

Catherine House Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	227205
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Inspector	Angela Dyer / Carol Johnson
Setting Address	106 Wake Green Road, Moseley, Birmingham, West Midlands, B13 9PZ
Telephone number	0121 449 3673
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Registered person	Buds 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?

Catherine House Day Nursery opened in 1987 and is one of six nurseries run by Buds Limited. It operates from seven rooms in a converted house in Moseley, Birmingham. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 86 children from birth to eight years on roll. Of these 21 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round, with the exception of bank holidays. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00. The setting also offers holiday care and after school care for children attending St Bernard's School.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff, of whom over half hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority and is a member of a recognised quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

All children have daily access to a stimulating outside area where they benefit from fresh air and exercise. The outdoor environment is well organised to maximise play opportunities for children and enables them to participate in a variety of physical activities including climbing on the large fixed equipment, riding bikes, painting and role play. Older children also benefit from having free access to a raised decked area which leads directly off their main play area where staff have created a fun outdoor learning environment. The management of the nursery place a strong emphasis on the importance of outside play and have recently been awarded a grant to further improve the garden through the development of a sensory garden.

Children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment where they learn about good health and hygiene through consistent routines and regular discussions with staff. Older children are aware of why they need to follow good hand washing routines and understand the importance of brushing their teeth. Staff have used planned activities to promote dental hygiene and children talked excitedly about their recent trip to see the dentist. Effective procedures are in place to minimise the possible spread of infections, including antibacterial spray being used to clean tables before meal times, children being provided with soap and paper towels for hand drying and bed linen being washed on a daily basis.

Staff have a good knowledge of the children they care for and this is enhanced by the effective use of individual care plans for all children. A large number of staff hold current first aid certificates and a first aid box is available in the office to enable staff to deal with minor accidents effectively. Parents are kept informed of their child's health and staff are clear of the procedures to follow in the event of a child becoming unwell or having an accident.

Considerable thought has been given to the quality and nutritional value of the food provided. The daily menus and recipes, which have been devised by a dietician, are available for parent's information. Children look forward to meal times and thoroughly enjoy the freshly prepared food, often requesting seconds. Meal times are sociable occasions and children's independence is encouraged as they help themselves to the food available with appropriate levels of support from staff. Drinking water is available throughout the day to ensure that children remain hydrated and a range of healthy and nutritious snacks are also provided by the nursery, including wholemeal rusks and marmite and homemade humus and pitta bread.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Parents and children are greeted on arrival by staff who have created a warm and welcoming environment for children to play and learn in. Children's artwork is displayed throughout the nursery enhancing children's sense of belonging and self-esteem. Children are grouped according to age and ability with older children being cared for on the first floor. Children use a wide range of suitable toys and equipment which are regularly checked for cleanliness and safety.

Staff carry out daily safety checks in relation to the indoor and outdoor environment in order to identify and reduce potential risks to children. However, children's safety is at potential risk because hot radiators are accessible and staff have not identified or minimised the potential hazard posed through children wearing number cards on strings around their necks when playing

outdoors. Children are developing an awareness of the importance of keeping themselves safe, for example when walking downstairs they are reminded of the importance of holding onto the banister. Staff discuss fire safety with children and provide regular opportunities for them to practise the fire drill to enhance their understanding of what to do in an emergency. Staff's knowledge of fire evacuation procedures are clear and fire exits are accessible for children to leave from safely.

Security is good as external exits are kept locked to ensure unwanted visitors do not gain access to the setting or present a risk to the children. Staff are deployed effectively and children are supervised at all times to ensure their safety. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues, including possible signs of abuse and neglect. All staff have a good understanding of the setting's well written child protection policy which is also shared with parents to ensure that they are aware of the steps staff will take if they have concerns relating to children's safety and well-being. Staff have also attended additional training to enhance their understanding of child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children within the nursery are happy and settled due to the caring and nurturing support from staff. They access a wide variety of activities which staff thoughtfully plan and prepare to encourage them to develop skills, knowledge and have fun. Resources are organised in low-level shelving units or trays which children can access independently to support their play ideas. Staff interact positively with the children, involving themselves in their play and offering appropriate assistance to enhance children's learning and enjoyment.

