



A.G.N.E.S Day Nursery Class 1

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY339356
Inspection date	10 January 2007
Inspector	Barbara Ann Bush
Setting Address	Bocking United Reformed Church, Church Hall, Church street, Bocking, Braintree, Essex, CM7 5LH
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Registered person	A.G.N.E.S. Day Nursery
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

A.G.N.E.S. Day Nursery, Class One is one of two nurseries run by A.G.N.E.S. Day Nursery Ltd. It opened in 2006 having relocated from other premises. It operates from rooms within a church building. It is situated in the Bocking area of Braintree Town.

A maximum of 24 children aged from two years to under four years may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 08.30 until 16.00 for 46 weeks of the year.

All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 42 children aged under four years on roll. Of these, ten children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and wider catchment area. The nursery

currently supports children with learning difficulties and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. Of these, four members of staff including the manager hold an appropriate early years qualification. One member of staff is working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority, The Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and the Area Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing an understanding about the need to stay healthy. They are following a basic routine that is meaningful to them as they are a very young group of children. They know that they must wash their hands after using the toilet or before eating; staff are on hand to give help where required and ensure that hands are washed properly. Older children are given more independence to use the toilets and basins. The standard of cleanliness throughout the building is maintained to a satisfactory standard by the staff for example tables are cleaned regularly and floors are swept or dried after messy play.

Accident and medication records are accurately recorded. The first aid box is on hand should it be required. A member of staff, trained in first aid is always on duty. Children who need to sleep or who become poorly during a session can rest on a mattress, covered by a blanket. Parents are alerted if a child becomes ill and staff talk with them about preventing the spread of infection in the nursery. These appropriate measures ensures that children's health issues are responded to in an appropriate way.

Children have regular food breaks and drinks throughout the day. Parents provide all the food and drinks for their children. The nursery provides extra drinks should the children become thirsty or if they have used up all of their own juice. All allergies and dietary requirements are documented and staff are alert to ensure children do not share their food and eat anything unsuitable for them. Staff talk with the children about healthy eating and have recently started a topic on 'green' foods and are learning rhymes that have connections with food. Children have also been able to experiment with basic cooking, mixing and decorating biscuits. This means that children are beginning to learn about nutrition and the effect food has on their bodies. Mealtimes provide opportunities to sit together and share their news. They enjoy helping each other and this aids promotion of their self-esteem. Children are learning effective table manners as the staff eat their meals with them and act as good role models.

Children have some opportunity to exercise during the day however the outside area is used infrequently. Children are able to move freely within the hall and thoroughly enjoyed a session with the parachute. They tried to grab balloons and run under the extended chute. Children are practising eye and hand coordination and how to manipulate tools and materials. Children are showing signs that they have skill when model making.

Funded children are learning how to participate in group games and work together to construct larger models with the train set or bricks. Children have time to practise and succeed in filling containers with water and other materials, such as pasta. Staff are helping the children to improve their ability to dress themselves; undoing buttons and tying shoe laces. Children are provided with resources such as threading, posting toys, scissors and pencils to encourage confident handling of smaller objects. However, children are not given sufficient opportunities to improve skills such as hopping, skipping, running and tumbling as the outside area is not being used to its full potential and alternative sessions inside the hall with large-scale equipment is not in place on a daily basis. Children are therefore not recognising the importance of physical play and the impact exercise has on their overall well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, bright environment. The hall is well maintained and decorated to an acceptable standard that is enhanced with posters and examples of the children's artwork. Staff ensure that the room is laid out ready for the children's arrival and this makes it easy for them to start playing with the resources straightaway. Staff also provide quiet areas for children to read or talk with their friends. Children are confident about where to put their belongings and this is building their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

The furniture and equipment in use is clean and well maintained. Resources are selected to meet the needs of the range of children attending and this means that they quickly become familiar with the toys and use them independently.

Security within the building ensures that no-one enters the premises without being met by a member of staff and visitors are asked to sign a book. Staff members complete visual risk assessments both inside and outside of the building which allows them to identify resources that require repair or that any hazards are removed promptly. Children are therefore protected and their safety is given priority. Children take part in regular fire drills and know why this procedure is carried out. Children are beginning to learn about safety issues as staff take time to talk about the use of sharp equipment such as scissors, not to run around the hall and how to lift the chairs. They are reminded about being careful near the water trough as the floor can become slippery and children were seen to make a point of walking around the puddles. Children are supervised closely when using the outside area as it is a concrete surface. Children are beginning to learn the basic rules about safety, awareness of themselves, how important it is not to hurt others around them and self-control.

