



Victoria House Day Nursery Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY338974
Inspection date	31 January 2007
Inspector	Deborah Ball
Setting Address	143 Bromyard Road, St Johns, Worcester, WR2 5DL
Telephone number	01905 426499
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Registered person	Victoria House Day Nursery 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Victoria House Day Nursery opened in 2006 and is a privately owned full day care setting. The nursery operates from a large converted Victorian house, situated on the outskirts of Worcester city. The setting serves the local and wider communities. A maximum of 44 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:00 to 18:00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and has procedures to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 11 members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is clearly protected through well-planned daily routines and learning from example. The children receive excellent support in learning to manage their own personal care as they wash their hands before meals, after toileting and outside play. The inviting presentation of the hand washing facilities encourages children to manage their personal hygiene needs independently. Laminated photographs displayed in the bathroom area identify the stages of hand washing and are available as a guide to children. Staff further encourage children's self-care skills by praising and congratulating them when they remember hygiene routines without being prompted. The nappy changing area is colourful and stimulating for the children to explore whilst having their nappy changed. However, children are at risk of cross infection because staff do not wear disposable aprons for nappy changing. Children's needs during rest and sleep times are carefully considered, with comforters and special toys kept close by so that children always feel emotionally secure. The premises and equipment are maintained to a very high standard of cleanliness and older children enjoy helping with appropriate tasks to keep the room and equipment clean and tidy.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have attended first aid training and can administer treatment in the event of an accident. Children benefit from the calm and caring approach of staff when dealing with minor accidents that occur, which quickly calms the children. Excellent systems are in place to ensure that accidents are well recorded and shared with parents at the end of each day. There are excellent procedures in place if children become unwell. Parents benefit from informative posters that are displayed to alert them of any illness that is present within the setting. Staff ensure that parents are made aware of any specific signs and symptoms of an illness and remind them of the advised minimum exclusion times.

Children enjoy an excellent range of varied, attractively presented and nutritious meals which are freshly prepared on site by the chef. Fresh produce such as vegetables and fruit are offered daily. Menus are produced to give parents information about meal choices. The children's awareness of the benefits of healthy eating is actively promoted at snack and meal times. Children enjoy a wide variety of healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit and they learn why some foods are better for our bodies than others through themed topic work. An exciting range of cookery and tasting activities inspire children to learn about healthy eating. Posters, puzzles and displays reflect the importance of a varied diet. The children are able to choose a drink of milk or water at snack and meal times and have independent access to further drinks throughout the day. Children's individual dietary needs are met through effective consultation with parents. Their needs are recorded in written form and are also discussed in full with parents prior to the child's placement at the setting. In order to ensure that all staff are aware of each child's individual needs, information is displayed in the kitchen area.

Children benefit from daily opportunities to experience the fresh air and changing seasons in the safe and secure garden. Babies and younger children enjoy playing outdoors, regardless of the weather and wrap up warmly in their coats and Wellington boots and go outside to splash in puddles and enjoy the stimulating learning environment. Indoors they are given plenty of space to move, roll, stretch and explore the things around them. They experience and achieve pleasure and control as they learn to throw a ball, play with shape sorters and use simple musical instruments.

Older children have excellent opportunities to play outside and confidently move between the indoor and outdoor areas as part of their play. The outdoor area is planned to create an outdoor classroom which provides children with opportunities to use their imaginations as they build, explore and play. There is an excellent range of equipment to enable the children to develop their physical skills. For example, children climb, balance, twist, and jump on exciting play equipment and they are able to challenge their limits in a safe and secure environment. Children develop co-ordination and spatial awareness as they successfully manoeuvre their cars around the play area, avoiding other activities and children, climb, develop ball skills and enjoy running around. The children play co-operative games, developing their understanding of sharing and turn-taking. Children benefit from enthusiastic staff involvement and interaction when playing outside. The outdoor play area is used extremely well to provide children with opportunities to link other areas of their learning, such as counting and colour recognition. If the weather is such that they cannot go outside, the children's base rooms are rearranged to allow them to play ring games, participate in parachute activities and enjoy dancing and musical movement. Children develop their fine motor skills using a variety of tools, natural materials and commercial equipment and have opportunities to make marks and develop their pencil control in various areas of play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children enter an environment that is highly stimulating, exciting and motivates all aspects of their development. It is a very welcoming environment which fully reflects the children's backgrounds and the wider community. Children develop a strong sense of belonging as their individuality is reflected throughout the setting in displays and photographs. Each age group is cared for in a specific base room that has been extensively planned to facilitate children's independent learning, as resources, which are of an excellent quality are stored easily within their reach, promoting their independence and ability to make choices about what they want to do. The space is extremely well organised to promote children's natural curiosity as learners as they access areas that are dedicated to certain aspects of learning. Children are engrossed in a wide range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities which provide high levels of challenge.

