



Catherine House Day Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	255135
Inspection date	09 January 2007
Inspector	Karen Cooper
Setting Address	2 Birchfield Way, Yew Tree Estate, Walsall, West Midlands, WS5 4LG
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Registered person	Buds Ltd.
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?

Catherine House Day Nursery School opened in 1992 and is one of six privately owned nurseries. It is based in a converted two storey house on the Yew Tree estate in Walsall. The location is convenient for schools, parks, shops and public transport. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children on roll from three months to four years. Of these seven children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 until 18:00 all year round. The nursery serves the local community. The setting supports children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

Five staff work with the children, of whom all have early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from a teacher mentor from the local authority and is working towards an accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is positively safeguarded through the staff's current knowledge of first aid and the effective routines in place to reduce the risks of cross-infection. Children learn the importance of good hygiene through the established daily routines of washing their hands before meal time and after toileting. Children are actively encouraged to be independent and manage their self-care skills and do so with increasing confidence. Staff are available to provide appropriate support when needed. There are appropriate arrangements in place to care for children in the event of illness. If children become ill during the session, the staff ensures that they are comfortable and cared for sensitively while waiting to be collected by parents. All minor accidents and medicines given to children are recorded and maintained appropriately, which supports children's well-being. Suitable nappy changing facilities are in place and staff follow appropriate routines to meet children's individual needs.

Children's health is promoted by a wholesome, nutritious and balanced diet. Meals are freshly prepared and menus are produced to give parents information about meal choices. Children are encouraged to enjoy food and understand why some foods are healthy and others are not. Meal times are relaxed social occasions when children and staff sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each others company. Children are provided with regular drinks and jugs of water are always available. All aspects of children's individual dietary requirements are discussed and agreed with parents. Staff are aware of children's specific dietary needs, likes, dislikes and preferences. Older children are offered a self-service style snack time. This effectively and positively encourages children to be independent and develop their self-confidence and self-help skills.

Space is used effectively to provide children with good opportunities to develop their physical skills. Children regularly take part in group activities, for example, music and movement sessions and practise their balancing and climbing skills when using large outdoor equipment. This helps children develop confidence moving their bodies with control in various ways. The children also go for walks within the local area. This enables them to explore their local environment and benefit from plenty of fresh air. Babies are learning to acquire physical skills such as crawling, climbing and balance because they have regular access to a good range of soft play apparatus, toys and resources which help to promote their development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children easily access a broad range of good quality toys and resources and space is used effectively, creating a child-friendly environment. Good consideration is given to the organisation of the rooms to allow children to move around freely and safely. Staff ensure toys and equipment

are suitable, safe and conforms to safety standards. Equipment is kept clean and is regularly checked for safety.

Children can move around the available space freely and safely as the staff have identified and addressed potential risks both indoors and outdoors to ensure their safety at all times. Appropriate safety equipment is used including socket covers, safety gates and safety flooring. Effective security systems ensure that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. For example, close circuit television is installed throughout the nursery, the outdoor area is fully enclosed and there are clear procedures to ensure only authorised people collect the children, if necessary passwords are used for extra protection. Thorough procedures are in place to ensure children are safe when on outings. Written consent is obtained from parents and staff take appropriate information with them including contact numbers in the case of an accident or an emergency. Staff talk to children about safety and reinforce safety messages. For example, the importance of picking up toys from the floor to avoid the dangers of tripping. They actively encourage the children to help tidy away toys and to play safely. Fire evacuation procedures are in place, which are discussed and practised with the children on a regular basis.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of their role and responsibility to protect children in their care. Staff are aware of signs and symptoms of possible abuse and know the appropriate procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child, which they ensure are shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, eager to learn and respond well to the staff's positive interaction. Good, warm, caring relationships between staff and children are evident. Children enjoy their time at the nursery and show eagerness and enthusiasm within their play. They are relaxed and well-settled; this enables them to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are provided with a wide range of activities to encourage them to learn through play and to help them develop positive attitudes towards learning, including creative activities, sand, water and role play.

Babies and toddlers respond well to the stimulating environment. They enjoy participating in messy play when using blancmange and oats, showing their enthusiasm with squeals of delight. Staff respond promptly and with genuine interest to children's reactions and enthusiasm, this helps them to feel valued and appreciated. Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use their knowledge effectively to support younger children's learning. Children's self-esteem and confidence is enhanced with the use of praise and encouragement. The staff expect appropriate behaviour and any lapses by children are dealt with in a kind and friendly manner. Taking turns, sharing and good relationships are fostered in this nursery.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation Stage and early learning goals. Children are motivated to learn, eagerly participate in activities and are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

However, there are missed opportunities for the more able children to make progress in their mathematical development and the role play area is not used to its best advantage. All children are included, made to feel secure and valued. The learning environment reflects the local community and the wider world and resources and equipment reflect positive images.

Staff ensure activities are planned around the children's learning needs and builds on what they already know and can do. This helps promote a positive attitude towards learning. Plans reflect how themes and topics are linked into the different activities to reinforce children's understanding. For example, stories, songs and craft activities are based on the current 'book' theme. Planning for focussed small group activities ensures clear learning intentions are identified for children. Regular observations are carried out on each child's capabilities and staff use children's profiles to record the progress they are making towards the six areas of learning. There are appropriate systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff have developed good relationships with support workers so all children are included in all aspects of nursery life.

Children are learning to play well together and co-operate with each other. They are keen to develop new skills such as using scissors to cut out pictures. Staff positively encourage children to be independent and provide many opportunities for them to develop their self-help skills, for example, serving themselves during snack and meal times. They willingly accept their responsibility as chosen leaders, helpers and cleaners. This helps support their developing independence and self-motivation. Children are starting to recognise their names through the self-registration system and placemats used at meal times. Older children practise writing skills and can write their names, with many letters correctly formed. They concentrate well during story time and listen intently to familiar stories such as 'The Rickety Barn'.

