



Daisy Chain Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY219513
Inspection date	15 January 2007
Inspector	Janette Elaina Lockwood
Setting Address	Royal Court, Maldon, Essex, CM9 5DA
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Registered person	Julie Hall
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?

Daisy Chain Day Nursery opened in 1991. It operates from six rooms in a two storey, purpose built premises close to Maldon town centre. A maximum of 74 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open five days a week all year round from 08.00 until 18.00.

There are currently 147 children from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 57 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. There are no children currently attending the setting with learning difficulties or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 members of staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The setting is kept very clean and hygienic by both employed cleaners and the staff who are responsible for their own areas. The floors are regularly mopped; staff clean tables and equipment properly with anti-bacterial cleaner and separate cloths are available for different tasks. These measures help to minimise the spread of germs to children. Staff involve children in interesting activities relating to healthy practices, for example, making books about hand-washing and exercise so they begin to understand the importance of keeping themselves healthy.

A proportion of staff have undertaken basic food hygiene courses and implement what they have learned into their daily practices, for example, when freezing and heating food for babies. This helps ensure that children are protected from food related illnesses.

Most staff are first aid trained and clearly understand the importance of keeping records properly. Information on children's individual health needs is obtained and taken into consideration to ensure they are cared for properly if they are ill or have an accident.

An experienced and qualified cook prepares appetising meals made from fresh ingredients. The menus are varied and interesting incorporating meals such as mushroom pasta or Irish stew. Children thoroughly enjoy the healthy and nutritious meals they are offered and menus are displayed throughout the setting so parents are kept informed.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are offered at snack time and children regularly talk about healthy foods with staff. As a result, children are learning what food is good for them to eat. Staff are aware of children's allergies and other dietary needs, recording what they have eaten everyday so that parents are aware of how well their child is being nourished.

There are daily opportunities for children to benefit from fresh air and enjoy plenty of outdoor play. Their activities include use of the apparatus to help with their climbing and balancing skills as well as planned activities such as using bats and balls to help with co-ordination. A soft play area incorporating a ball pond is situated in the summer house which offers excellent opportunities for all children, including babies, to develop their large muscle skills in a safe environment.

Planning for physical development also includes opportunities for children to practise action songs and rhymes, copying and repeating a range of movements. Staff know the importance of letting children learn some finer physical skills for themselves such as attempting to put on their own coats, or use cutlery to help them become more independent.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The setting is situated in purpose built accommodation, which has been designed to be child-friendly, bright and welcoming. Staff decorate their own rooms with children's work and

organise the areas to suit the children attending. As an example, there is sufficient space for plenty of cots in both baby rooms for children to sleep comfortably whenever they want. Each room has a sink and the toilets adjacent to base rooms.

The majority of equipment is well-organised in boxes with plenty of clear labelling so children can begin to learn where things belong. There is an abundance of toys and resources in each room although a few of the books and a small proportion of technology equipment in the rooms for older children are damaged and therefore may not be safe or interesting to the children.

Children begin to learn some effective ways they can help keep themselves safe, such as taking part in regular fire drills and learning songs about fire safety. There are clear safety notices relating to fire emergencies and requests for an ambulance to remind staff the correct way to carry out procedures and keep the children safe.

Children attending the after school club are collected from schools which are all within walking distance. Staff take first aid kits, high visibility jackets and tags with them to help keep children safe when they are out. They talk to the children constantly about road safety when they are out as well as reiterating this through activities in the setting.

Risk assessments are in place and staff take active steps to ensure the safety of the premises and activities to help minimise hazards and risks to children. The majority of areas are safe, however, equipment storage racks under the dormer windows in the upstairs room may present a climbing hazard to children.

Staff clearly demonstrate that they understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about children's welfare, including their own personal responsibilities. The deputy manager will be attending up-to-date training in safeguarding children in the near future and she will then cascade the training to the remaining staff. The child protection policy is consistent with the National Standards and is made available to parents so they can be sure their children are safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There are well-organised rooms for children under three years in the setting, so they can be cared for effectively according to their individual stages of development. Planning is currently being implemented into practice which takes account of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the supervisor for this age group oversees this throughout the three rooms. She has devised clear long term plans from which medium and short term planning is implemented and staff are beginning to understand the framework. Current planning takes account of observations, experience and discussions with parents.