Babies and young children are well cared for and respond enthusiastically to the stimulating activities provided. The activities and experiences offered are planned in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and staff working with this age group demonstrate a detailed knowledge of child development and the children in their care. Children enjoy playing alongside their peers and develop their social skills as they sit together for snack and meal times. They delight in messy play activities using different materials including cornflour, oats and mashed potato and explore other senses during activities where they compare the tastes of foods including honey, marmite and dried apricots. The use of household objects in their play, such as wooden spoons and metal pans, and daily opportunities to go outside also encourages children to explore the world around them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy the time they spend at nursery and benefit from the sound understanding and knowledge staff have of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Their knowledge is evident in the planning, which covers all the areas of learning, and the understanding staff have of what children are learning from play and activities. Staff carry out observations in relation to children's progress and have started to link these to children's assessment records to make the assessments objective and informative to assist with future planning. Staff follow activity plans which are regularly evaluated to monitor their effectiveness, these plans are flexible to allow for different children's levels of attainment and children's interests. Staff provide a stimulating and inviting environment, both indoors and out, that supports children in being independent in selecting their own resources. Staff fully respect children's individual preferred learning styles and activities are presented at a level which enables all children to participate. Staff challenge more able children to encourage them

to progress further and plan times to revisit activities to consolidate children's learning. Staff have a calm approach to managing children's behaviour and children demonstrate a mature understanding of what is expected of them in terms of acceptable behaviour.

Children form strong friendships and join in co-operative play with each other as they develop their ideas and activities. Children take on the role of 'helper for the day' enjoying the responsibility and explaining it clearly to visitors as they put out the mats when setting the table for meal times. They make many choices about what they would like to play with and are developing personal independence. Children play an active role in their own learning and are generally motivated and keen to learn, however, some children become restless during French class as they lose interest and concentration. More able children demonstrate a wide vocabulary as they initiate conversation with each other and chosen adults. Children select books for pleasure and relax in the reading corner becoming absorbed in their stories. Children are beginning to learn to recognise their own name from seeing it displayed on their coat pegs or as they find their name at registration time. Opportunities for early writing and mark-making are available in all areas of the room and a number of children are able to write their names skilfully forming recognisable letters.

Children explore different materials including paint, sand, water and play dough. Role play is a popular activity and the area, which changes frequently to compliment the current theme, is well-utilised. During their play children take on new roles and their imagination is fired by staff providing a wide range of stimuli, for example a number of children enthusiastically informed staff that they were going onto the decked area to do some 'animal and bird spotting' taking wildlife photos, paper and clipboards with them. Children have opportunities to observe, question and explore their natural curiosity during activities such as planting bulbs and watching them grow in the planters on the outside decking. Children also go on regular outings where they have opportunities to find out more about their environment and local community. Frequent opportunities are provided for children to design and make things with a variety of construction resources. Children confidently use the computer with little need for staff direction, accessing appropriate software, manoeuvring the mouse with precision and printing off their own work.

Children are developing positive attitudes to number work. Counting and number recognition is threaded through all activities and most children can count reliably to 20 or more. Number lines and number puzzles help them to recognise numbers and children hear staff using mathematical language throughout routine activities. Children are encouraged to solve simple mathematical problems, for example calculating how many more plates they will need at dinner time. They are beginning to learn about data collection and graphs and were able to explain with clarity how they had measured the lengths of the dough 'caterpillars' they had made and plotted the results onto a bar graph. Children's physical skills develop and improve through a wide variety of experiences, for example riding bikes outside, participating in weekly dance sessions, balancing on the wooden planks and milk crates, climbing on the large fixed play equipment and using various resources including a large parachute. Children move with confidence, control and agility and develop positive attitudes to physical exercise understanding the benefits to staying healthy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Within the nursery there is a strong focus on the development of children's self-esteem and independence, as a result, their confidence grows as they progress through the nursery. Children are well behaved, play well together and have formed positive relationships with other children

and staff. Children have a good understanding of the boundaries and respond with enthusiasm to staff praise and encouragement. Children are able to take turns, with suitable adult support, and show care and concern for each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children have access to a suitable range of play resources, posters and books that show positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. They gain an understanding of the wider world as they follow themes and projects and celebrate a number of different festivals. Children also go out on visits within the community to support topic work and recently went on a walk to collect rubbish and discuss the effects that rubbish has on our environment and wildlife. Older children freely talk about their home and community life and they are learning to respect and value both their own culture and that of others.