Children move around the vibrant environment freely and confidently. The children's safety is assured through the vigilance of conscientious staff, who complete daily visual checks and comprehensive annual risk assessments to identify and reduce risks to children. Staff take responsibility for identifying any safety issues and report without delay to the management team. Any visitors to the setting are vetted at the reception area and staff are vigilant in

confirming identities of unfamiliar faces. Children actively contribute in developing an awareness of their own safety. For example, the children learn how to cross the road safely when they go out for walks around the local community. Children take part in regular fire evacuation drills which helps to develop their understanding of the action that they should take in the event of a fire and have recently enjoyed a visit from the local fire-fighters who delivered the important message of the dangers of fire. All policies and procedures are consistently applied by diligent staff in regard to supporting children's safety and welfare.

Children's welfare is extremely well promoted by a team of staff who have an excellent understanding of the issues surrounding child protection and recognise that this is their first priority. Procedures for reporting concerns are implemented consistently by the management team and all staff complete training in identifying possible signs of abuse. The child protection policy is clearly displayed for parents so that they know what action will be taken if staff have any concerns about their children. The children are cared for by adults who are vetted appropriately and suitable systems are in place to ensure that children are protected from staff awaiting their clearance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The children benefit from a stimulating, colourful and exciting care and learning environment where they make good developmental progress. Children are confident and are happy and secure in the care of trusted staff. The children are forming positive relationships with their peers, playing co-operatively and involving each other in their play. They have excellent relationships with the staff who help them to develop their confidence through sensitive interactions and warm praise and encouragement. The children access meaningful and exciting play opportunities that support and develop their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development and are enthusiastic to take part. Staff have high expectations about what each individual child can achieve and support them well to achieve their full potential, given their capabilities and starting points.

The learning and development of younger children is enhanced through the excellent implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Knowledgeable, trained and experienced staff plan very carefully to meet the learning needs of all children. The children relish well resourced free play periods when they begin to make choices about their own learning and take part in more structured activities, adapted to meet their individual level of development. The key worker system has successfully achieved strong and trusting relationships between children and staff. Key workers carefully record observations and assessments of children's progress which are readily shared with parents. The staff give lots of praise and reassurance whilst interacting and communicating with all children which helps them to feel happy and secure. The children enjoy sensory play, using materials such as cornflour, paint, play dough, jelly, sand and water and are encouraged to think about how objects feel, smell and taste through first hand experiences.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals. The staff have an outstanding knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and a very clear understanding of how children learn. They are skilled in providing different learning environments and use a variety of exciting and varied teaching methods to ensure children remain motivated and eager to learn. Children are well supported and grouped appropriately, enabling older children to work in small groups on focused activities. There are effective systems in place for establishing children's developmental starting points and individual interests on entering the setting and for using ongoing information provided by parents. The planning is exceptional in its clarity and effectiveness. Weekly planning is clearly linked to the stepping stones and also to aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The key worker system in operation works very well to ensure that planning is specific for individual children and based on their own stage of learning. Both formal and informal observations are made and are used to inform the planning and identify clear learning goals for individual children. Staff can be seen making notes during the session about children's achievements and these are then transferred into children's assessment files and verbally communicated with parents at the end of the session. Parents and key worker staff meet regularly to discuss children's development and learning. These meetings are used to identify the next stage in children's learning and how both the parents and staff can support the children and move them forward. Children with learning difficulties or those who speak English as an additional language are well supported to ensure that they are able to fully participate, given their starting points and level of understanding.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Within a nurturing environment, children have excellent opportunities to develop positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning. Children are extremely well motivated to learn because they are actively involved in the learning process and are able to make choices about how they use activities to meet their own learning needs. The children are confident and enjoy very good relationships with the staff and each other, which contribute towards developing high levels of self-esteem and belonging. Children become independent as they are encouraged to choose from an excellent range of activities. They spontaneously initiate their own purposeful play and extend games very well using their imagination and creativity to develop ideas. Children's independence and self-care skills are further developed through day-to-day routines, for example, they use the toilet independently and they get ready for outdoor playtimes with minimal adult help. The children behave very well, with staff continually praising and encouraging them, so enhancing their self-esteem and reinforcing their positive attitudes to learning.

