

Carealot Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402191
Inspection date	25 May 2007
Inspector	Anne Daly
Setting Address	Fox Crescent, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2BL
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Registered person	Carealot 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 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?

Carelot Nursery is operated by an informal partnership. It opened in 1999 and operates from a self-contained building within the grounds of St Peters College, Chelmsford. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 until 18:00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 27 children aged under five years on roll. Of these, eight receive funding for early education. Children come from both the wider and local catchment areas and they attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language and can also support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs five staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications, while two are currently working towards a level 3 qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children are insufficiently protected as no staff members hold current first aid qualifications and they have not requested parental written agreements for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment to enable them to act in children's best interests if they have an accident. Children are not fully protected from infections as the setting's sickness policy does not include exclusion times to ensure that parents keep their unwell children at home. However, children's needs are considered by appropriate accident and medical records being shared with parents and carers to ensure that they are fully informed.

Children are beginning to understand simple health and hygiene procedures through staff ensuring that they learn how to wash their hands before eating food and after using the toilet. Children stay healthy through staff demonstrating sound awareness of positive hygiene practices. Staff ensure that the premises are regularly cleaned, including cleaning the tables with antibacterial sprays before allowing children to sit at them to eat their snacks and lunch. Older children know that their hands can carry germs which can make them ill. Younger children are protected from cross-infection during nappy changing by staff following good procedures, such as wearing disposable gloves and disinfecting the changing mat after each child.

Children's needs are met through staff requesting information from parents and carers about dietary requirements and allergies. Children enjoy eating nutritious and balanced lunches provided by outside caterers. Older children's independence is promoted at tea time by choosing and spreading their favourite spreads on crackers and pouring their drinks. Younger children are regularly provided with drinks, while older children know that they can ask for a drink at any time to avoid becoming dehydrated. Older children know that vegetables and fruit are healthy. They have many opportunities to learn about vegetables and fruit, such as by observing and drawing peppers, cabbages and tomatoes. Younger children enjoy their food and appreciate the healthier choices combining new tastes and textures made by staff. Younger children are allowed to sleep according to their needs and are not woken up to be fed.

Children enjoy varied opportunities to experience physical activities to help to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active. Older children are developing confidence to enjoy moving with control and using their bodies in a variety of ways. They use a range of malleable materials, developing hand-eye co-ordination when utilising tools to roll and cut play dough. Younger children are not restricted when exploring their environment, for example when pulling themselves up, shuffling or walking. Their large arm and hand movements are being strengthened by increasing control over balls and by touching, pushing and throwing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are insufficiently safeguarded as the designated staff member for child protection has not attended appropriate training and the nursery's procedures do not include contact telephone numbers for the local police or social services for when staff have concerns for children's welfare. Children's safety is unsatisfactorily promoted on outings as no prior risk assessments are undertaken to assess any dangers to them. There is a daily check list for the premises, but staff have not evaluated risks and hazards or identified who will be put at risk. For example, when older children independently use the toilet area, they are able to access the kitchen as there

are no means or procedures to prevent them entering unnoticed. A very recent Environmental Health inspection has proved that the kitchen is not conforming to environmental health standards or food safety regulations. Whilst some issues have been addressed, some remain outstanding to be complied with to ensure that the physical environment remains suitable for purpose.

Children have sufficient toys, furniture and equipment to ensure that they are comfortable when playing together. They can self-select to ensure their interest with whatever they are playing. Staff ensure that all equipment meets safety standards and children's developmental needs.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe, such as older children telling their friends not to put a knife in their mouth as it may cut them. They understand and comply with safety routines, such as not running on the premises. There are adequate procedures for the emergency evacuation of the building, which are regularly practised by staff with children to safeguard the welfare of all children attending the nursery. Staff plan activities to ensure that children learn about safety awareness, including special visitors, such as a Police Officer, maintaining their interest in how to keep themselves safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are familiar with the nursery's routines and surroundings as evidenced by their happiness and eagerness to participate in all activities. They show great interest in what they do, for example building a pretend school with bricks and ensuring a safe area for farm animals outside the school. They demonstrate good levels of confidence while learning through play and relating well to each other, such as discovering what happens when adding bubble bath to water. They are purposefully engaged throughout the day, working and playing enthusiastically, either alone or with others, such as when completing jigsaw puzzles. They are well-behaved and are developing a clear awareness of staff's expectations of their behaviour, for example knowing how to correctly carry a chair. They respond to simple instructions and staff provide many practical experiences to encourage them to respond to challenges, such as matching the colour of a chair to a table. Staff consistently praise children's achievements and also use a popular sticker system to raise their self-esteem and to develop their confidence.

