

Ducklings Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	258968
Inspection date	19 July 2007
Inspector	Anne Georgina Phillips
Setting Address	2 Western Road, Hagley, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 0LB
Telephone number	01562 885523
E-mail	
Registered person	Alyson Burton
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ducklings Day Nursery opened in 1999. It is privately owned and managed and operates from a large house in Hagley, Stourbridge, West Midlands. There are three play rooms downstairs and two upstairs.

A maximum of 30 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 garden and play area with safety surfacing area under the play equipment.

There are currently 72 children from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 37 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. A limited wraparound service is available from another nearby setting. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children come from a wide catchment area and many of their parents travel to work locally or in the wider West Midlands area.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards further qualifications. The nursery is actively involved in a local

nursery education support group. It receives support from a local authority mentor teacher and is working towards the Growing Together Quality Assurance Award. Students from local colleges attend on placement.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because staff follow highly effective procedures and practices which meet children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Staff ensure that current health guidelines, and effective policies and procedures are implemented consistently well to protect children from infection. The premises are kept immaculately clean with staff and children wearing their slippers in carpeted areas so that babies and toddlers can crawl and play hygienically on the floors. Children develop an excellent understanding of good health and hygiene practices. Older children confidently explain why they need to wash their hands to get rid of germs after using the toilet, playing outside or handling animals, and before eating their snack. They dispense the liquid soap themselves and wash their hands thoroughly so that they are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care. They are developing an excellent understanding of the importance of wearing sun cream and sunhats to protect their skin outdoors. Older children put on protective cream before going out as well as acting this out in their imaginative play. They notice and talk about the changes caused by accidents and aging on the skin of others.

Children's individual dietary needs are very well supported by knowledgeable and vigilant staff. They ensure that parents' wishes are closely followed. The daily register and individual laminated cards with photos of children in each room are used very effectively to communicate about children's specific needs. Guidance for acting in an emergency situation is prominently displayed in order to meet individual children's needs promptly. Children are closely supervised at all times to minimise the risk of accidents. Staff are well prepared if accidents do occur. All hold a current first aid certificate and an in-house nursery programme ensures these are maintained.

Children gain an excellent understanding of how to care for their bodies and develop a healthy lifestyle. All children are offered frequent drinks especially on outings and when playing outdoors when it is warm. Children can help themselves to accessible drinking water throughout the day. They make choices from a varied menu which includes cereals, toast, milk and fresh fruit at breakfast time and eat fruit at snack times. Older children visit a garden centre to buy vegetable seeds such as beans, courgettes and tomatoes to grow in the garden. They enjoy harvesting these for inclusion in their freshly prepared, nourishing and substantial meals which also incorporate fresh local produce. Parents are actively involved in planning these.

All children develop a very positive attitude to physical exercise and gain excellent control of their bodies through a comprehensive range of varied, daily activities within the spacious environment of the large lounge or garden. Babies have lots of space and encouragement to develop their mobility skills and have frequent opportunities to be outdoors in the garden on a rug on the safety surfacing or on well-planned walks and outings. Children enjoy the challenge of coordinating their movements when joining in circle games, using the outdoor play equipment or responding imaginatively to music. Older children become very skilful when managing their clothes and shoes, using balancing equipment, and manipulating a wide variety of tools and equipment. A calm, homely environment and the use of the different areas in the nursery ensure

that each child's day is balanced to give them daily opportunities to be active, play quietly, or rest comfortably if they are tired.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a light, airy, accessible and immaculately kept child-friendly environment. It is made very welcoming to them with their individual artwork and photographs of their activities. These keep parents informed and are used by children to remember recent experiences and to discuss them with their friends or carers.

Children are very safe and secure. They enjoy very stable care that protects them from harm extremely well. Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are always vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Finger guards have been fitted to fire doors to prevent children trapping their fingers. Safety surfacing under active play equipment helps to protect them from injury and also provides a safe environment for babies and toddlers developing their mobility skills. Security is excellent ensuring that no one who is not vetted enters the premises unannounced. Parents actively contribute to the safety of the children by steadfastly observing the rules for entry and exit from the premises. Individual children and visitors are immediately signed in and out on the very clearly drafted daily register so that it is always very accurate and easily used in case of an emergency.

Children develop an excellent understanding of how to think and act safely. Older children learn the importance of picking up the scissors from the floor. They are very interested in safety issues and ask how the special doll that is going on holiday with a member of staff will stay safe and not get lost. They talk about how to protect their feet from the hot sand on an imaginary holiday. They identify hazards such as spilt water and observe safety rules when on outings or visiting the local park.

Children use high quality equipment that is very appropriate to their age and stage of development. Activities and equipment are presented very accessibly to children at their level so that they can make active choices and develop at their own pace. All children are fully included because of sensitive adult support which ensures that all children have equal access to resources and activities. All staff are actively involved in monitoring the quality of resources so that these are promptly replaced or added to if necessary. The creative use of the different areas within the nursery such as the large carpeted lounge for different groups of children, and the excellent use of the attractive and well kept garden, significantly enhances their experiences.