Children's language and communication skills are developing very well because staff use effective strategies to support children's use of language for communication. The children communicate their needs very well and initiate conversations about their experiences, feelings and opinions. They accurately recall past events and talk about holidays, home and family. Language and communication skills are further developed as a result of the staff engaging children in lively conversation and asking open-ended questions. Children's thoughts and suggestions are listened to and they are encouraged to contribute their ideas when planning topics and associated activities. Excellent use is made of 'circle time' to allow children to share news by talking to the whole group and they begin to learn the concept of listening to each other and taking turns to talk when they join in at this special time. Excellent teaching methods are used to enable

the children to begin to learn letter sounds and to enjoy books and stories. Children enjoy having stories read to them and listen intently, showing excitement and pleasure by joining in with familiar parts of their favourite stories. They spontaneously access a variety of good quality story books for their own enjoyment, as the book area is well resourced and inviting.

Opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills in preparation for writing are very good. The children relish the many opportunities for mark making and use appropriate implements such as pencils, chalks and crayons with increasing control. Some children are able to write their own names and others are well supported by staff as they begin to form letters. Children participate in activities which help them to develop their co-ordination and dexterity, for example, model making and construction. Activities such as role play are used to introduce children to writing in a variety of situations, for example, the post office has writing pads and envelopes for letter writing.

Children are developing their number and problem solving skills through a variety of activities and through singing and rhymes. The children are able to use these skills spontaneously in a positive and inclusive manner which further consolidates their learning and enhances their self-confidence. Children show a keen interest in numbers and counting and most confidently use and understand numbers up to 10 and above. Counting and number recognition is threaded through most activities as children count, match and compare numbers of objects as part of their play. The children sort and match objects using puzzles and construction toys and divide them into sets relating to their colour, shape or number. Children show a developing awareness of weights and measures through well considered practical activities, such as weighing out ingredients during cooking activities and often use mathematical language as they play, for example, small, medium and large. The children show a good understanding of shape and are able to name the most common ones describing them in terms of the number of sides and corners. Songs, stories and number rhymes are used extensively to help children count, solve simple number problems and to understand positional language such as in, out, under and over.

Children are developing an excellent understanding of the world in which they live because their natural curiosity and interests are stimulated by the extensive range of activities and the very effective teaching methods that form the foundation for learning. The children investigate objects and materials, using all their senses and have opportunities to observe, explore, question, and be curious, in a broad range of activities. For example, children enjoy corn flour magic and they learn to observe and question as they mix cooking ingredients together to make bread. Children explore and develop their natural curiosity during interesting activities, such as discovering which objects float or sink. The children are encouraged to extend activities to meet their own exploratory needs and to use their natural curiosity to find out how things work. The living world is explored when children access the garden where they enjoy caring for their rabbit, observing insects and small creatures in their natural habitats and sweep up leaves to create nests for the birds. The children use child-sized gardening tools to plant seeds and then watch them grow. Children have good opportunities to learn about their own and the wider world community through well-planned and well-resourced activities. They gain knowledge about different countries and cultures through stories, such as 'Handa's Surprise' and learn about the exotic fruits grown in Handa's homeland. The children talk about going to buy fruit from the shops and begin to realise that some of the fruit they see is grown in a country far away and has to be transported by a ship or aeroplane to this country. Through topics, such as

'People who help us', children learn about the lives and work of others. Children are very adept at using the computer and other technology. There is a comprehensive range of equipment available for children to extend their skills in information and communication, such as in using play telephones, a tape recorder, push-button toys, a digital camera and laptop computers. Strong community links help children to develop their sense of identity through visits from people who work in the community and outings around the local environment.

The children are able to be creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, drama and imaginative play. The setting has regular outside support from other professionals in the field of drama where the focus is developing children's creativity. Opportunities to participate in interactive workshops fire their imaginations and children talk excitedly about what they are doing. Children are encouraged to make very good progress in their creative development through producing paintings, drawings and models which are valued and displayed within the setting. Children play imaginatively, using a well-resourced role play area, where they can independently select resources and use fact or fiction to act out their experiences from home and the wider community, thus developing their imagination and creativity. Music is effectively used and children appreciate the opportunities they have to listen and dance to various pieces and they enjoy singing popular tunes and rhymes. Children recognise and explore how sounds can be changed, sing simple songs from memory and access a range of musical instruments such as tambourines, a xylophone and a rain maker.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging within the setting as they form excellent relationships with their peers and the staff who value and respect their individuality. Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge and views of their children's development and this ensures that staff can provide the most appropriate care for their child, based on their individual needs. Children are developing an excellent understanding of the wider world through effective planning, which includes the celebration of festivals and the careful selection of resources. These resources reflect equal opportunities successfully helping children to become aware of a wider society. For example, an excellent range of dressing up clothes, small world figures of differing disabilities and ethnic origins, books and posters. Through the daily routine and planned topic work they develop an understanding of music from other countries and explore the tastes and textures of foods from around the world. Children learn to value cultural differences, as they play with excellent multicultural resources, such as dressing up clothes, or discuss the climate in a child's country of origin. There are positive images displayed around the nursery and the setting actively and successfully celebrates the backgrounds of the children.