Clear and proactive arrangements are made towards ensuring the setting's practice is inclusive and staff show a commitment to ensuring all children are included. Staff work closely with parents and outside professionals to build a collaborative approach to meeting the individual needs of children. Staff have experience of working with children with English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff use picture symbols and photos to assist children in understanding routines and in enabling children to express their needs and wishes. Children and parents also benefit from the employment of bi-lingual staff members who are able to converse with them in their first language.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Positive and friendly relationships have formed between staff and parents, which contributes to children's well-being. Parents share information about their children at induction and on entering new rooms. This enables staff to find out about children's likes and dislikes, their abilities and individual routines. Therefore, children benefit from consistent levels of care and settle quickly, enabling staff to provide for their individual needs. Parents report that they are generally happy with the care their children receive and positive comments were made by parents during inspection regarding their children's happiness and care.

Parents are provided with frequent opportunities to visit the nursery and discover what their children do whilst there. They are invited to attend assemblies, luncheon groups, sports days and graduation ceremonies. Also, they are invited to parents evenings where they can discuss their child's progress and workshops where they can learn more about the planning of activities. The nursery recruits parent representatives, with whom they meet termly, to answer any queries and share information in relation to any nursery developments. These representatives are then asked to cascade information to other parents on an informal basis. Detailed notice boards and available policies and procedures also provide parents with useful information in relation to the nursery, however, the complaints log currently holds data of a sensitive nature which if shared with other parents would contravene confidentiality.

The parents and carers of children receiving funding for nursery education receive additional information via newsletters and workshops to help them in understanding the Foundation Stage curriculum and support their child's learning at home. Regular newsletters are sent home detailing what children are doing at nursery along with the planned learning intentions. Parents are also provided with examples of activities that they can do at home with their child to further enhance their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery is well organised and has achieved a gold quality assurance award. Staff work well as a team and are enthusiastic and committed within their roles. They show obvious enjoyment in their work and take time to develop warm, caring relationships with the children in their care. Staff are appropriately qualified and recruitment and vetting procedures are thorough, ensuring all staff are suitable to work with children. Area managers work closely with the setting, both in supporting the new manager in her role and offering support to staff throughout the day. The setting also employs administrative staff allowing the manager to have a hands on approach in the nursery and meet with staff on a regular basis to identify training needs and plan for improvement. Staff receive robust inductions into the policies and procedures of the setting, resulting in cohesive team working for the benefit of the children. Children's welfare, safety and care are effectively promoted as the staff and managers ensure that all legally required documentation and records are maintained. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. Staff work well together and communicate with each other successfully, offering each other support where needed. Staff meet on a regular basis to review and develop the provision for nursery education and have access to relevant training. The management has a clear vision for future practice, and parents and staff are involved in monitoring and evaluating the service to identify strengths and weaknesses. As a result, most weaknesses have already been identified and improvements have been planned for. However, the activities provided by external agencies are sometimes too long and not presented at a level that meets the need of all children in the group leading some children to become restless and lose concentration.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to ensure children are adequately supervised when on outings and review the system for recording staff's attendance. Staff attendance times are recorded and ratios are increased for when on outings to improve children's safety. The provider also agreed to ensure that the management of younger children's behaviour is consistent and develop staff's knowledge of child protection issues. Staff have attended relevant training and now demonstrate a sound understanding of all child protection issues including the referral procedure for if they had a concern about a child's safety. Staff also demonstrate a suitable knowledge of behaviour management, which ensures that children's behaviour is managed appropriately, with consideration given for their age and understanding.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to review children's assessments. Although still at its infancy staff now link observations into children's assessments to identify their achievements and progress. The assessments are linked to the stepping stones and informative and used to help staff plan for children's next steps in learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- take positive steps to promote safety within the setting and ensure proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents; this is in relation to number cards worn on strings around children's necks and hot radiators being accessible to children
- ensure that all staff are aware of the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality; this is with regards to the record of complaints.

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 monitor the suitability of activities provided by external agencies.

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