

The Heritage Family Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137805
Inspection date	19 April 2007
Inspector	Jennifer Devine
Setting Address	161 Pitfield Way, London, NW10 0UW
Telephone number	020 8830 1993
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Registered person	The Heritage Family Centre 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

The Heritage Family Centre is run by a management committee. It opened in 1994 and is situated in a purpose built building on the St Raphael's Estate, in Harlesden, in the London Borough of Brent. There is one large room divided for children aged 2 to 3 years and 3 to 5 years; and a separate baby room. All children share access to an outdoor play area. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time.

The nursery is open each week day from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year.

There are currently 54 children from six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 12 members of staff. Of these, nine staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health within the setting is not supported adequately as not all staff follow good hygiene practices when changing nappies. For example, staff do not change the disposable gloves worn between changing children, or remove them when returning children to the play room. Therefore, younger children are exposed to cross infection. Older children are developing their understanding of good personal hygiene and know why it is important to wash their hands regularly. Children learn about the importance of wearing sun cream and sunhats in hot weather and confidently talk about how their skin will get burnt and hurt if they do not use sun cream.

Children are provided with a hot lunch and dessert, prepared and delivered daily by external caterers. These meals are healthy and nutritious and enjoyed by most of the children. However, as these meals are ready prepared they do not fully take into account all children's individual preferences. For example, some children do not like custard on their cake and therefore do not eat their dessert. Tea is prepared by the nursery staff but the foods offered are not sufficiently nutritious. Children are provided with foods such as cake, doughnuts and biscuits at tea time. Older children can help themselves to their individual water beakers during the day and younger children are offered a drink regularly.

Three staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and this ensures children have access to appropriate care and treatment in the event of an accident. Medication and accident records are completed accurately.

Older children are developing a positive attitude to physical exercise which is enjoyed on a daily basis. There are opportunities for free flow of play between indoors and outdoors. The outdoor area is well planned to incorporate different activities which encourages children to use their bodies to keep fit and healthy. Children move with confidence and skill as they ride tricycles and have access to climbing and balancing equipment.

Children are developing their fine motor skills and hand eye coordination as they have access to many activities such as cutting with scissors, drawing and writing or using various play dough implements.

Children under two years have some opportunities for indoor physical play such as using seesaws, running and playing in the ball pool. They have access to the garden daily but it is limited to the late afternoons.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety is compromised as the required adult to child ratios are not consistently maintained, as at times during the day, there are not enough adults present in the rooms. This means that children are not being adequately supervised or their safety maintained.

Babies are not provided with suitable chairs to sit in for meal times. All children under two years sit together at low tables on child sized chairs. However, they are not secured to prevent them falling. Staff hold the younger babies on their laps at lunchtimes which impacts on them being able to fully meet the needs of all the children present. For example, some of the toddlers start

to fall asleep at the table and the staff find it difficult to react quickly enough to prevent them falling, while feeding a baby as well.

There are good security precautions, such as an intercom system in place on the main door. Good systems are in place to ensure that children are released to authorised adults and are signed in and out of the building by their parents. Older children learn about the importance of not going into the garden without an adult present. Children practise fire drills regularly and this helps them gain an awareness of fire safety issues. Records of fire drills are well maintained as required.

Staff provide a warm welcome to the children and parents, who bring their children into their appointed rooms to settle them. The setting is adequately clean, maintained and attractively decorated with children's artwork and photographs. There is a wide range of suitable toys and play equipment in all rooms which are attractively stored and easily accessible for older children to make choices and have independence in their play. However, staff in the under two's room do not make good use of the available toys.

Children's safety and well being is well protected because staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. There are effective procedures in place to confirm the suitability of staff working in the nursery and a record of all visitors to the setting is maintained.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children under two years are not sufficiently developing their early learning skills, due to the staff working with this age group not having adequate knowledge of how to plan a stimulating and exciting environment to encourage children to explore and investigate their surroundings. The Birth to three matters framework has not been fully implemented into the setting and staff do not understand the importance of providing high quality play experiences. For example, babies are not given sufficient toys to explore and the television is constantly on during the morning. There are no effective methods in place for recording and tracking young children's development to ensure they are making sufficient progress. However, the staff are warm, loving and caring to the babies and offer lots of cuddles and reassurance. This ensures the babies are emotionally secure and confident with their surroundings.

Staff working with the children from two to three years of age are developing their awareness of the Birth to three matters framework and this has a positive effect on the children's achievements. They are provided with a range of suitable and interesting resources and are excited to join in with activities. They are learning about developing friendships and share and take turns with toys. Children are learning about helping each other and offer each other assistance to put on sand hats or painting aprons. Staff provide good support and children feel secure and grow in confidence because of the continual interest shown to them by staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and early learning goals and provide an exciting environment. Long term plans clearly identify topics to be introduced over the year which ensures a broad and balanced curriculum is provided. However, staff do not work together to develop a consistent approach to short term planning and this impacts on ensuring there are clear learning intentions for activities. Staff complete children's portfolios and observe children's development regularly.

However, there is no method in place to clearly identify the next steps of learning for individual children to ensure they are suitably challenged. Staff spend time with the children at activities but do not always extend activities for older or more able children. For example, children counting using a large number mat are not encouraged to add, subtract or predict.

Children are confident, happy and enthusiastic to participate in activities. They choose and use resources independently and confidently express their needs, likes or dislikes. They are generally interested during activities, such as when drawing and writing their own names. Children form good relationships with each other and familiar adults and are welcoming to visitors into the setting. They behave well and share and cooperate during play. Although children have generally good opportunities to develop their basic self help skills such as taking themselves to the bathroom, they are unable to develop their independence further by, for example, serving their own lunch or making choices about what they wish to eat.