Children are very well protected by staff who have an excellent understanding of child protection policies and procedures and give top priority to children's welfare. All staff have completed child protection training and designated staff are committed to looking at further ways of improving their practice such as developing children's awareness of how to protect themselves. Child protection procedures are detailed, up-to-date and shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in the nursery where their individual views and opinions are sought, valued and acted upon. Staff are highly skilled and use their excellent understanding of early years guidance, such as 'Birth to three matters' and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to provide high quality care and education. This ensures that each child is sensitively supported in reaching

their full potential. Children develop secure attachments because there is a very effective keyworker system that establishes close links with them and their family even before children start. This ensures that staff have an excellent knowledge of the needs of each child and are able to pitch the challenge of activities successfully to enable children to quickly develop at their own pace.

Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them to develop a very strong sense of self which empowers them to express themselves freely, and make genuine decisions and choices. Early communication skills are extremely well supported by high quality adult to child interactions which have been honed by staff reviewing their individual practice to give children more time to talk and respond. They recognise the importance of identifying any gaps in development early so that children get prompt support in developing their early communication skills.

Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences. Babies are very settled, alert and interested in their surroundings. They explore lots of different textures such as paint, different wall plaques and treasure baskets. They see bold visual stimuli on the walls and shining mobiles, and reflections of themselves and others in low-level mirrors. They experience fresh air and the natural world when playing in the garden or on walks and outings in a pushchair. They enjoy social snack and mealtimes and rest peacefully in the airy and calm baby room with gentle music.

Toddlers revel in the messy play such as sand, finger paint and water play which they have chosen together. They are confident to try out new activities and to assert themselves politely when someone does not use their correct name. They develop real independence in making choices such as whether to wipe their face themselves or ask for help. They carefully take an extra spoonful of pudding which builds their feelings of belonging and self-worth. They relish being active, and moving, stretching and developing their coordination skills to music and rhyme sessions, or playing energetically outdoors.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are inspired by stimulating activities which are child-centred, purposeful and fire their imagination and enthusiasm. They access an extensive range of well-chosen resources which support their development extremely well across all areas of learning.

Staff are skilled in adapting the level of challenge in individual activities to suit each child. This ensures that they succeed, are self-assured in their play and face the next steps in their learning with confidence. Staff give children time to think which often results in children finding the answers to their own questions. For example, they ask 'Why do we need to make a label for the ice lollipop?' that they have made and then decide that it is so that they will know which one is theirs when it is frozen. Staff are sensitive to children's self-chosen challenges such as matching all coloured plates correctly to the cups at snack time.

Children become excited by the activities on offer and develop excellent attitudes to learning. They wait open-mouthed to see what will emerge from the bag at group time. The oldest children are brimming with confidence and high self-esteem. They are observant, curious and question everything they encounter. They frequently make their own suggestions about why things happen and sometimes link these to past experiences such as the badge worn by a visitor

resembling that of a doctor. They develop very real independence, concentrating and persisting with tasks such as finding and changing their shoes and skilfully pour their own water or milk.

Children are very keen to communicate and express themselves through talk. Older children are starting to recognise that marks carry meaning when competently recognising their own name card, and making their own tickets for their imaginative play or labels for their lollipops. Children listen intently to stories and develop a real love of books. They handle these carefully and correctly and explain the detail of the story out loud as they turn the pages. They learn to value other languages when learning some words and seeing dual language labels on resources.

Children show confidence in using numbers, seek and offer solutions to problems. They request activities to use mathematical concepts such as putting up the height chart in the hall to compare how children have grown. Older children competently use numbers in their play, planned activities and daily routines. They quickly say that there are more children in one group than another and concentrate closely to identify differences in patterns. They stop pouring juice into the lollipop mould when it is half full after only verbal advice from staff.

Children have excellent opportunities to make sense of the world around them when visiting exciting places of interest such as the 'Think Tank' in Birmingham, or an arboretum to study the plants, animals and wildlife. They notice the bees and insects on the lavender in the garden and learn to walk carefully around it because it is the insect's favourite bush. They find out about more unusual creatures such as snakes and large snails when a visitor brings them to nursery. They grow, harvest and eat vegetables and learn that guinea pigs need daily food and water to grow and stay healthy. They have an exciting journey on a bus and revisit the photographs to find themselves, their friends and families. Children are inquisitive. They are fascinated by changes to the ice as it melts and the properties and textures of the compost when it is wet.

They develop excellent physical skills through a wide variety of experiences. They move and manoeuvre with skill and imagination. They skilfully use a wide range of tools and equipment including scissors and mark making materials. They competently operate the mouse for the computer programme.

