

Corams Fields Community Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100589
Inspection date	17 August 2007
Inspector	Chris Banks
Setting Address	93 Guilford Street, London, WC1N 1DN
Telephone number	020 7833 0198
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Registered person	Corams Fields & the Harmsworth Memorial Playground
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?

Corams Fields Community Nursery for children aged between two and five years was registered in 1992. It is managed by a voluntary committee and operates from a building situated in the WC1 area of Camden. The provision is open 48 weeks of the year from 08:00 to 18:00.

There are currently 17 children on roll. Of these, 10 receive a nursery education grant. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children at any one time.

A team of six staff work with the children, all of whom hold recognised qualifications in early years childcare. The setting receives support from local authority advisory teachers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean and welcoming surroundings. They are well protected from the risk of infection because staff follow clear written procedures and also carry out effective

hygiene practice. Nappy changing arrangements are well managed and older children are learning good self care skills. They understand the importance of washing their hands after feeding the farm animals who live at Coram Fields and also learn good hygiene practice as part of daily routines. Upgraded bathroom facilities now afford children more privacy and independence.

Prompt action is taken if a child becomes ill in the care of the nursery. Staff also take effective precautions to ensure they do not return until they are completely well and provide parents with written guidance. Good account is taken of individual children's health needs and clear guidance is given to staff about how to safely administer specialist medication or alternative health remedies. All staff have recently renewed their first aid qualifications which means they are now well prepared in the event of an accident or emergency.

Children enjoy very nutritious meals and snacks because staff positively promote healthy eating in line with the nursery's written food policy. Menus are well planned in advance in close consultation with the well trained and knowledgeable cook who only uses fresh ingredients for all meals. Close partnerships working with parents and health professionals also helps ensure the needs of children with special dietary requirement are effectively met. Children actively take part in setting tables and enjoy the warm sociable atmosphere at mealtimes. Some children are already quite well informed about the positive effects of a healthy diet.

Physical exercise forms an integral part of children's daily routines. During outdoor play, children enjoy the fresh air and have good opportunities to develop their co ordination and balancing skills using wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. They also enjoy more vigorous exercise during well planned activities using the extensive open space which is easily accessible and well supervised.

Children have many good opportunities to practise their fine motor skills. They confidently fit small pieces of construction kits together, manipulate IT equipment and skilfully use scissors, brushes, pencils and crayons. They are also positively encouraged to learn how to use cutlery at meal times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in secure surroundings with effective systems in place to ensure any potential safety risks are minimised. Good routine safety procedures such as regular fire drills help protect children and well documented risk assessments are used to review safety practice on a regular basis. For example, food sharing is currently discouraged to ensure the interests children with multiple allergies are safeguarded.

Children are able to explore in comfort and safety because staff take good practical precautions to protect them. They are vigilantly supervised and extra precautions are taken when children are accompanied to the extensive open space adjoining the nursery. Outings are planned with care and increased staff to child ratios on longer journeys further protect their safety on the very busy streets of central London.

Within the nursery, children are encouraged to behave in a safe and responsible way. They happily tidy away after themselves and are gently encouraged to show consideration towards other children during their play.

The overall welfare of children is positively protected because key staff are extremely knowledgeable about their role and responsibility in child protection. They are familiar with the process of monitoring, recording and reporting concerns and use up to date written guidance. The procedure for dealing with any allegations made against staff is also outlined and the role of Ofsted is included. The child protection policy is clearly explained in writing to parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children look forward to coming to the nursery because they are greeted warmly and made to feel very welcome. They happily separate from their parents and quickly settle into activities. The close and affectionate relationships between staff and children is very apparent. Children enjoy warm and consistent care from their key workers who understand and respond well to their individual needs. The system works effectively because staff take a strong personal interest in each child and gets to know them very well. They speak knowledgeably about their different personalities and interests and are familiar with their behaviour patterns.

Children enjoy the familiarity of their daily routines and participate in most with lively enthusiasm. Before and after lunch, children are encouraged to relax in the comfortable reading area before rejoining the afternoon's activities.

Children aged between two and three benefit from being able to choose where they play. Although they now have their own base room, it is their decision if they choose to join older children for their free play. They are also becoming increasingly independent as they are able to easily select toys and equipment from accessible, well designed storage units. The extensive range of very good quality toys and equipment are safe and well cared for by children.

