

Children 1st @ Breedon House

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	403676
Inspection date	14 May 2007
Inspector	Jill Lee
Setting Address	Breedon House Nurseries, 39 Scotland Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S3 7BS
Telephone number	0114 279 8892
E-mail	
Registered person	Margaret Mason
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?

Children First @ Breedon House, Sheffield was registered in 1996 and is part of the Children First Nursery Chain. It operates from a large building on two floors, close to Sheffield city centre. There are three fully enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery serves children and families in Sheffield and the surrounding areas. Forty nursery places are reserved for the children of staff of HSBC Bank.

The nursery may care for a maximum of 120 children aged from three months to five years at any one time. Children attend for a variety of sessions. In addition to full day care, the nursery also provides holiday care for a small number of children up to the age of 14 years. There are currently 184 children on roll, of whom 71 receive funding for nursery education. It opens each weekday throughout the year from 07.30 to 18.00. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

There are 27 staff employed to work directly with the children, all of whom have an appropriate early years qualification. The nursery also employs a qualified teacher. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and has achieved the accreditation award 'Quality

Counts'. The nursery has also achieved the Investors in People award and is an approved early years training centre.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children use the outdoor environment daily. They enjoy a well planned variety of both indoor and outdoor physical play experiences. They love the freedom of movement offered outdoors and use space well to develop their physical skills. They enjoy riding back and forth on the bikes, run fast and play chasing games. They practise their ball skills. They use the large climbing frame and balancing beams with agility and confidence. Children have regular planned opportunities to develop coordination and control, as they enjoy music and movement sessions and ring games. They move in different ways, as they stretch their bodies with scarves and play 'pretend to be' games. Babies and toddlers love clambering on the soft play resources in their play room and disappearing into the ball pool. Toddlers have sturdy toys to push along to support their developing mobility. The covered veranda is used well to provide fresh air in all weathers. Older children in the holiday club access different outdoor areas when they are not in use by younger children.

The nursery environment is very bright and well maintained. High priority is given to children's health and staff consistently implement good health and hygiene practices. Parents are clearly informed that sick children cannot be cared for, so that children are protected from infection. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication fully meet requirements and effectively protect children. Children clearly understand why they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before they have their snack. Staff consistently promote children's awareness of good hygiene within everyday routines, so that children learn how to keep themselves well. They are developing high levels of independence in attending to their own personal care, as they manage the toilet independently and put on their own coats.

Parents are fully consulted about their child's health and dietary needs. Children enjoy a varied menu of freshly cooked, healthy food and menus are clearly displayed for parents. Children are encouraged to try a wide variety of different foods, including lots of vegetables and fruits. They are encouraged to express their likes and dislikes. They are involved in some food preparation, for example, they use recipes regularly in the food technology area. Snack and lunch times are pleasurable and relaxed occasions, where staff and children sit together, sociably sharing conversation. They have flowers and napkins on the tables. Children's awareness of healthy eating is promoted well within planning, for example, a dentist visits the nursery to talk about how to keep teeth healthy. However, staff do not fully use daily routines, like the snack area, to consolidate and encourage children's understanding about making healthy choices independently.

Children's emotional well-being is attentively nurtured by well known staff, who liaise very closely with parents to ensure individual needs are met and home routines respected. Sensitive consideration is given to ensuring children are supported in small key worker groups. Transitions between rooms are well planned, enhancing children's feelings of security in the nursery.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery offers a very welcoming and completely child-focused environment, where children are thoroughly safe and secure. Staff show a very high level of awareness of safety issues and are meticulous in ensuring all areas of the nursery are safe. Risks, both indoors and out, are identified and minimised, without limiting challenge. Children enjoy their play in an environment where space is most effectively organised to allow children to move around safely, freely and independently. Organisation of the daily routine meticulously considers the safety needs of children of different ages. For example, a specific area is designated for use by the older children attending the holiday club. Children's safety and welfare are enhanced by vigilant supervision and very high priority is given to security of the premises. Procedures to ensure safe evacuation in the event of an emergency are very well-considered.

Children learn to use the well-planned space purposefully and with confidence. A wide and well-balanced range of high quality resources is stored at child height so that children can select them safely and without help. Appropriate risk assessments are conducted routinely and practice is consistently monitored and evaluated to increase children's safe and independent participation in everyday activities.

Children's understanding of safety issues is very good, because staff routinely discuss and reinforce limits and boundaries with them. They develop an awareness of dangers, for example, they understand why it is not safe to run indoors and why spilt water must be mopped up quickly. They know only one child may use the woodwork bench at any one time. Visitors to the nursery, like the road safety officer and community policeman, help to raise their awareness of road safety. Consistent reminders and explanations help children to begin to think about how to keep themselves safe.