Children with learning difficulties receive a good level of support because there are effective systems in place which enable staff to implement individual learning plans for the children and to work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure each child is able to make sound developmental progress. Children with English as an additional language are very successfully supported and the staff have a close relationship with parents to ensure that the care offered is appropriate.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children thrive in the nursery's caring environment, where they are constantly praised for their efforts, and for showing kindness to each other. The children's behaviour is exemplary due to the staff's consistent and skilled approach in promoting positive behaviour in a manner which is proportionate to the child's level of understanding and maturity. Children respond very well to the excellent role models being offered by the staff, who demonstrate respect for other members of staff and children. The children are calm in response to their relaxed manner and are able to share and take turns with resources, such as the laptops, with little or no prompting. Furthermore, children's understanding of right and wrong is developed through gentle reminders to care for their environment, the resources and each other.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit greatly from the strong relationships between their parents and staff which enables them to settle well and develop a sense of belonging. Parents appreciate the very good relationships with staff established during initial visits to the nursery and these are consolidated during daily exchanges of information about their children. There are excellent arrangements in place to share information with parents. A web site is available to help parents access information about the nursery. Staff share a wealth of relevant information items with the parents. There is a parents notice board which is regularly updated to enable them to play a full part in their child's learning and includes information on events and activities the children will be involved in and ideas that parents can try at home with their child to further extend their learning. Parents are given regular newsletters about the topics being covered and information about how the setting is run. The staff know the children well and are able to provide for their individual needs because the key worker system works effectively to enable the staff to provide appropriate care and learning opportunities for all children and to support parents with information and advice. Parents are extremely well informed about their child's progress through regular communication and access to their child's personal assessment records which include detailed observations. The parents are given clear and meaningful information on all aspects of the care and education provided. Parents are regularly invited to comment on the provision for their children and their views and wishes are used to identify areas for improvement in the settings action plan.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care, learning and play are very well supported by excellent organisation. The manager's energetic leadership and the staff's enthusiasm, and their consistent robust responses to their ongoing development plans and evaluations, ensure that children and their families receive high quality day care. The children benefit greatly from the calm and well-organised environment in which they thrive and are eager to learn and play. The space and resources are organised effectively to ensure that children can develop their own games and access their playthings. Thorough recruitment, vetting and appraisal procedures ensure that staff are suitable, very able and highly motivated.

Children experience rewarding activities and benefit from the support and encouragement of a very able, intuitive and caring staff team who offer high levels of individual attention to the children. The staff demonstrate great enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that

stimulates, excites and motivates children of all ages and are particularly skilled at interacting with the children, responding to them and listening to their ideas. Staff are highly motivated and demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and direction. They have excellent opportunities to continue to extend their own professional development through regular access to training. Children's care and welfare is supported by clearly recorded, well-organised documentation and there are effective procedures in place to ensure they are regularly reviewed and updated. A clear operational plan, plus associated comprehensive policies and relevant guidance support the staff's practice. Staff's knowledge and understanding of these contributes to their successful implementation, thus ensuring that children are safe and appropriately cared for.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The management and staff are enthusiastic, dedicated and work very well together as a strong and supportive team. The care and nursery education provided to the children and families within this setting is constantly and effectively monitored, evaluated and reviewed, with a commitment to continuous improvement. The children's needs are the driving force of this facility and this is evidenced within all aspects of staff meetings, planning, assessment and the atmosphere generated through the staff's commitment. Children benefit from staff who are well qualified and have excellent knowledge of not only child development but of the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' curriculum. Staff are able to access appropriate training opportunities and are committed to improving their knowledge and understanding, as their self-development is supported and valued by the management team. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 outstanding.

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):

- ensure children are protected from the risk of cross contamination during nappy changing procedures.

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