans are themed with topics such as 'make and create' which have children's learning intentions recorded under each area of learning so staff are clear about the objectives. The activities are evaluated to ensure they meet the objectives and to improve on them to help children progress. 'Special time' is planned into the session twice a day, this includes activities with outside agencies such as dance, story telling or French lessons. There is a good system to track children's progress. The effective use of assessment allows staff to have clear knowledge of children's individual abilities and areas for progression. This means that children's next steps for learning inform the planning in an organised way. There is good support for children to develop independence and self-confidence. The organisation of the room and orderly storage systems ensure children have independent access to materials and equipment.

Children are confident and proudly call their name when their name card is held up at registration. They are sensitive to others' feelings and show care and concern about each other. Children share and play cooperatively because of staff's example and supportive guidance. Children have good relationships with staff and each other, and have friends who they particularly seek out to play with. Staff manage the children well through an atmosphere of mutual respect. They praise and thank the children appropriately and the children behave very well in response. Children are given responsibilities such as being the 'helper' and they proudly display their helper sticker. Children's independence is encouraged through every day routine; they dress themselves, help themselves to water and make choices in their play. Labels are used well in the nursery to help children recognise letters and words. All the children recognise their name and most can name and sound the first letter in their name. The children are confident writers and enjoy activities such as writing letters, putting them in envelopes and posting them in the nursery post box. Children are happy to talk about themselves and their family and are skilful at narrating their own stories. Children are often seen in conversation during role play acting out their own experiences.

Children have independent access to musical instruments and music tapes to experiment with sound. They enjoy singing and dance which they participate in enthusiastically. Staff are skilled at promoting children's self-esteem when they encourage them to lead music and movement sessions such as 'simon says'. Children use their imagination well while involved in role play or messy activities. Children are given worthwhile activities to practise and consolidate their manipulative skills. They handle tools with increasing control when they pour water, use pencils, glue sticks, cutters and the hole punch. They manipulate play dough, sand and mud and give a running commentary of what they are doing. Children are encouraged to design with junk modelling and construction equipment and spend time concentrating carefully. They experiment with colour at the painting easel and while involved in finger painting; children noticed that mixing two different colours made another colour.

Projects such as 'growing' are used to encourage children to explore and recognise features of living things to some degree; however, staff have not exploited opportunities for children to have access to and investigate natural objects on a regular basis. Worthwhile themed activities help children to learn about the world around them. They notice changes such as the green water turning the spaghetti green and learn about the seasons. Children and staff discuss the weather and the day of the week on a daily basis. They are beginning to gauge a sense of time when they talk about yesterday or look at the pictorial timetable. Children learn about volume, weight, sinking and floating during water activity. Good practical activities are offered for children to learn about shape and size such as when playing with play dough. Children complete puzzles and look at shapes. They sort and match objects into colours and size. Number songs are sung enthusiastically introducing early calculation. Children count things throughout the session and some children count up to 10 and beyond. Children use small equipment such as threading cards and beads, cutters, rollers, scissors, stencils, pegs and the computer mouse; this helps develop their hand to eye coordination and physical development. The outdoor play is well planned to promote physical development. They practise ball skills, balance, climb and manoeuvre wheeled toys skilfully. Music and movement sessions are used to help children gain control of their bodies.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from good relationships between staff and their parents. The detailed written agreements with parents with comprehensive information about their child ensures parents' wishes are known and the children's care needs are clear. The flexible settling in policy which meets the families' needs ensure children are well settled. Effective communication through daily written records ensure the children receive consistent care. The partnership with parents of children receiving nursery education is good. Parents regularly meet with staff to discuss their child and share their record of achievement. They are encouraged to share their skills and interests with the children such as when the nursery are celebrating festivals. The staff provide opportunities for parents to learn about the Foundation Stage and how to develop this at home. For example, parent evenings when parents are invited to look at and take part in the activities their children are offered. This helps promote children's development.

Positive imagery around the nursery within play resources and posters help the children to develop a positive awareness of each other and learn to value differences. Children show a sense of belonging when they talk freely about their friends and family and point out photographs of themselves involved in nursery life. Detailed information is taken about the children to ensure they receive appropriate individual care. Effective steps are taken to ensure that children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported, and in partnership with their parents their welfare and development promoted. The staff liaise with outside agencies to support the children's individual development. Children's self-esteem is fostered when staff praise them and recognise their achievements. They praise and encourage desirable behaviour such as kindness, willingness to share and careful listening. Children are well behaved and work harmoniously with each other in response to the realistic boundaries and expectations of staff. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff who have a good knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. They are kept up-to-date through regular meetings ensuring the operational plan works well in practice. All the required documentation is in place. Most policies and procedures work well in practice helping the efficient and safe management of the nursery. The leadership and management of the nursery education provision is good. Staff are well supported to develop their skills and knowledge through local training opportunities and the close links the nursery have with outside agencies. Staff have a sound understanding of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice to support children's development. There is a strong commitment to develop the provision. The effective system in place which monitors and evaluates the quality of the provision, ensures that areas for improvement are identified and addressed at an early stage. For example, the nursery have been developing the organisation of children's access to the equipment ensuring they can make more choices in their play. Parents are kept up to date about their child's progress through regular meetings and discussion with staff. The good range and quality of activities provided for children ensure

they make steady progress. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection it was recommended that the nursery improve the hygiene practice for food preparation; improve records pertaining to baby care routines and times children are in the care of nursery staff; fit a fire blanket in the kitchen and review the operational plan. Since the last inspection a number of staff have attended food handling and hygiene courses; and the nursery now have a permanent housekeeper and a qualified and experienced cook. This has improved the hygiene practices in the kitchen. The kitchen has been completely refurbished since the last inspection and the fire blanket has been fitted according to the manufacturers' instructions, improving fire safety precautions. Detailed records are kept about children's arrival and departure times and the babies' feed and care routines. The extension is now complete and the baby room no longer needs to be used as access for other group rooms. The staff have reviewed their existing routine in order to make the most effective use of the new facilities.

At the previous education inspection it was recommended that the nursery improve their evaluation and assessment system; improve staff understanding of how to promote mathematical concepts and to develop the range of opportunities for children to develop spontaneous writing. The staff evaluate activities to ensure they meet their objectives and plan to extend them to help children progress. The assessment system uses observations, reflections, aims and objectives, learning intentions and informs the planning to provide opportunities to support children's learning needs. This is effective and children make steady progress. Staff are offered regular training opportunities including Foundation Stage workshops. Good mathematical learning opportunities are provided for the children on a daily basis. Children are confident writers and write spontaneously throughout the session. The staff have ensured there are creative writing resources available to the children at all times and the children use them regularly and independently.

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.

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):

- improve hand washing procedures in the baby room after messy activities, to prevent the risk of cross contamination.
- ensure daily risk assessments in the toddler room are sufficiently thorough.

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):

- increase the use of natural objects for children to investigate and explore.

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