The systems of recording children's development are very good and staff ensure that children's progress can be recorded effectively and their next steps identified. There are spaces in the records for parents to make comments on their child's development so they can help to influence their care. A really informative letter has been written for parents explaining the 'Birth to three matters' framework, how it is being implemented and what it means for their child.

Staff get to know children really well and a clear record of what children can do is handed over to the child's next key worker. This helps the staff to establish an appropriate starting point for the children in their new room and begin to plan to help them move onto their next steps. Children under three years are motivated and interested in their activities, for example, the provision of heuristic play with exciting treasure baskets. The toddlers benefit from regular messy play experiences giving them opportunities to explore and begin to make sense of their world.

The experienced staff directly influence the calm organisation of the rooms and children are confident in knowing what comes next in their day. Staff interact very well with the children helping them to make connections and become good communicators.

The setting is registered to care for children after school and in the holidays. They benefit from sole use of their own room which is organised very well for older children. Staff are experienced and offer children a wealth of opportunities to take control of their own play, whilst skilfully supporting them with new ideas and learning experiences. For example, children decide to make up their own show to perform to other children later in the day and become extremely involved and motivated. They are animated as they exchange ideas about the show and use skills such as mathematics, writing, drawing to produce artwork and tickets. Children work out problems and show how well they can work together.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate their good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage through their clear planning. The short term plans link to a stepping stone and identify what the child should be doing. There are daily activity plans which detail a learning intention, resources to be used and vocabulary for staff to include. Staff understand differentiation and plan the curriculum to promote progress towards the early learning goals and the inclusion of all children. However, a small number of the more-able children may not be sufficiently challenged in their activities which can lead to their disinterest during some parts of the session.

A range of teaching methods are used in the setting, ranging from individual work on numbers and letter recognition, to whole group activities and free play. Staff regularly record observations of children in different situations and these are used effectively to plan the next week's activities. In addition, staff take account of home links, for example, experiences of individual children moving house or a new baby in the family, in order to help children explore their feelings.

Children are confident to approach visitors in the setting and ask them questions. They show curiosity with their enquiring minds and want to chat and show visitors what they can do. Children are given plenty of scope to become more independent and all have regular opportunities to become 'helpers'. For example, helping to give out the plates and cups for snack. Staff offer children real and appropriate responsibilities such as helping to clear up things they spill with a dustpan and brush. Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings with staff through use of pictorial resources.

The play environment is text rich with labels on furniture and equipment so children begin to understand that text has meaning. They recognise the importance of written communication and are frequently encouraged to write their own names on their work. In addition they sometimes record what they have done at home with support from the staff. Children like to copy their names onto a keyboard, using their name cards and more able children know the initial letters of their name.

Children use mathematical language in their play and in conversations. They are able to show the correct number of fingers in counting and recognise numerals and what comes next in the sequence. They clearly understand the terms of more and less and can answer questions about bigger and smaller numbers. Staff regularly show children shapes so they learn to identify them, in addition, children skilfully use shape equipment to explore how shapes fit together.

There are regular activities to help children learn about nature, for example, they learn about how things grow, care for pets carefully and recognise the changing seasons. Children are encouraged to talk about their families and homes, helping them demonstrate a sense of belonging and also learn about people who help them in the environment. They have access to technological equipment such as keyboards, calculators and cameras and are beginning to understand how some equipment is used to help them in their daily lives.

Staff skilfully prepare a variety of activities to help children explore and practise their creative skills. They thoroughly enjoy role play areas to act out real and imagined experiences, for example in the play hospital. Children use their design and making skills in junk modelling, enjoy painting on a small and large scale and can recognise and differentiate between colours.

Staff use time, resources and accommodation well to maximise the children's learning potential and as a consequence they make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's social moral spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children regularly learn to help others through taking part in charity events such as Comic Relief and Children in Need. They also learn to help others in their local environment, making and delivering Harvest boxes to elderly people. Staff have discussions with children about why they are doing these things so they learn to appreciate the needs of others. In addition, the children find out how they can make a difference in other people's lives.