They develop excellent independence in managing their personal care. They achieve increasing control over their clothing and shoes. They develop an excellent understanding of good practices with regard to hygiene, exercise, diet and protecting themselves from hazards such as the harmful effects of the sun outdoors.

Children are extremely imaginative and creative. Their senses are stimulated by the many different colours, textures and aromatic plants in the garden. They create their own individual artwork and drawings which are attractively displayed and valued. They move expressively to music developing their own ideas of actions to imitate a helicopter, create their very own imaginary beach or act out a camping trip.

Right from the start, staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs when talking to parents and carers. They build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. Frequent observations, thorough planning and detailed evaluation by staff ensures that an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities is achieved. This ensures that children learn at their own pace and quickly move on to the next step in their learning. Staff are very perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking, problem solving and language skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, visitors to the nursery and outings to local places of interest. They use and see numerous positive reflections of diversity and disability in resources and posters. Labels on resources for older children are in French and Spanish as well as English and some have opportunities to speak French at weekly sessions. Words of children's home languages are used to make them feel welcome when they start. Children find out about the cultures and traditions of others and are actively involved in their local community. For example, by influencing the equipment used in the refurbishment of a local play area so that it is attractive to all children. They are learning to recycle, compost and cut down on the food they waste, and help to fundraise for several local charities including a children's hospice. Children's spiritual and moral social and cultural development is fostered.

Children respond extremely well to high expectations to behave because staff use sensitive support and model strategies for children so that older ones develop their own negotiating skills and use these in their play. They learn to share out all the pieces of the puzzle equally so that each child has a fair share and politely ask for help from adults and other children. They become increasingly independent making numerous active choices and decisions. They contribute to routines such as helping at snack time and keeping the nursery tidy. Older children brim full of self-confidence and develop high self-esteem because their questions and suggestions are listened to and acted upon by staff. For example, children's requests to put up a chart are quickly actioned so that they can compare their varying heights and those of the adults.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Excellent relationships and active involvement contribute significantly to children's well-being. Parent's views about the children's needs and interests are actively sought before the children start at the setting during home visits by key members of staff. The special atmosphere created by working closely with them ensures that all children are fully included. Their individuality is respected and routines are flexible to meet their specific needs. Regular consultative meetings for parents about changes in procedures and the introduction of email links enhances communication and cooperation. Excellent written information such as white boards showing each day's activities, termly development reports, and invitations to 'Stay and Play' sessions, ensure that they have comprehensive information about children's progress and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care and learning is greatly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation. Leadership and management is outstanding.

The premises are very well-organised and resourced. The spacious indoor and outdoor environment is used very effectively to maximise the play and learning opportunities available to children. They are cared for in separate groups so that the level of challenge in activities is especially well matched to children's individual needs and ensures that they achieve their full potential. All children have daily opportunities to experience stimulating physical play activities, fresh air and exercise. Individual rooms are used flexibly and imaginatively to provide excellent opportunities for quieter, messy and creative activities. Children are excited by learning and build excellent relationships.

Children benefit from highly-motivated, competent and enthusiastic staff, and very proactive and effective management. Staff are very well qualified but undertake higher qualifications and numerous training sessions. They demonstrate a real depth of knowledge, experience and skill which they use to create a rich learning environment for children. There are comprehensive systems in place for observing and recording children's progress, and keeping parents informed. All staff are effectively vetted, inducted and monitored. They demonstrate a genuine commitment to promoting inclusive practice by working with other early years practitioners to develop and implement new initiatives such as early support packages. The whole staff team conscientiously reflect on, monitor and improve the quality of their care and education using a detailed self-evaluation based on all aspects of 'Every Child Matters'. Staff working with younger children enthusiastically implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They use innovative methods such as the 'Nursery Talk' project and filming their own interaction with children in order to improve their practice and to enhance children's speech language and communication skills. They build genuine and rewarding relationships with parents and other agencies to enhance children's learning and development. Overall children's needs are met.

All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. It is immaculately kept, accessibly but confidentially stored. Policies and procedures are individual and robust and regularly reviewed. Records of children's progress are very thorough, shared with and valued by parents who contribute their own comments.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation relating to care and one relating to nursery education were raised. The nursery was asked to devise a plan for the redecoration of the nursery rooms and to increase the availability of activities for children so that they have a broader range of experiences.

Very good progress has been made in both areas. An action plan was promptly drawn up and acted upon. There is a comprehensive maintenance, improvement and redecoration programme which has been ongoing since the last inspection. This has resulted in immaculately presented premises that are continuously being improved to enhance the welcome that children, their parents and carers receive. The nursery has also reviewed its programming of activities, staff time, space and resources to ensure that all children participate in a very full range of activities. Flexible use of the premises and careful planning means that activities are rotated regularly to allow every child frequent access. There is a rolling programme to ensure that all areas of development are promoted for part-time children. Frequent observation and assessment informs the planning of activities so that each individual experiences ones that are interesting and appropriate to their age and stage of development.

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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