



Academy 4 Kids

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY260044
Inspection date	06 February 2007
Inspector	Malini Parmar
Setting Address	209 Friern Barnet Lane, Whetstone, London, N20 0NG
Telephone number	020 8446 9988
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Registered person	A B Nurseries 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?

Academy 4 Kids has been registered since 2003. It operates from a building that was previously used by St Johns and All Saints Nursery School. The building is situated on a main road and is close to other local amenities, in Whetstone in the London Borough of Barnet. A maximum of 71 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. Children attend from the local and surrounding community and child care places are open to the general public.

There are currently 81 children on roll from under one year to under five years. Of these 32 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs, and also children who speak English as an additional language. There is a separate baby room, a room for children aged from one to two years, and a toddler room.

Older children have access to the pre-school room. There are two separate outdoor areas, and a woodland area used for outdoor play and activities.

The nursery employs 21 staff; 14 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Nine staff are currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment which places strong emphasis on promoting their health. As a result, hand washing forms an integral part of the children's personal care routines, and older children visit the toilet independently. Older children know and understand how washing hands "keeps dirty germs" away, as they consistently engage in useful conversation to reinforce their understanding. Staff follow clear routines to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria. Younger children have their own bedding and staff diligently sterilise equipment after it has been used to promote a healthy environment. Young children are cradled whilst being bottle fed, and staff maintain conversation when changing nappies to promote children's emotional well-being. Occasionally, such effective personal routines are not followed, and babies do not consistently receive such positive levels of involvement during their mealtimes. Children do not attend if they are sick or infectious as clear information is shared with parents to help prevent the spread of infections. Staff keep appropriate records for the safe administration of medication and reporting of accidents.

Children relish the nourishing meals and snacks offered throughout the day. These are freshly prepared on site, from the balanced menu, which takes account of all special dietary requirements and parental wishes. Older children enjoy peeling their own fruit at the snack area, and recycling the waste to make sure "it goes back outside" to be composted. Younger children make their choices from the attractive range of fresh fruit on offer. The fish pie is very popular with the children at lunch time. Secure arrangements are in place to ensure children have access to fresh drinking water at all times to ensure they remain hydrated.

All children enjoy daily access to the outdoor area. Babies and young children benefit from having their own secure garden, which ensures they receive opportunities for fresh air, according to their needs. Older children utilise the many opportunities the outdoor area affords them. They show their awareness of space as they skilfully manoeuvre around objects and one another. They develop greater control over their movements as they practise jumping and hopping and energetically pedal bikes and scooters to win races. They climb the frame with confidence carefully co-ordinating their movements to reach the top. Children enjoy balancing along the stepping stone buckets following instructions with care as they move along them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are secure in a warm and friendly environment. The use of posters and attractive low level displays of their work promotes a sense of belonging. The effective "settling-in" procedures

ensure new children attend the nursery gradually for longer periods but these may vary according to their individual needs. Children move freely and confidently in the light, bright well equipped premises, making their choices from the variety of toys and resources on offer. Younger children and babies have access to a range of equipment to ensure their needs. Older children can easily access particular activities because space is effectively utilised and attractively divided into specific play areas.

Children benefit from good systems to monitor the entrance to the provision, such as the intercom system, to enable them to feel safe and secure. Risk assessments are regularly made to ensure effective safety measures are in place. Children are supervised closely and staff offer helpful explanations to enable them to understand why some things are unsafe. They are skilfully reminded of the dangers of spilling water whilst enjoying their water play. As a result, children are becoming increasingly aware that they must not run indoors and prompt one another to wear an apron and their "wellies" before they play with the water. Regular checks are made to electrical and gas equipment to ensure it is of a safe standard and does not pose a hazard to children. Effective procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children, staff's knowledge and understanding of recommendations for sleeping babies, and clear procedures for evacuation in the event of an emergency contribute to keeping children safe.

Children's safety and well-being is safeguarded due to the sound knowledge staff have of child protection and local Safeguarding Children procedures. Staff are supported by regular in-house training to increase their confidence in this area. The comprehensive policy in place includes procedures to follow in the event an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages are keen to embark on a broad range of interesting activities that promote their development. They share warm positive relationships with staff and benefit from the sensitive support they receive to extend their play and learning.