Younger children and babies are developing warm relationships with staff when communicating in a variety of ways. They enjoy listening to a wide variety of sounds, for example enjoying making babbling sounds when listening to music. Staff talk to babies about what they are doing, so that they will link words with actions. Young children are developing their manipulative skills, for example when mark-making on paper using glue spreaders and coloured glue. Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, but they do not consistently plan or assess the outcomes for children under three to influence the development of younger children attending the nursery.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of the stepping stones to enable them to plan a varied and balanced range of activities covering all six areas of learning. They use long, medium and short term plans, including the local community and environment as a source of learning, to ensure that each child feels included. They know the children well to ensure that weekly activity plans detail the main learning

intention for the week. Staff evaluate what children can do to guide future planning, but the activity plans do not always include the key questions and associated vocabulary or how the activity will be adapted to fully challenge individual children. Staff deliver a focused range of activities by the use of a range of teaching methods, where appropriate, working alongside children to check whether they have acquired a skill to enable them to progress towards the early learning goals. Staff manage children's behaviour by providing a learning environment that enables them to develop their understanding of right and wrong, for example knowing that they have to take turns in group activities. The environment is suitably organised and satisfactory use is made of both the inside and outside areas to ensure that children are able to independently access activities, to make choices about their learning and to have time to complete their activities.

Children are building relationships with staff and each other. They can freely choose their activities to enable them to mainly learn through free play. Older children are sufficiently confident to speak in a familiar group and are able to concentrate by sitting quietly when appropriate. They talk freely about their home and listen carefully when other children are talking about their experiences. They show concern for others, for example when explaining the nursery's behavioural expectations to visitors.

Children are making sound progress in communication, language and literacy by selecting and sharing books and by talking with staff and peers. Some children can recognise their names at registration time and more able children can correctly form letters to write their names. They can confidently link letters to sounds, such as 'v' for vase or violets. However, staff are missing opportunities for children to write in a variety of role play situations, such as making lists and booking appointments. Children thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and know that print carries meaning when read from left to right.

Children are given many reasons to count, such as when staff asking them to find so many different shapes of bricks. They use number language when counting the 'number' of the day on the calendar. They can sort, order and count objects and more able children can say one number for each item. However, there are limited opportunities in everyday situations for them to use calculation, such as at snack time staff do not encourage them to calculate how many plates and cups required for each table. Children show an interest in shapes and space when playing with construction toys, knowing 'shape' names such as semi-circle, square and triangle. They demonstrate that they understand position and measurement by using language, such as 'inside the tunnel' and that a container 'is full of sand'.

Children are acquiring a range of skills, knowledge and attitudes relating to their understanding of the world. They have opportunities to learn the necessary skills for using a range of tools, such as scissors, hole punches and staplers. They are learning to identify the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to develop their skills, for example performing simple computer programmes and speaking and listening on the telephone. However, everyday technology is not consistently being used by staff to support children's role play. Children discuss regular events taking place within their experiences, for example the seasonal pattern of the oak tree within their outdoor play area. They are developing an awareness of other cultures and beliefs, for example tasting different foods and dancing to Indian music.

Children are able to move freely with pleasure and confidence when listening to some of their favourite tapes. They move enthusiastically, using their arms and legs and shaking their heads in time to the music. They are refining their movements and actions by using climbing equipment and when negotiating outdoor pathways on bikes. Children have acceptable opportunities to

develop their own creativity and to explore an adequate range of mediums and materials when painting, drawing and making models of their own design during both planned and free-play activities.

Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals from their individual starting points. Staff talk to parents and carers and observe individual children prior to receiving funding. They regularly assess and record children's achievements, but these records of achievement do not always inform the short term planning as to how all children will be fully challenged and supported to maximise their learning outcomes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing positive relationships with adults and other children. Staff work with parents and carers to meet individual children's needs and to ensure that they are all fully included in the setting. They seek information from parents and carers about cultures and home languages to meet specific children's individual needs. However, staff could use prompts for familiar words for children who have English as a second language to further enhance language development.

Children are learning about their own and other people's cultures by celebrating their birthdays and other cultural festivals, such as the Chinese New Year and Holi. Older children are finding out about their local environment by going on a bus to visit the pet shop or local museum. Younger children are being encouraged to develop their confidence to try new things through staff effectively supporting them by providing suitable and challenging experiences, such as filling a large water tray with many different sensory balls. Children are developing a good sense of belonging to the nursery by having a named drawer to ensure that toddlers know where to find their personal comforters before going for a sleep.

There is a sound system to support any child with learning difficulties or disabilities. The appointed co-ordinator consults with parents and carers about any special services their children require to promote their development and welfare. She works closely with the Area Special Needs Educational Co-ordinator (SENCO) and also seeks advice from other professionals to maximise each child's developmental progress.

Children are well-behaved and staff have a calm approach to skilfully negotiating any minor disagreements arising between children. They help children to find solutions, such as through distraction and praise, which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are given time to reflect and to have tranquil moments when looking at books alone. They self-regulate their behaviour, for example knowing that they have to wait their turn to ride their favourite toys. They are able to work well together in different situations, for example during group circle time or when singing action songs in pairs.

Parents and carers spoken to are very happy with the care their children receive. Children are benefiting from staff working closely with parents and carers to ensure that they meet their individual children's needs. Parents of babies and toddlers receive daily written information about their child's feeding, sleeping and nappy changing routines. All parents and carers receive satisfactory information about their children's care and education through a prospectus,

newsletters and notice boards. However, they are not informed of Ofsted's contact details if they require the regulator to investigate concerns.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early years education is satisfactory. Funded children's six areas of learning and the early learning goals are displayed on a notice board. Children frequently talk to their parents and carers about the activities they have enjoyed at Nursery. Parents and carers speak positively about the nursery and some have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and Early Learning Goals. They are very satisfied with the settling-in procedures and have daily opportunities to speak with staff to share any observations about their children. However, staff make limited use of this information in their planning of children's next steps of learning. Children's individual developmental files are available for parents and carers to see at any time. They receive regular updates about their children's progress through informal chats and frequent written progress sheets to enable them to become involved in their learning, for example by playing with different types of dominos.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children's needs, safety and well-being are compromised by the registered providers not ensuring that minimum staff ratios are being maintained at all times. There are some of the required elements within the operational plan, but it excludes how the setting operates or how resources are used to meet children's needs. Staff who have been through the Ofsted vetting checks have unsupervised access to children, but children's safety is potentially being compromised by the lack of robust procedures to ensure that new staff are suitable to care for children.

The organisation of daily routines for the younger children is mostly satisfactory when they are in their home bases, but some toddlers feel insecure when moving from their base rooms. This is particularly evident at meal times when babies and toddlers are cared for in groups of more than 12 when joining the older children.

Staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities. Children benefit from staff having regular appraisals to encourage their professional development by ensuring that their training needs are identified and that they have the required child care qualifications. However, the registered providers have not developed a training plan to ensure that designated staff attend specific training relating to individual National Standards, for example child protection.