The safeguarding of children is given a high priority in the nursery. All staff have accessed recent training and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities within child protection procedures. Staff enable children to share their feelings and make their needs known. They sensitively establish supportive relationships with parents and use the comprehensive written policies to explain their child protection responsibilities. They use the daily care sheets well to share any concerns and clear systems are in place for recording of concerns. Existing injuries are noted and discussed fully with parents, although the record has insufficient detail and parents' endorsement of the record is not requested.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled and content in the nursery. They enjoy warm and affectionate relationships with staff, who are very interested in what they are doing. Staff listen closely to them and sensitively support their play. The planned environment is very child focused, so that children develop high levels of independence as they play. Children select resources freely and the continuous provision is well-planned to promote experiences in all areas of development. They cooperate well together as they develop extended imaginary games in the home corner. They go shopping, cook meals and feed the babies in the home corner. They experiment with lots of different media, as they explore with sand, water, paint and dough. They swirl the mint smelling pasta, fascinated by the feel of it on their fingers. They are totally absorbed as they pour and sift sand and fill and empty pots with crispy cereal. Children in the holiday club suggest their own ideas for activities and plan outings to the cinema and the bowling alley.

Babies and toddlers play very contentedly as they learn to enjoy being with others. The baby rooms are very calm and relaxing. Babies are held closely and snuggle up with staff for their bottle. They explore a wide variety of sensory materials and treasure baskets, which stimulate their senses and curiosity. They love the coloured reflections on the floor and the shiny music shakers. They have fun banging the wooden spoons together. Staff are gently in tune with babies' needs, responding intuitively and sensitively to non-verbal communications.

Staff talk frequently with parents and confidently use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan experiences reflecting children's current interests. They ensure an interesting variety of activities for babies and toddlers, including creative, exploratory and heuristic play. Resources are freely accessible for them to select independently. Toddlers are cared for in small groups, supported very effectively by their key worker. They move at planned times between the different areas of continuous provision within the nursery, to ensure they access a well balanced range of play experiences. This helps to promote their security within daily routines but also has the effect that their spontaneous play and exploration is frequently interrupted. Children do sometimes continue at an activity, if very absorbed.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff have a very secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and comprehensive planning helps children to make very rapid progress towards all the early learning goals. Children are highly motivated and their interest is fully sustained, as they enjoy a broad range of well planned activities and experiences. Planning for use of the learning experiences offered by the outdoor environment is less comprehensive. Children learn to listen, to concentrate extremely well and to persevere with activities they enjoy. Well considered daily routines allow children to freely access interesting activities, which promote experiences in all areas of their learning. They can select resources independently in all areas of the continuous provision. However, they tend to limit their play to using the resources put out by staff within the planning, specifically in the creative, construction and exploratory areas, like sand and water. They are not sufficiently encouraged to experiment with their own creative ideas or to select additional resources to enhance their own independent exploration.

Children are highly confident communicators and use language extremely well to share their own ideas and experiences. Staff introduce new language into activities and nurture children's opportunities to use language in different ways. Children love reading books and enjoy a wide range of factual books, which promote their awareness of the world around them. They listen with pleasure to stories. Children have many opportunities to practise writing and write for real purposes in their role play in the garden centre. They write their name on their work and enjoy activities which promote their interest in letter sounds. Children are very familiar with numbers as labels and for counting. They work out how many cups and plates are needed for snack time and act out number rhymes at group time. They investigate mathematical ideas as they measure ingredients for recipes. They use mathematical language with comprehension, as they sort and order different sized shapes. Staff do not sufficiently maximise opportunities for them to solve problems and consolidate their understanding in practical activities in their free play.

Children's interest in the natural world, growth and change is stimulated well. They use magnifying glasses to observe mini-beasts, they explore locks and keys, torches and electronic gadgets. They experiment with hot and cold 'baking' activities, using the oven and the fridge. They make papier mache models, using balloons as a frame. They develop an interest in technology as they use the computer and listen to stories on the cassette player. Their

imagination and creativity is nurtured as they enjoy extended role play activities, do newspaper printing and make 'squidgy' play dough.

Staff interact very effectively with children to stimulate their curiosity and consolidate learning. They model skills and consistently reinforce expected behaviour, so that children learn to work cooperatively and use activity areas productively. Varied methods are skilfully used to help children progress, like small group and one-to-one work. Staff have developed clear and varied systems to observe children's interests and monitor their individual progress. These are evaluated and used to identify next steps in learning when planning for the next half term. However, they are not used directly to inform staff interactions with children on a day to day basis, so that greater challenge is introduced into their free play based on observed children's interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The nursery is highly effective in meeting children's individual needs, so that their sense of belonging is strong. They receive a warm and personal welcome and are fully supported by excellent interactions with staff. They are fully included as staff nurture and highly value their individuality. Staff ensure all children can take part in all activities according to their needs and abilities, for example, by constantly reviewing the accessibility of resources and communication issues. Staff intuitively respond to children's non-verbal communications to support their play. Children have an excellent understanding of the daily routines and staff very successfully create a fully participative environment.

