

Catherine House Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	227230
Inspection date	31 January 2008
Inspector	Carol Johnson / Angela Dyer
Setting Address	19 Woodland Road, Northfield, Birmingham, WEST MIDLANDS, B31 2HU
Telephone number	0121 4758416
E-mail	
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 satisfactory. 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 was opened in January 1993. It is one in a group of six Catherine House nurseries around the country. It operates from a large house in Northfield, Birmingham. The main house accommodates children under three years and a Coach House which is a separate building is used by the pre-school children. The building contains eight play rooms, a cot room, large garden, office, staff room, reception area, laundry and kitchen. A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 with the exception of Christmas, Easter and bank holidays. Also, the nursery provides a breakfast club and drop off service for children attending St. Lawrence's School.

There are currently 52 children from three months to eight years on roll. Of these 17 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those children who speak English as an additional language. The setting supports children with special needs, and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs ten members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. 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.

Children are effectively protected from the spread of infection because they are cared for in a very clean and healthy environment. All areas of the premises and resources are cleaned on a regular basis and suitable nappy changing procedures are followed. Staff members are positive role models and ensure that children follow good hygiene procedures. They teach children to wash their hands properly and older children demonstrate good levels of independence with regards to their own personal care. Pictorial displays on the walls in toilet areas reinforce hygiene messages in an easily understandable and attractive manner.

Children benefit from easily accessible first aid supplies and the high level of staff members who are first aid trained. A clearly written and shared policy ensures that parents understand the requirements for administering medication and do not send children who are clearly unwell and pose a potential health risk to others. Documentation to ensure that children's individual medical needs are known is suitably maintained.

Children's dietary needs are well met because they are offered a wide range of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. All food is provided by the nursery and is attractively presented with portion sizes being generous. Meals are meat free and menus are thoughtfully devised to ensure that children receive a balanced and healthy diet. Parents know what their children will be offered each day as menus are displayed. A cookbook has been produced for parents to purchase that includes the recipes for the meals that children are given at the nursery. Staff discuss individual children's dietary requirements with parents and this information is recorded and respected. Children's social skills and table manners are encouraged as staff and children sit together and interact during meal times. Children demonstrate good manners. They are not at risk from dehydration as drinks are offered at meal times and all children have access to water within their rooms.

Children in the nursery benefit from lots of physical play and exercise that helps to develop their muscles, co-ordination and confidence. The management of the nursery place a strong emphasis on the importance of outside play and there is plenty of outdoor space for children to run about, enjoy fresh air and generally 'let off steam'. Children also go on outings in the local environment, for example, to the park and library. Nursery outdoor areas are actively used on a daily basis and contain a wide range of physical play equipment. The outdoor area is used as an extension of the indoor environment and areas are set up for children to enjoy activities such as role play, craft and construction. Children go outside in all weathers and a selection of umbrellas, rain coats and waterproof dungarees are available to help protect children from the elements. Also, inside the nursery children are given opportunities to dance, move to music and take part in yoga sessions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the provision's warm, homely and welcoming premises. Displays are bright and attractive and include examples of children's work, photographs of staff and children and general information about the setting. Consequently, children are helped to develop a sense of belonging and parents are given lots of visual information about what their children are doing and how the setting operates. Space is plentiful and thoughtfully arranged to provide different areas for children to rest and play. The nursery is well resourced and equipment is clean and of good quality.

Children are cared for in a generally safe environment because a range of steps are in place to help identify and minimise risks and hazards. For example, staff members carry out daily checks to ensure that furniture, toys and equipment are safe and developmentally appropriate for the children in their care and procedures for the emergency evacuation of the premises are regularly practised. Entry to the nursery premises is carefully monitored by management and an intercom system is used at the front entrance. However, children's safety is at potential risk because some radiators are currently extremely hot to the touch and there are gaps in the boundary fence between the nursery outdoor play area and a neighbouring garden.

Children's welfare with regards to child protection is suitably protected. This is because staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues. They are able to identify a range of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. Most staff have attended additional training to enhance their understanding of relevant issues. The nursery child protection policy is clearly written, shared with parents and is in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures. Clear systems are in place to ensure that children are not released into the care of unknown individuals and they are not left unsupervised with persons who have not been suitably vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and eager to participate and learn. They enjoy a good range of activities and experiences that enhance their all-round development. Photographs are extensively used and these, along with displays of children's work, provide an attractive visual image of children's experiences and achievements. Staff demonstrate a caring nature and a good knowledge of individual children. They observe children closely to assess their needs and preferences and they regularly communicate with their parents. This helps to ensure that children's individual needs are known and addressed. However, younger children who do not wish to sleep during 'sleep' time are not always provided with suitable activities to occupy them during this period. The organisation of this time often depends on the number of staff available and as a result the children are not always given the opportunity to participate in activities in a room separate to the 'sleepers'.

Children are able to choose from a large selection of good quality toys and equipment that help to support their play and learning. Resources are attractively presented and are available to suit all the children's different ages and abilities. Children's independence and freedom of choice is actively encouraged. A wide selection of resources are stored at child-height and children know that they can freely select toys and equipment to add interest to their play. Bright and attractive sensory areas encourage children to explore and investigate using all of their senses and they regularly enjoy dancing, musical activities and a variety of messy play.

Children are settled and are at ease to go to staff for comfort, support and reassurance. They are confident and happily interact with adults and each other. Staff spend time talking to children and show interest in what they have to say. They communicate clearly with the children; they ask questions to extend their learning and patiently wait for responses. Lots of positive body language, gestures and facial expressions are used by staff and children's efforts are greeted with lots of praise and smiles.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff understand how children learn and carefully plan a range of exciting and developmentally appropriate experiences that help children to progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. All of the six areas of learning are promoted well and staff carefully use their knowledge of individual children when considering how to present them with new experiences or information. Children are involved in planning and circle time is used to invite children to contribute their ideas. Staff also receive general information from parents about their children and use this information, along with their own observations and assessments, to plan and adapt activities to reflect children's differing interests and abilities. Resources are plentiful and effective use is made of both the indoor and outdoor environment to help support and extend children's learning.