Records relating to individual children are maintained, but their health is compromised as the registered providers are not ensuring the maintenance of all required documentation. Some of the implemented policies and procedures promote children's welfare and care, but many require review to ensure that they fully safeguard children.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The registered providers monitor the planning of the curriculum and, when necessary, involve the Early Years Partnership for advice. They delegate the responsibility for the planning and delivery of Nursery Education to the two staff members running the room, who work well together to ensure that sessions run smoothly to deliver the curriculum in all six areas of learning. There are clear aims for children's learning, although the planning does not include their differing abilities. They have a positive attitude to their professional development, planning to improve their teaching by attending training specifically covering the different areas of learning.

Overall children's needs are not met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the registered providers were given an action to include written procedures for lost and uncollected children and to update their policy in line with the National Standards. They were also given six recommendations: to ensure that a policy was in place with regard to the vetting of staff and records kept; to conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying actions to be taken to minimise identified risks and to review on a regular basis; to devise and make available to parents a written statement on special needs consistent with current legislation and guidance and to ensure that it is understood and implemented by all staff; to ensure that there is a copy of the Code Of Practice on the premises and to identify and access training for the appointed SENCO; to identify and access relevant training for the named member of staff and to review and update the policy to reflect current practice and to review and update all policies in line with National Standards.

Since the last inspection, the registered providers have devised procedures to enable staff to act in children's best interests if they are not collected or lost. The child protection statement has been reviewed and an ex-staff member attended training. However, children are now insufficiently safeguarded as the registered providers now responsible for child protection have not attended appropriate training and the nursery's procedures do not include the contact telephone numbers for the local police or social services when staff have concerns for children's welfare. Staff files now include their vetting checks to safeguard children and the setting has devised an employment policy, but the registered providers have yet to register with a CRB agency as no new staff have been employed. The policies and procedures for risk assessments, health, equal opportunities, special needs and complaints have been updated. However, the risk assessments, health and complaints policies and procedures require further review following recent changes to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to fully safeguard children and to promote their welfare. The named staff member for children with learning difficulties and disabilities has attended training and the Code of Practice is now kept on the premises to ensure that procedures value and include all children.

At the last nursery education inspection, the registered providers were asked to continue to develop their planning and assessment; to review the use of the outside area: to implement further utilisation of the monitoring and evaluation systems; to review the provision for all areas of mathematical development through the practical activities provided; to introduce more opportunities for parents to become further informed about their children's progress and to provide more opportunities for them to become involved in their learning.

The registered providers have made satisfactory progress to address these three key Nursery Education issues. They have purchased more mathematical equipment for children to learn through play, although the staff team delivering the nursery education still miss some opportunities to include calculation in routine activities. They have sought advice from the Early Years Partnership and the team delivering the nursery education have further developed the planning and assessment records. However, activity plans sometimes exclude the key questions, associated vocabulary and how activities will be adapted to fully challenge individual children. Parents now receive regular information on their children's progress to enable them to become involved in their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

On 22 September 2004, Ofsted received a concern regarding care practice relating to National Standards 3: Care, learning and play, 6: Safety and 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. Ofsted asked the provider to conduct an investigation and to report back. A response was received on 20 October 2004. Following a review of the information received, there was evidence that National Standard 14: Documentation had not been met. As a result of this investigation, the provider was given one action to inform Ofsted of any significant incidents. A satisfactory response to this action was received on 08 November 2004. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking this step the provider 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.

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 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 that minimum staffing ratios are maintained at all times
- review and further develop the operational plan and make it available to parents (it should include how staff will be deployed within the provision, how and what activities will be provided and how the continuing training needs of staff will be met).
- ensure that the kitchen conforms to environmental health and food safety standards
- conduct risk assessments to identify risks and hazards, both inside and outside the premises and on outings, evaluating them to identify who will be put at risk and taking action to minimise
- ensure that there is at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate on the premises or on outings at any one time
- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure that the designated member of staff attends a child protection training course and that the child protection statement is reviewed.

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):

- develop the activity plans to include the key questions and associated vocabulary and how activities will be adapted to suit children of all ages and differing abilities
- provide opportunities for children to write for different purposes and to use calculation and ICT in everyday activities.

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