Children are highly independent and very capably manage many of their daily experiences. Their behaviour is very good and reflects the high expectations of staff. Children begin to take responsibility for their own behaviour. For example, they sweep up sand, return toys to the shelves when they finish playing and holiday club children contribute to drawing up the rules at the beginning of each holiday. Staff gently and consistently reinforce rules and boundaries, involving children actively, so that they fully understand why certain behaviour is not allowed. Politeness, sharing and good behaviour are sensitively encouraged and warmly rewarded by lots of praise. Children love getting a 'star' on their chart and receiving a certificate when the chart is full. They volunteer enthusiastically to be one of the daily 'monitors'. They play together very harmoniously, learning to think about their own needs and the needs of others. They begin to be able to resolve difficulties independently, as they negotiate sharing of resources and who sets which table for lunch. They are very confident of staff support.

Well planned visitors to the nursery stimulate children's knowledge of local issues and the people who help us in the community. They are learning about the importance of re-cycling and are planning a re-cycling project. Children access a wide range of resources that promote positive images of diversity, including displays, posters and books in other languages. They learn about different faiths, festivals and cultures in well planned activities, helping them to value and respect difference. Children are purposeful and independent, as they eagerly make their own choices and decisions within the daily play environment. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Relationships with parents are friendly and relaxed, enhancing children's sense of security. Parents feel staff are approachable, very helpful and always willing to make time to discuss their child's progress. A daily diary gives them practical information about their child's care. They are confident to raise any concerns and are clearly informed about the procedure if they have a complaint. Regular newsletters keep parents fully informed about nursery issues and

their views are sought through regular questionnaires. Parents are able to opt to be members of the steering group, through which consultations occur, which helps to promote an integrated and active partnership with the nursery.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents receive detailed information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and what their child is doing and learning. Information is shared on a daily basis and at regular parents' evenings. Parents receive written information about new topics and are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. They frequently access, and can contribute to, their child's development file. Well considered use of photographs provide colourful insights for parents about the activities their child enjoys. Children make photograph books to reflect activities, like their outing to the Fire Museum. Their achievements are evaluated and planning for next steps is thoroughly discussed with parents. Parents are therefore very familiar with what their child is learning and how they are progressing, so they can plan linked activities at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's feelings of security and well-being are enhanced by the effective deployment of staff. Very good staffing levels enable staff to spend time in direct work with children. The key person system works successfully to ensure familiar and trusted adults are on hand to attend to children's individual needs. Both the nursery and holiday club environment are very well organised to promote children's welfare, learning and safety. Daily routines are clearly planned to support children's varying needs and interests. Space and resources are organised well to promote children's independent participation. Staff are knowledgeable about child development and make good use of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum to provide good quality care and education.

Leadership and management is good. Staff are highly committed and hard working. They work together effectively as a cohesive team. Staff are well supported with regular opportunities to meet together, share views and attend further training. The early years manager has a 'hands on' approach and is frequently in the nursery, working alongside staff. This, together with regular appraisals, helps her to monitor the quality of teaching and identify training needs. Systematic observations of children help staff to identify children's interests and plan for their progress.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are effectively implemented, so that children's welfare is safeguarded. Recruitment and vetting procedures are fully robust, ensuring that staff are suitably skilled and experienced to work with children. Well planned induction procedures, together with ongoing staff monitoring and appraisal, ensure staff are able to support children's individual needs. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. Parents' wishes regarding their child's care clearly influence day-to-day practice and clear written agreements are recorded.

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 the nursery was asked to further develop the outdoor play area to enhance play opportunities for children. With regard to nursery education they were asked to improve the recording of the next steps in individual children's learning, as they are identified.

Children now have access to three defined play areas, which are used by children according to age. The nursery has further plans to develop the outdoor areas, to improve the curriculum offered by using the outdoor environment. Children benefit as they use the outdoors routinely each day to enjoy active physical exercise.

Staff have given detailed consideration to the ways in which they observe children's activity. They have installed observation books in all areas of the continuous provision, which staff use well to record their observations of children in free play. This information is used to inform planning, but is not used sufficiently actively to help staff vary planning to respond to children's observed interests. This limits planned challenge in the everyday environment and does not actively enhance planned staff interactions with children on a daily basis.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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 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):

- more actively use everyday activities to promote children's awareness of healthy eating
- develop clearer procedures for the recording of existing injuries
- review the impact of routines on the play experiences especially of the younger children, and consider ways to enhance their opportunity to extend their own play ideas and more freely explore their own interests.

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):

- use daily observations of children more directly to inform staff interactions and maximise learning opportunities in everyday play, to enhance challenge in all areas of the continuous provision
- further develop planning to promote all areas of learning using the outdoor environment.

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