The group has a comprehensive child protection policy that is available to staff and parents. They also have a designated person in place, appointed to update the policy and act in an emergency. However, it is apparent that not all staff members are aware of child protection issues and therefore they are unable to implement the policy and procedure that is in place should a concern arise. This limited knowledge potentially puts children at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children experience a range of activities that are planned and spontaneous for example extending the home corner out into the room and using other equipment to enhance the game. Children are learning to interact with adults and each other. Their opinions and ideas are important and affirmed. Children are learning how to deal with a range of feelings and that it is alright to feel angry and sad. There are strategies in place to deal with the unknown such as, leaving their parents and using unfamiliar materials. Children have pride in their work; it is displayed and appreciated by others. Their independence is increasing and they are beginning to make sense of the world.

Children have opportunities to play games and share equipment. They learn what is acceptable behaviour, sharing and right and wrong. Children are able to use their imaginations for example, pretending to cook, having the freedom to make a collage without adult direction and making all sorts of shapes with the play dough. They increase their vocabulary through their play. They are able to express their own creativity and thinking.

Staff members confidently use the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have plans for the children's learning. They ensure that the very young children are comforted and settled, encouraging them to communicate and make themselves heard. Children are learning how to listen and concentrate at story time and repeat simple rhymes. Staff members work closely with parents to understand what the children are capable of achieving at home in order to provide them with activities that interest and stimulate their imaginations.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff members have completed training for the Foundation Stage and courses on how to assess and monitor the children's learning. They follow the guidance and use the stepping stones to plan activities. They use a variety of teaching methods; one-to-one, small and large groups and this depends on the activity. All six areas of the Foundation Stage are included in the planning. These are clear, simple and colour coded so that all the staff can use them. Plans are assessed and adapted to suit each child's rate of learning. The key workers watch and listen when working with the children to discover if the children need more challenge and understand what they are doing. The staff members understand that the children are very young, targeting their learning aims to suit their knowledge and understanding.

Plans are inclusive to ensure that children requiring additional support can take part in all the activities. Staff members learn simple words in other languages to help a child feel comfortable and settled. Children behave well and understand the need to help each other and cooperate. They know the boundaries and respond to the positive methods used by the staff. Staff members work with the children for the majority of the time and change the resources during the session to maintain interest. Children's progress is assessed on a regular basis, however these records are not always shared with parents.

Children can use their imaginations and are using the new home corner extensively. Staff members have recognised that the addition of dressing up clothes will add to their enjoyment. Children are using a variety of materials to create pictures such as tissue, cloth, glitter and different kinds of paper. They are able to make their own patterns and designs. They are learning to sing simple songs and listen to music. They look at photographs of the real world to discuss smells and nature. They occasionally use music for dance. Children's mathematical skills are promoted through the use of water and sand to fill and empty containers. They can count tentatively with the help of the staff and continue to practise by using number rhymes. They know comparative language such as 'tall', 'small', 'little' and 'large'. They can create and re-create simple patterns with help and are beginning to recognise shapes, such as 'circle' in the activity for making a current bun.

Children are extending their language skills and know how to interact in a conversation, taking turns and sometimes listening to what each other is saying. They can express their feelings and know when they are happy or feeling cross. They like to look at books with a member of staff and settle to listen to a story. They are beginning to understand the sequence of events in a story and will occasionally offer their opinion or try to predict what happens next. Children have some opportunities to write, making simple marks with pencils and paint. They are yet to try writing for a purpose such as, making lists or putting their names onto their work. Staff members are beginning to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world. They are starting to look at living things and the world around them and have recently discussed 'green' vegetables. They are able to talk about themselves and family and staff have plans to extend this to the wider environment. Children have some understanding about other cultures and beliefs through topic work on festivals and books depicting how other people live. Children, as yet are unable to appreciate the environment as they do not make visits outside of the nursery or use the outside play area to its full potential.

Children are willing to learn. They try new activities and play in a secure and happy environment. Children display confidence when leaving their parents in the morning and enter the nursery with enthusiasm. They are making friends and are beginning to understand the rules of working together. Staff members provide opportunities for the children to explore their emotions through stories and discussion such as feeling happy and worried. In this way children are articulating their thoughts and are able to participate fully in the activities. They respond to praise and encouragement and their independence is developing. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated with equal concern and their individuality is valued and respected. The setting has an equal opportunities policy in place and a designated member of staff responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the aims of the policy. Both boys and girls have equal access to resources and any discriminatory remarks made by children or adults are challenged. There is a fair range of materials reflecting diversity in the community, books, dolls and small world figures. It has already been identified by the staff that the addition of dressing up clothes will add to the enjoyment children have in the home corner.

