

Beech Tree Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY264541
Inspection date	14 June 2007
Inspector	Susan Parker
Setting Address	Howlands, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 4HH
Telephone number	01707 326001
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Registered person	Child Base Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Beech Tree Day Nursery, formally known as Child Base at QEII, is one of the Child Base Limited chain of nurseries; it has been registered since May 2003.

It operates from a two storey purpose built premises in the ground of the QEII Hospital in Welwyn Garden City. The nursery has areas for children under one year, for children aged one to two years, for children aged two to three years and children aged three to five years. There are discovery, sensory and quiet rooms.

A large enclosed garden is available which has an impact absorbent surface and surface for climbing equipment. A separate area for babies is included. There is a large reception area and separate office. The nursery provides places for National Health Staff and the local community.

There are currently 128 children aged from six weeks to five years on roll. This includes 32 children in receipt of funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently has three children attending with special educational needs, and six children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery is open five days a week all year round. opening times are from 07:00 to 18:00.

There are 22 full-time staff and 4 part-time staff working with the children, the majority of whom hold early years qualifications. Members of staff also participate in Child Base's own training - "Sound Foundations".

The Nursery are currently working towards the Hertfordshire Quality Standards Award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and healthy environment where they are learning the importance of good hygiene, personal care and independence. They are supported by a committed staff team who act as a good role models. This is clearly demonstrated as staff speak clearly to the children when helping them to wash their hands or prepare for meals, repeating careful instructions and explaining the importance of good hygiene routines. Children's developing awareness follows naturally as they repeat daily routines. Children's good health is well promoted through positive steps incorporated into daily routine to prevent the spread of infection and to ensure that children are well cared for if they have an accident or are unwell.

Children's meals are cooked fresh each day and offer healthy options. Any dietary needs are met and effectively checked to ensure that children receive healthy and appropriate meals, snacks and refreshments.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Each day there are indoor and outdoor physical activities to help them develop control of their bodies, for example, children regularly use toys and equipment in the safe outside play areas. Children benefit from well planned activities which encourage them to develop a wide range of body movements and control using equipment, dance, ball skills and balance. This effectively ensures that all the children have ample opportunities to increase and develop their physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe due to clear explanations and safe routines during play indoors and outside. For example, clear reminders are offered when moving between rooms or playing outside. Children are encouraged to discuss with the staff the reasons why an action is unsafe. They benefit from premises that offer access to play activities and space enabling them to explore freely and learn to avoid accidental injury.

Children's safety is well promoted because the staff take well planned steps to prevent accidents and to plan for emergencies, for example, through clearly written plans and procedures which put the safety of the children first. All sleeping children are well supervised and checked every five minutes, and this is recorded. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised regularly and children take part in daily routines which effectively promote their understanding of safety awareness.

Children's welfare is protected because the staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and the written procedures to follow in the event of concern or child protection.

This includes ensuring that parents have good information about child protection issues and understand the setting's responsibility towards children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children actively participate in well planned purposeful activities and clearly enjoy their time in the nursery. They are making good progress in all aspects of their development and learning because practitioners continue to develop their understanding of good quality childcare practice. Staff provide positive role models for children and give sensitive support to all children. They demonstrate a genuine affection for children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their own curriculum "Sound Foundations" and the 'Birth to three matters' framework which is very effective in underpinning the foundations of the educational programme for younger or less able children who attend the provision. Staff endeavour to constantly assess and evaluate their practice of good care and education, however, part of the daily routine results in the children having to wait. This results in some poor behaviour and disruption to the group. Staff have recognised this and are already planning and trying out other options.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn through play. The staff meet formally as a team to share and collate ideas linked to their current topic. This forms the base of their long term objectives. They then break their overarching theme into a weekly plan formulating a medium term overview of how they will cover their topic within the six areas of learning. Short term plans are daily adult-led activities which are evaluated. Children are effectively assessed, their achievements and goals recorded.

Children's confidence and self esteem are high, they are able to separate from their main carer with ease. They are mostly independent but less so at meal times. Children enjoy the opportunity to learn through exciting and stimulating experiences. They are gaining a very good awareness of letter sounds through the Jolly Phonics scheme. Children handle books very well. They take time to look at the pictorial illustrations before turning the page to continue the story. They are gaining an excellent understanding of how to use books. Children have plentiful opportunities to practise their mark making skills, and are beginning to form recognisable letters as they practise writing their names on completed art work.