Young children clearly enjoy the wealth of exciting practical activities which focus on using malleable resources to promote their senses. They delight as they roll balls in "purple paint" and discover the patterns they make. They chatter happily as they wash their "dollies" in their water play, deciding when the dolly is clean. Children are supported to make play dough and together with their friends choose the colour. They proceed to play with it to encourage their manipulative skills. Children enjoy the texture of the combination of rice and sand, and how it slips through their fingers. They respond with excitement as they use the toy phones to "ring mummy", and dress up in the imaginary play area. Babies are supported in their sensory development, as they keenly explore items in the "treasure basket", they enjoy the variety of rough and smooth items the basket offers. Children benefit from the evolving use of the Birth to three matters framework to support their play and learning. Staff continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of the framework to support the planning of activities. They make observations of the children's development and are beginning to evaluate them more and more to support children's progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enthusiastically participate in a variety of stimulating practical play. They enjoy learning in an environment where staff provide good support to extend their learning and thought processes. Staff make observations of the children's involvement in activities and evaluate these to ascertain progress. The system is evolving to ensure that observations are recorded across each area of learning for all the children, in order to consistently identify children's individual learning priorities. The child focussed environment makes it easy for children to make choices from a wide range of exciting opportunities. These include daily activities planned and offered by staff, as well as choices within the planned environment. As a result, children initiate their own play independently. They secure firm friendships as they learn to share, take turns, and work co-operatively. They strengthen their concentration skills and persevere in their chosen tasks as they complete mathematical puzzles, racing with their friends to successfully find "number 10 to fit in the last space". Children are mostly encouraged to develop their self help skills, as they ably peel fruit at the snack table and learn to dress themselves for outdoor play. However, children are not always asked to do things for themselves, sometimes staff pour their milk and mark their name on their work for them. As a result, children are not provided with consistent chances to increase in their independence. Children speak openly and confidently as they engage their friends and adults in conversation. They regularly use the book area, sharing their favourite books with one another. They listen to stories and enjoy the pat and clap rhythms. Sometimes the size and length of the whole group times mean that not all children participate fully. They learn that print carries meaning as they respond to the labels in their environment and successfully find their names at the snack table. Children clearly enjoy making marks using the chunky chalks outside, to make patterns and "lists".

Children experience counting daily, they ably count up to 10, as they find the puzzle pieces. They count the number of children eating snack and receive good support to work out how many cups and plates they may need accordingly. They repeat much of the mathematical language they consistently hear staff use to describe, shape, colour and size. As a result, they successfully differentiate and proudly pronounce "I've got the longest hose". Children clearly enjoy scooping measures of sand to fill and empty containers as they explore space and measure. They explore and investigate using their senses, and excitedly notice the change to the water as staff skilfully support them to blow bigger and bigger bubbles. They receive good support to learn different ways of making bubbles in the water. Some children learn that they can also shake the hoses "faster and faster" to make "more bubbles". Children strengthen their fine motor skills as they wind the handle on the shredder backwards and forwards, and delight as they notice what happens to the paper. Children clearly enjoy the attractive imaginary play area, which is visited frequently. They mimic their observations of the world as they put on aprons, in preparation to "make cakes" and make cups of tea for their friends. The quality of play sometimes varies according the amount of support they receive. Children particularly enjoy mixing paints to "make new colours"; they receive good staff support to make up their favourite "orange" and learn about light and darker shades. They paint freely and eagerly use the large array of resources, including boxes and pasta to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals and encouraged to show kindness and respect to one another. They share their thoughts and ideas freely in the secure knowledge that these are welcome. Children learn about differences and the wider world as they celebrate a range of festivities throughout the year. They receive useful chances to consolidate their understanding of these by regularly using a range of resources reflecting diversity. Older children clearly enjoy learning about the Chinese New Year, as they make lanterns and learn to count in Mandarin.

Clear strategies are in place to support children with special educational needs. The nursery follows an inclusive approach, staff attend relevant training and systems in place include working closely with the relevant professional agencies. This ensures that current good practice is followed and the best guidance is available to children in their care. As a result, children attending are supported well.

Children are generally well behaved in response to staff's high expectations. They receive lots of praise and recognition for their achievements which builds their self-esteem and raises their confidence. Younger children and babies beam smiles as staff clap to alert their attention to positive behaviour. Older children receive useful explanations in order to learn to manage their own behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. This contributes to children's well-being, development and progress. Clear information detailing children's individual needs is gathered and documented upon entry. Parents receive a variety of relevant information in the form of a prospectus. Parents are happy with the provision and are able to speak to their child's key worker. Daily verbal information is shared, in addition, parents of young children and babies receive written information about how their child spent their day. Consultation meetings are arranged three times a year to speak about children's learning and development. Details of the group's policies and procedures are included in the group's prospectus and are available to parents at all times. In addition, newsletters and notices keep parents informed of all current nursery events and issues. Parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education are provided with useful information relating to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff provide useful details to parents about how they can help with their child's learning at home. Parents have access to the regulator's details should they wish to raise any concerns and there is a clear procedure in place to support them.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children are cared for in an environment which is well organised to ensure positive outcomes for them. They benefit from the evolving support structure in the organisation which has clear aims and values the ideas of staff, in order to meet their needs. All required records for children are in place and there a set of appropriate polices and procedures for the safe and efficient management of the setting. Induction training, regular staff meetings and individual support