Good quality resources such as dolls, puzzles and posters reflect people's similarities and differences and children sometimes use interesting musical instruments from other cultures. Staff regularly incorporate activities in their planning, linking to festivals and events from around the world. As a result, children begin to appreciate and value others.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has undertaken relevant training and has taken steps to be proactive for children with special needs. Although there are no children currently attending with identified special needs, visual aids are available showing routines to help children with communication difficulties. A resource file is being collated for different conditions

such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Downs Syndrome in the event that staff or parents need a point of reference. Staff recognise that some children may have special needs and have systems in place to be able to care for them appropriately.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, encouraging them to take some responsibilities for their own actions. As an example, they are asked to apologise to others or to clear up after themselves. In addition, they are asked to think about and share their 'new year resolutions' with their peers: Helping them to identify how they can improve their behaviour in the setting and at home. There is a named person for behaviour management and regular in-house training takes place to ensure staff are consistent in their management of children. Staff use positive methods such as giving praise and explaining why some behaviour is not acceptable and as a result children are beginning to know how to behave acceptably in the setting.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The setting invites all parents of funded children to formal open days every term during which they can discuss their child's progress and view their records. Once a year, parents receive a clearly written report about their child, these reports accurately detail their progress within in the six areas of learning. There is sufficient space for parents to add their comments so they can contribute what they know about their child. Parents have a well designed monthly newsletter explaining the exciting topics and activities their children will take part in. In addition, parents are invited into the setting regularly, for example, to tell stories, or talk about their occupations helping children to make effective links between their homes and setting.

Parents of children under three years also benefit from regular information sharing with systems such as daily home to setting diaries, to inform parents of important issues in their child's day. As a result of this effective information sharing between parents and the setting children are able to gain confidence and trust in the staff. The prospectus for parents is clearly written, giving parents all information they need. Parents are also given a copy of the full policies and procedures enabling them to make informed choices. Within this document is the complaints procedure which is well-written and consistent with the National Standards. Additional information is displayed on the large notice board ensuring parents are made aware of any developments that may affect their child.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Leadership and Management are good. The manager consults regularly with staff in order to assess the setting's strengths and weaknesses and demonstrates how this is managed. The delivery of the nursery education is effectively monitored by the manager although it is the room supervisors who undertake the planning. Drawing up plans is recognised as a very important task and as a result, staff that plan for children aged three to five years are allocated one whole day per week for this. The manager randomly checks the plans to ensure they are helping children to progress towards the early learning goals and advice is welcomed from Early Years Advisors.

The manager is confident, very organised and able to prioritise extremely well. She values the high commitment of staff by involving them in decisions such as the self-evaluation of the nursery. Staff benefit from regular appraisals and dynamic staff meetings where they can add their ideas, or identify their own training needs and personal development is highly recognised as an important factor for good practice.

There are robust checking procedures in place to ensure that staff working with the children are extremely able to manage the demands of their role and a high level of staff are qualified. All staff demonstrate an extensive understanding of the needs of children, together with a comprehensive knowledge of the policies and procedures, which they implement effectively. The balance of mature and younger staff combine their individual qualities to positively influence the care of the children. Overall, children's needs are met.

The setting is thoroughly organised in relation to records, policies and procedures, keeping abreast of any changes in legislation. Information is easily accessible and very well-ordered for reference. All documentation is clearly written in plain English, with good attention to detail whether this is for use by parents or staff. As a result, the staff and users of the nursery are kept highly informed of how children are cared for and educated in the nursery.

Improvements since the last inspection

At previous inspection, the setting agreed to ensure information contained in the procedures was consistent with the National Standards. This referred to obtaining parental signatures when medication had been administered and in addition, to have some procedures for managing a situation with a lost child. Both these amendments have been made to ensure procedures reflect current practices.

The setting was asked to implement a system for recording all concerns and complaints included those made verbally. The manager has successfully updated the complaints system to effectively reflect the changes in legislation so that complaints can be dealt with effectively and in a timely manner.

At the previous inspection, the setting was asked to increase the staff's knowledge and implementation of all the policies and procedures contained in the operational plan. This specifically related to health policies and child protection. All the policies and procedures are up-to-date and informative.

The setting was asked to nominate a named person for behaviour management and this has been addressed.

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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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):

- assess risks to children in relation to the equipment storage racks, technology equipment and books and take action to minimise these.

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):

- ensure that more able children are sufficiently challenged in all areas of their play and 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