Children are developing a growing awareness of number. They regularly use numbers and counting during routine events such as during registration as they confirm how many children and how many adults are present today. Their counting is supported by recognising the numerals, and using a numbers in daily play activities. Children have regular access to a computer and other technological equipment, such as walkie talkies, bee bot, headphones and telephones. They develop an awareness of the wider world as they celebrate a wide and diverse selection of festivals and cultural events throughout the year.

Children are extremely competent in their physical skills. They use the outside area daily to make use of the larger pieces of equipment such as climbing frames. They have daily access to a range of tools, such as pencils and paints to draw, scissors to cut and use knives and forks appropriately during meal times.

Children's imaginations and creativity are encouraged and promoted. They enjoy making individual creations from empty boxes and cartons, coloured paper, paints and a variety of media and materials in line with the current theme of the week. Photographs are often taken of craft work and wall displays which are used for planning purposes and to use as discussion points with the children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued as individuals and all children from a variety of different backgrounds are welcomed into the setting. They receive consistent praise and encouragement, and learn what is right and wrong. As a result, children behave well; they take turns, show respect and concern for each other and share resources with their friends. They develop positive attitudes to others through stimulating activities and an environment that reflects the lives of those who attend and the wider community. They begin to appreciate the customs and cultures of others through celebrating festivals throughout the calendar year. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff have an effective system in place for supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Children are assessed and supported by the named special educational needs co-ordinator, who supports the provision in adhering to current guidance and to recognising and acting on observations where children are not developing or making progress in their learning.

Practitioners are conscientious and welcoming to parental input. There is a wealth of information which is easily accessible. This includes general care and educational literature. Parents value the openness and honesty of staff. This supports the appropriate sharing of information in sensitive situations. Staff are aware of the legislation regarding a complaints process and have implemented a system to record and manage any concerns raised. Parents are highly complimentary about the level of service provided.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Staff encourage parents to actively contribute towards individual assessment records. Children benefit from a two-way sharing of information between parents and practitioners to enhance their learning. This underpins their progress in the setting and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The nursery staff effectively communicates and fully shares literature and information about the educational provision.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of documentation is good, however the recording children's attendance when arriving late is occasionally delayed which has the potential to result in records not always being fully accurate.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The nursery has strong leadership and a committed staff team who work well together. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are aware of the policies and procedures. Staff attend regular staff meetings and in-service training. There is an effective induction system in place. The nursery is well organised and managed by experienced staff who work hard to ensure that

children are well cared for, staffing levels are maintained, all required documentation is in place and training needs are met.

An enthusiastic committed and dedicated staff team, sound and detailed documentation and positive working relationships within the provision ensure that children benefit and enjoy their time in this setting. Staff are exceptionally skilled and competent in their childcare practice. They demonstrate a real affinity with children. They use their wealth of experience and their ongoing childcare training to provide a wide range of practical and stimulating learning opportunities. Staff have a good working knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework as well as the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance. This ensures that a unified curriculum for all children is in place and effectively supports the learning and development of all children.

Staff have developed their skills through training and through reading and consolidating their knowledge of the company's Sound Foundations and the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. The systems they use to plan and provide good quality learning experiences are simple and user friendly. Staff are committed to the ongoing monitoring and reviewing of their systems to ensure progression, development and enhancement in quality of the curriculum. Staff are highly competent. They are able to draw incidental learning from the daily routine naturally. This supports the balance and coverage across all aspects of the curriculum.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, staff agreed to ensure that all parents sign permission to administer first aid and medication to children. This enables the staff to effectively care for each child's individual needs in partnership with the parents. Staff have also amended their good hygiene practice in reference to wiping children's noses and disposing of tissues correctly. This ensures that any infection is well controlled and germs are not spread. Staff also agreed to ensure that all room registration entries are up to date. This is not always completed for children who arrive late and could result in that child being overlooked in an emergency evacuation. This recommendation remains.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

On the 13th August 2004 Ofsted received a complaint that raised concerns regarding the care of a child. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 16th August 2004 to inspect against National Standard 2 (Organisation), 3 (Care, Learning and play) and 14, (Documentation).

As a result of the visit, four actions were identified as follows: Std 2, ensure that all children are recorded on the room register including those attending for a 'settling in' day. Std 3, review the purpose of CCTV and ensure that tapes correspond to appropriate dates. Std 14, ensure that all records are fully completed including nappy changing and sleep times of children. Std 14, Fully document all incidents that occur within the nursery.

A satisfactory response to the actions was received on 1st September 2004. The provider continues to meet the National Standards and remains qualified for registration.

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 systems to record attendance are completed promptly, this refers to children who arrive late.

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):

- revise the organisation of mealtimes to ensure that children are fully engaged at these times (also applies to care).

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