Children use mathematical language such as 'tall' and 'bigger' when building a tower using construction objects. They confidently count the days of the week using their fingers and competently participate in an educational programme using the computer to recognise and match numbers up to 10. However, there are missed opportunities during daily routines and activities to ensure that the more able children develop their understanding of simple subtraction. Children can describe the properties of shapes and understand when building a tower that the shape they have formed is that of a cube. They enjoy looking after and feeding the pet Giant African Snail and are interested in how things work such as the way magnets can pull together and push apart.

Children are developing skill in control and co-ordination when using small tools and large equipment. For example glue spreaders, paint brushes, push-a-longs and climbing equipment. They show an awareness of space for themselves and others when joining in exercise activities and can adjust their speed well when chasing each other outdoors. Regular opportunities are provided for the children to be creative through activities such as, cooking, painting, sand, water and collage. For example children enthusiastically use smashed potatoes to stick bricks together and enjoy making papier mache masks. Crayons and pencils are freely accessible to encourage children to express their ideas. However, there are missed opportunities to develop children's imagination when participating in role play. Planned music sessions provide opportunities for children to be creative through dancing and listening to simple instructions using a compact disk player. They use a good range of instruments to look at rhythm, tempo

and beat. Children are learning to differentiate between colours through activities and a 'colour of the week' theme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are learning to respect diversity within their immediate and wider community through planned and spontaneous activities, toys and resources such as dolls, figures, books and puzzles. They take part in celebrations of different festivals from around the world, for example, Diwali and have tasted food from other cultures. Currently there are no children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but staff have past experience and ensure that they work with parents and other professionals to meet each child's individual needs in a sensitive and caring manner.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are learning to work and play harmoniously together. Staff have a good understanding of managing children's behaviour and have attended training. They encourage the children to share, take turns and consider the feelings of others. They respond positively to the staff who ensures behaviour is managed with the use of praise, distraction and explanation. Younger children are well settled into the daily routine and are happy and eager to learn. Older children are confident, independent and self-reliant as they choose activities. Children develop self-confidence and self-esteem as their work is displayed attractively throughout the nursery. They are listened to and the staff value what they say, which helps them to feel good about themselves.

All aspects of children's individual needs are discussed and agreed with parents. Settling-in visits are used to support children effectively in the transition from home to nursery. Time at the beginning and end of each session is made available for parents to talk with staff. A parent representative ensures that information is shared with staff and vice versa.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. This ensures that children are happy and confident during their time at the nursery. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures about the day-to-day organisation of the nursery and educational programme is displayed and shared with all parents. Staff encourage parents to share what they know about their children's learning and to work together to help their children make good progress in their development. They ensure parents are well informed about their child's progress through regular discussions and parent's evenings.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children enjoy and participate fully in activities because space and resources are well organised. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are cared for by suitable staff. A key worker system is operated in the nursery which ensures the children's well-being is promoted. Staff have formed positive relationships with parents which ensures they work effectively with them and their children.

All legally required documentation is in place and shared with parents. However, staffs attendance during the lunch time period is not accurately recorded as records do not state when staff have left the premises. Children's personal information is stored securely, which helps to maintain confidentiality.

Leadership and management is good. This contributes to children making good progress towards the early learning goals. The management team monitors and evaluates practice with staff and works effectively with the local authority advisory teacher in supporting children's learning. Staff work well together as a team and are committed to ongoing training and development, which has a positive impact on children's overall learning and development. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure the changing area in the panda's room is appropriate for the care needed and that windows are made safe. Children's health is safeguarded as a good standard of hygiene is maintained throughout the nursery and all changing areas are equipped with the appropriate equipment to ensure children's needs are met. Children are prevented from gaining access to low-level windows as sheets of plastic have been secured to window sills to ensure their safety is protected.

As part of the last inspection for nursery education the provider was asked to continue to develop behaviour management and encourage parents to participate in their children's learning and progress. Staff have a good understanding of managing children's behaviour and have attended training. They encourage the children to share, take turns and consider the feelings of others. Children respond positively to the staff who ensure behaviour is managed with the use of praise, distraction and explanation. Staff encourages parents to share what they know about their children's learning and to work together to help their children make good progress in their development. They ensure parents are well informed about their child's progress through regular discussions and parent's evenings.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 there has been two complaints made to Ofsted that require the provider to take 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.

Concerns were raised about staffing ratios at the nursery, particularly in relation to children aged under two years. This relates to National Standard 2 – Organisation. We made an unannounced visit on 10 May 2004. Two actions were raised. The provider was also served with a Compliance Notice requiring her to ensure suitable contingency arrangements are in place to cover emergencies, unexpected staff absences, and sufficient suitable staff and volunteers to cover staff breaks, holidays, sickness and time spent with parents as set out in the National Standards. A further monitoring visit was undertaken on 7 June 2004, which confirmed that the provider is now complying with the National Standards and remains qualified for registration.

Ofsted received a complaint about staff:child ratios and hygiene at the setting. The complaint raised concerns in relation to National Standards 2(Organisation) and 7(Health). Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit on 1 September 2006 to investigate these concerns. Ofsted found no evidence to suggest a breach of National Standard 7. Ofsted did find evidence of a breach of National Standard 2 with regards to the recording of a child's attendance. Ofsted is satisfied that the provider took appropriate action at the time of the visit to address the breach and Ofsted will take no further action. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure records of staffs attendance are accurately maintained at all times

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):

- continue to develop and improve the role play area and activities for more able children to understand simple subtraction

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