Children benefit from staff's good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and their progress is well monitored. Staff keep clear, detailed observations and effectively plan a stimulating range of activities which support children's all round development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children engage in enjoyable, worthwhile activities and are making steady progress towards reaching their early learning goals before they go to school. This is because staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan well for their future development. Children's progress is closely monitored and clear observation records help ensure they are appropriately assessed by their key worker on a regular basis. Plans for their next steps are well documented and based on children's emerging skills and interests. Staff are aware of the continuing need to ensure opportunities for older more able children remain challenging.

Children play happily and comfortably alongside their peers and are learning to co operate well with each other. They play a productive part in the nursery as they willingly help prepare snacks, set tables for lunch and tidy away as part of their daily routine. Children often display spontaneous acts of kindness and are also becoming increasingly aware of how their behaviour can affect others.

Older children are confident to express opinions and make independent decisions because they receive a positive response from staff to their suggestions. They contribute freely and with enthusiasm during interactive story times and are also able to listen intently and enjoy story

tapes by their favourite authors. Children are familiar with the storylines and illustrations of many books and can also clearly recall the words and gestures of action songs.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is being well developed and supported by staff. When children help feed the resident goats, rabbits and guinea pigs they are encouraged to treat them with respect and also learn about safe behaviour. They very much enjoy experiencing animals at close quarters and learn much about their life cycles, diets and behaviour.

Children enjoy a range of learning opportunities during their role play when they dress as fire fighters and staff successfully extend their learning through visits to the local fire station and museum.

Children demonstrate a growing confidence in using technology as a learning tool. Staff closely monitor the use of educational software to ensure children also practise and develop their skills in other ways. Children learn to count through a range of practical activities and some can confidently count to 10. In the very well resourced water play area, they also learn about measuring volume and capacity. There are improved opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills because good quality materials are freely accessible and children now routinely use a range of drawing and writing materials as part of their creative play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued and respected because staff have an excellent understanding of their individual needs and respond to them extremely well. Detailed information is gathered and recorded about each child at the start of a placement and each parent is also asked about specific aspects of children's learning and development. In turn, parents receive very comprehensive written information about the service and childcare arrangements in particular. Following this meeting with parents, information is successfully used to plan for the child's first few months at the nursery. Children are settled in gradually and with great sensitivity. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in the process and value the gentle, reassuring approach of staff.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning in a range of ways. They are given clear information about how the curriculum is planned and subsequently kept very well informed about their child's progress. High quality portfolios track children's learning and development from when they join the nursery and contain photographs, examples of children's work and detailed observations.

Children benefit from their parents' participation in different celebratory events at the nursery which are also effectively used to positively acknowledge a child's individuality. New children who speak English as an additional language benefit from the ongoing reassuring support of staff who learn key words of each child's home language. Parents are also closely consulted and involved in discussions about children's language development. A very good range of anti discriminatory toys and equipment helps all children acknowledge difference and learn more about the world around them. This helps successfully foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The overall atmosphere of the nursery is very relaxed, quiet and purposeful. This is because children are happily absorbed and feel secure and wanted. They play in a co operative and companionable way and are learning about sharing and being patient. Staff are very good role

models. They speak to children in a respectful, kind way and guide behaviour sensitively. On the rare occasion that behaviour gives real cause for concern, parents are involved at an early stage and the family as a whole are given strong support by staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. Children are cared for by a well qualified and experienced staff team who are motivated and enthused. Staff are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities because they are given clear direction and strong support by their manager. The team work very well together to create the warm and happy atmosphere enjoyed by children and there is a shared commitment to continually improve the service.

All staff keep well informed about new developments in childcare and education and are already familiar with aspects of the new Early Years Foundation Stage document. They are open to new ways of working and make a positive contribution to the overall good quality of the service.

Clear and comprehensive written policies and procedures relating to children's health and safety are effectively put into practice. The complaints procedure has been revised and now includes the role of Ofsted but is not shared in writing with parents.

There is sufficient space for the number of children the nursery is registered to care for. It is very well organised and children benefit from recently completed improvements. The new room for two to three year olds is bright and welcoming and extra investment has improved the overall quality of all other equipment.

Documentation is well organised and there are suitable arrangements for the storage of confidential information. All required records are kept.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, the provider was required to ensure details of Ofsted are included in the complaints and child protection procedures. Both have been revised accordingly and now include the required information.

The provider was also required to ensure at least one member of staff is qualified in first aid. All staff have since updated their qualifications. The requirement to obtain written consent from parents to seek emergency medical treatment has also been addressed. This helps protect the interest of children.

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):

- ensure parents are informed about the role of Ofsted the complaints procedure

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 develop the curriculum to ensure challenging opportunities are consistently provided for older more able children

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