The setting is inclusive and welcomes all children. Access to the premises is good and resources are adapted to meet the children's needs. The group has a special needs coordinator and she is aware of the Disability Discrimination Act. Children who require additional support are encouraged to be independent and take part in all of the activities. Advice and help is sought from parents and any agencies involved with the children's care.

A written behaviour policy is in place and is consistently applied. As a result children are developing an understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. There is little disruption during whole group activities and this in turn is helping the children to complete tasks and aids their ability to concentrate. Staff members are sensitive to each child's needs and this was seen when food was thrown on the floor by a child who then wanted to eat it. Negotiation started and an explanation given about germs and how dirty the food had become. The child agreed to the solution of throwing it in a bin and the incident was quickly forgotten. Young children are attended to quickly and they are reassured by the provision of familiar toys or their comforters. The most frequently used method of behaviour management is 'time out' which the children respond to favourably.

There is an effective partnership with parents for the younger age range of children. Parents have time to settle their children and this can be for as long as it takes to reassure them. There is a parents' notice board in the entrance and further information is given to them via newsletters and talks with the key workers. Parents complete booklets based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and information is added by both carers and staff to record achievements. This united approach ensures children are settled and confident when leaving their parents.

Partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is satisfactory. Parents receive verbal feedback about their children's progress from key workers and access information via the notice boards and the setting's website. Parents are very happy about the way staff members care for their children and feel able to make suggestions, understand the daily routine and have access to the policies and procedures. However, not all parents are aware of the Foundation Stage or the six areas of learning. Therefore they are unable to become involved with their children's learning or understand the aims of the curriculum. Children benefit from a coordinated approach to their learning so that they know their efforts and achievements are appreciated by their parents as well as the staff.

Children are beginning to learn to control their emotions and try to be kind to each other. They are extending their ability to listen and look at books quietly. They are starting to understand about the wider world and talk about their own home life. Events such as a new baby in the family or decorating is talked about with friends and staff. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The management team within the nursery are both qualified and both are experienced workers within the childcare field. They work well together and are aware of the issues raised within their team and work hard to address any problems. The whole team has pooled their resources

to meet the demands of the move to new premises; settling the children and familiarising them with the building and organising the day to day running of the group.

The playroom is well organised and staffing ratios are not only maintained but exceeded at each session. This means that key workers have ample time to spend with the very young children who frequently need additional comforting and support when completing tasks. Additional staff can be called if necessary to cover absence and staff files are up to date and available for inspection. However, new members of staff do not have formal induction training and although they have copies of the group's policies and procedures, do not have to confirm that they have read and understood them. This also means that they do not complete health and safety training or cover child protection issues within their first week of employment. Potentially, this lack of knowledge puts children at risk as new staff are unable to follow procedures.

Documentation is generally in good order. All of the mandatory records are on site. However, children's safety and well-being is potentially compromised because the daily register does not accurately record the times of arrival and departure for each child or the staff. Paperwork is kept confidential and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure information is in line with current guidelines.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The management committee, which is newly formed, are beginning to develop strategies of working with the childcare team to ensure there is a common aim. This is to provide a service to their community, ensuring that all of the children play in a secure and happy environment.

The committee oversee the general running of the nursery and provide staff with the resources they need. They also work with the teaching staff to ensure that the children's educational needs are met. During the past six months work has been concentrated on establishing the nursery in the new building, building up team spirit and morale and dealing with any staffing matters or problems.

Training is valued and one member of the committee has completed training for the 'Birth to three matters' framework and intends to complete an NVQ 111 course to expand her childcare knowledge. However, the committee has not established any system to regularly monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching team. As yet, there have been no staff meetings therefore the team has not identified their training needs. This lack of systematic reviews means that staff and management are unaware of the strengths and weaknesses in the setting.

The support and input of outside agencies are welcomed and encouraged. Links are in place with the local authority and in particular with the area special needs coordinator.

Overall, children's needs are met.

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.

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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 that staff are aware of child protection issues and are able to implement the policy and procedure in the absence of the designated member of staff
- provide induction training, ensuring that all staff members are competent and knowledgeable about the group's policies and procedures
- ensure that there is a system in place, accurately recording times of arrival and departure of the children and staff on a daily basis.

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):

- provide opportunities for regular and frequent physical activity indoors and outdoors (This also applies to childcare)
- ensure that there is a system in place to monitor and assess the development and training needs of the staff members
- ensure all parents are fully informed about the aims of the Foundation Stage, sharing children's records of progress and achievement with them to promote a coordinated approach to 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