meetings are in place to ensure staff are secure in their knowledge of them. The provider and manager take responsibility for the recruitment and selection of staff and they follow a secure procedure to establish the suitability of all staff working in the nursery. The nursery applied to Ofsted to change the conditions of their registration in November 2006. The nursery was subsequently reorganised to meet the proposed changes. The full impact of proceeding with the changes prior to waiting for a decision from Ofsted, was not fully considered. As a result, the nursery is currently caring for too many children under the age of two years old, and this is a breach of the registration conditions. However, space has been effectively organised to meet the children's needs and children using the new room have access to new equipment, toys and resources. They benefit from the extra space the new room affords them to increase their mobility. Therefore, the oversight has little impact on the children attending.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. The staff work well as a team and benefit from the support and guidance of an experienced manager who has a clear understanding of the Foundation stage curriculum. There is a strong commitment to improvement throughout the team which is instigated by the manager. Therefore, staff are keen to continually update their knowledge and skills by regularly attending a variety of training which includes in-house training. The staff team are motivated, and their individual skills and experience are valued and some of the team have taken an additional responsibility to support their own development. The manager has a clear understanding of the settings strength's and weaknesses and uses appraisals and regular support meetings well to identify staff training needs. Systems to monitor and review the effectiveness of the setting and the nursery education continue to evolve.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery were set three recommendations. These were: to ensure the role of the key worker is effective in offering continuity of care; to make sure a record of observations of what children can do is kept and used to plan for the next steps in the play and learning and also to update policies and procedures to include the required information.

The nursery has made solid progress in addressing these issues. The role of the key worker is now secure and offers children consistency of care, the policies and procedures have been updated to ensure all the required detail. A record of observations of what children can do is kept on all the children and the process of using these to plan for children's next steps is evolving.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted have received two complaints in 2004 and two in 2005.

One complaint was received on 25 November 2004 and one on 01 December 2004. A number of concerns were raised relating to National Standards 1:Suitable person, 2:Organisation, 3:Care learning and play, 5:Equipment, and National Standard 8:Food and drink. The reported concerns related to suitable staff qualifications including the managers, and correct adult to child ratios not being consistently maintained. A lack of toys and play materials available to children, and food not being offered in line with the menus.

An Ofsted inspector made an unannounced visit on 20 December 2004 in response to both of the received complaints. Seven actions to improve practice were set, around National Standards 2:Organisation, regarding the staff qualifications including the managers, 3:Care learning and play, regarding keeping records of children's development, 5:Equipment, regarding the sufficiency of toys and resources available to children, 8:Food and drink, regarding offering food to children which is reflective of the menus displayed, and National Standard 14:Documentation, to ensure Ofsted are notified of all significant changes to the nursery. The provider complied with the actions agreed.

On 02 June 2005 a further unannounced visit was made by an Ofsted inspector in response to a complaint received on 17 May 2005. Concerns raised related to National Standards 6:Safety of the premises, 12:Working in partnership with parents and sharing information regarding accidents promptly, and National Standard 14:Documentation in relation to maintaining accident records and risk assessments. One action to improve practice was set around National Standard 6, regarding arrangements in place to review risk assessments throughout the nursery. The provider complied with the actions agreed.

On 05 July 2005 a further unannounced visit was made by an Ofsted inspector in response to a complaint received on 29 June 2005. A number of concerns were raised relating to National Standards 1:Suitable Person, 2:Organisation, 6:Safety, 7:Health, 8:Food and drink, 12:Working in partnership with parents, and National Standard 14:Documentation. The reported concerns related to the management of the setting, the operational plan working in practice, staff qualification requirements, implementation of health and safety procedures for dealing with hazards, compliance with regulations for food safety and hygiene, providing balanced healthy and nutritious meals, sharing information with parents, taking prompt action on concerns raised and maintaining all required information. One action to improve practice was set around National Standard 14, with regard to maintaining all required documentation on children. The provider complied with the actions agreed.

The registered provider remains qualified to provide full day care.

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:

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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):

- continue to ensure that children receive consistently positive levels of involvement during their mealtimes

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 the use of assessments in order to identify children's individual learning priorities and use these to inform future plans
- enhance the routine to ensure children receive greater chances to participate more fully in group situations, and increase opportunities to develop their self help skills and independence.

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