Children are confident and articulate speakers and they use a wide vocabulary. They extend their imaginative thinking through generally well planned and resourced role play. Children enjoy playing in the shop where they are learning about the roles of the shop keeper and customer. They buy food using pretend money and have a range of shopping bags to put their shopping into. Lots of conversations between children occur as they discuss what food they have chosen and what they like or dislike. However, staff often miss opportunities to engage children in meaningful conversations, such as describing their own art work. Children enjoy developing their writing skills and many children confidently write their own names and recognise letters or words in their environment. They enjoy playing games together such as lotto but staff do not provide enough challenge for older children to further develop their learning.

Children have satisfactory opportunities to develop their awareness of mathematical concepts. They are learning to count and understand about numbers when they play in the shop. Children participate in activities to develop their understanding of measure such as when weighing themselves and recording their findings on a graph where they then compare the numbers, beginning to learn about more or less. However, some group activities are not sufficiently planned to provide adequate challenge for older children to extend their understanding of numbers further.

Children have opportunities to learn about the natural environment and look closely at similarities or differences. They learn about hibernation and make clay models to show which animals hibernate during the winter months. They explore materials such as fir cones, bark, stones and various shells closely, using magnifying glasses. Children use the computer confidently where they can follow a simple programme and control the mouse well. Older children are willing to assist younger children in using the computer.

Children develop their creativity and imagination through a generally well resourced craft area. They can independently choose activities such as sticking, cutting or painting. Children enjoy making their own creations of a tree using blossom and twigs. They enjoy singing and using musical instruments, which enables them to learn about rhythm and the sounds of instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

The needs of children younger children not being adequately met. Staff do not have a good understanding of the children's developmental needs. For example, children do not sleep when

they need to and are left to fall asleep during lunch times, and staff fail to plan an adequately stimulating environment.

Older children make positive relationships in the nursery and are encouraged to feel that they are contributing to some aspects of the daily routine. For example, children tidy away their chosen toys after they have finished playing. Older children are generally well behaved as they are engaged in interesting play. They learn right from wrong in ways they understand and appropriate strategies are used consistently by staff to handle any unacceptable behaviour.

Through displays and activities which reflect the diverse local community, children develop positive attitudes and appreciation of the customs and cultures of others. For example, children compare the differences between an African kitchen to a Western kitchen. Children explore and investigate various countries and use a globe to find out where other countries are situated in the world. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The staff work closely with the parents and any therapists who may be involved in the children's care.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are warmly welcomed into the nursery to settle their child and staff make themselves available to exchange information. The nursery has generally good systems in place to ensure parents are kept well informed by publishing regular newsletters and holding parents meetings. Staff working with children under two years provide parents with a written daily progress report which includes details on food intake and sleep patterns. Parents written comments indicate they are happy with the service that they and their children receive from the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

There are appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures in place and children are cared for by staff with suitable child care qualifications. However, some staff have not gained a sufficient understanding of the developmental needs of babies to fully support and provide for their all round development. Minimum staffing ratios are not being met across the nursery at all times and this impacts on the staff being able to adequately supervise children's safety. The setting is in breach of the National Standards with regard to the ratio of staff to children.

All records, policies and procedures which are required for the safe and efficient management of the provision and for the children's well being are in place. However, some procedures, such as the nappy changing procedure, are not adhered to and this impacts on children's good health. The manager and registered provider lack a full awareness of providing children with a healthy and nutritious diet, which takes into account individual children's needs. They also lack understanding of ensuring babies are provided with adequate equipment to ensure their safety.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager is supernumerary but spends time working with the children and provides a generally good role model to staff. She has a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning but has not identified a member of staff to oversee the Foundation Stage. This results in staff not having clear guidance for planning work together as a team. Staff are able to access many training courses to develop their knowledge and understanding of the National Standards and child development.

Overall, the setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the nursery has made some improvements to the care children receive. Risk assessments are now conducted regularly to contribute to children's safety. Policies and procedures have been updated, in particular the behaviour management and child protection policies. Although all children lie down for a rest after lunch time, older children who do not sleep are provided with space to play quietly. Children from two to three years are now grouped separately from the older children to enable their needs to be met. Babies are provided with satisfactory meals according to their individual needs but they still are not provided with an adequate range of activities to fully promote their development. This continues to be an area for improvement.

Some improvement has been made to the quality of nursery education. Long term plans identify the learning intentions but short term plans are not linked to individual children's next steps for learning. Staff have developed ideas for topic work, such as exploring and investigating hibernation. Children's language development is supported, they are confident, interested and articulate when speaking.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. A concern was raised on 4 October 2005 regarding National Standard 2: Organisation, relating to staffing ratios, and National Standard 7: Health; relating to the keeping of medication records. Ofsted made an unannounced visit and found the provider to be complying with these standards. However, Ofsted found a breach of the National Standards not related to the complaint, in regard National Standard 1: Suitability, as unvetted staff had been allowed unsupervised contact with children. An action requiring the provider to ensure that unvetted staff are not left unsupervised with children was set. The provider took appropriate steps and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure the minimum staff ratios are maintained at all times
- ensure children's safety by ensuring appropriate equipment is available for babies and toddlers at meal times
- ensure children under two years are provided with a range of suitable activities and experiences by implementing an approach in line with Birth to three matters
- ensure staff implement good hygiene practices
- improve the nursery menu to ensure foods are nutritious and healthy and ensure individual children's dietary needs are met.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- improve the methods of recording children's development so that it clearly identifies the next steps for learning to ensure children are offered appropriate challenge
- ensure staff have a consistent approach to planning and observation

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