Children are settled and know routines well. Staff encourage them to be self-dependent and reliable through making children 'leaders' and 'helpers'. The responsibilities of these roles include helping to lay the table for lunch, clean the fish tank and tidy away toys. Children's self-esteem and sense of responsibility is increased as they eagerly relish these roles. A wide range of strategies are in place to encourage children to value who they are and to teach right from wrong. Staff remind children why rules exist and a written 'Code of Behaviour' is displayed that clearly emphasises what staff want children to do rather than what is not acceptable. However, occasionally children find it difficult to manage their own behaviour, deal with minor conflicts and show care and concern for others and when this unwanted behaviour occurs it disrupts and unsettles the group.

Children are learning to listen to others in group situations and staff provide regular opportunities for children to communicate both in a one-to-one situation and in small groups. Their language and communications skills are extended through weekly French lessons with an external teacher. Lessons are delivered in a fun and relaxed way and consideration is given to ensure that they meet the developmental needs and abilities of the children. Children enjoy listening to stories and look at books both independently and with staff. The book area is comfortable and attractive and contains a wide variety of books.

Children play and learn in a number and word rich environment. Stairs and chairs are numbered and labels, around the room, written in either English or French, help to reinforce children's understanding of the connections between the written and spoken word. Children learn about capacity and weight during cookery activities and playing in the water tray. They count as part of everyday activities, for example, as they walk up and down the stairs, and staff encourage children to solve problems and use mathematical language. For example, children compared collections of leaves gathered from outside, they counted how many they collected and stuck them to a chart displayed on the wall.

Children have plenty of opportunities to gain an awareness of technology around them in the setting, local environment and home. They have easy access to a computer and have used a laminator and digital cameras. Children have been learning about British wildlife and have made

'bird cakes' using a range of ingredients including lard, dried fruit and cereals. Children have taken some of the cakes home and have placed others on a bird table in the nursery garden in the hope of attracting some wild birds. Laminated photographs outside remind children of the various birds that they might see and children talk about the activity with enthusiasm.

Children's imagination and creativity is flourishing and staff support and enhance this through providing a rich and stimulating environment. They ensure that children have sufficient time, space and materials to explore and express themselves and they take care not to stifle children's creativity and imagination by interfering unnecessarily. For example, a group of children independently decided to rearrange a selection of tyres, planks and milk crates that were accessible in the outdoor area. They thoughtfully and co-operatively balanced the various planks on the tyres and crates and then loudly declared that they were fire fighters, carefully walking along the planks and jumping off the crates to avoid the 'fire'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated as individuals and with equal concern. Parents are warmly welcomed and relaxed settling-in procedures allow 'new' children to settle at their own pace. Each child is assigned a key worker and these members of staff provide children and parents with a consistent adult with whom they can develop a trusting and supportive relationship. Children's individual needs, for example, whether they like to sleep on their front or back, are recorded on care plans and this information helps to ensure consistency of care for children.

Children have access to a variety of toys and resources that reflect diversity and help children to develop a knowledge and understanding of the wider community. They learn about a range of religious and cultural festivals through craft activities and stories and children explore differences and similarities through everyday discussions and activities. Positive images of diversity are evident throughout the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The provision has suitable systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff work in partnership with parents and other agencies to promote the welfare and development of children within the setting. The commitment to inclusion and the promotion of children's positive attitudes towards equality is evident in all policies and relevant training has been attended by the nursery Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

A clear written policy is shared with parents that outlines strategies used by the nursery to promote positive behaviour. For example, staff praise children and acknowledge their positive actions and attitudes. Children are learning to behave and staff understand that children need regular opportunities to develop the skills of sharing and turn taking. Opportunities arise during the day for this to be encouraged, for example, whilst sharing bikes during outdoor play, and staff monitor children's play to ensure that all those that want to, are able to have a turn. Children respond positively to staff requests and older children are keen to help staff with tasks, for example, laying the table. However, challenging behaviour is not always effectively managed by staff and this has a potentially negative impact on some children's learning, welfare and enjoyment.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The nursery offers children, parents and carers a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Staff are approachable helping to create effective communication and relationships are effectively enhanced and supported because staff and

parents work together to help children learn and develop. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in the nursery. They are given the opportunity to take up a role as a parent representative and are invited to attend workshops, concerts, assemblies and a range of special occasions.

Children's well-being is increased because a wealth of useful information is shared to ensure consistency of care. Staff, parents and carers have opportunities to chat at the start and end of each session and daily diary sheets are completed for younger children. Parents are invited to attend regular parent evenings where they can discuss their child's progress and view examples of their work. Notice boards around the nursery attractively display an array of useful information. For example, parents can find information regarding curriculum plans and menus alongside details of the setting's policies and day-to-day practice.

The parents and carers of children receiving funding for early education receive additional information to help them understand the Foundation Stage curriculum and support their child's learning. Parents are provided with plenty of opportunities to speak to staff and they regularly chat about children's routines, interests and learning. Activity plans are displayed and photographs and examples of children's work are clearly labelled. Consequently, parents receive both visual and verbal information about what their children are doing at nursery. Staff provide parents with ideas of how they can continue some play and learning activities at home and they invite parents to borrow a small bag of physical play equipment and take home 'Magic Bear'.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Recruitment, induction and vetting procedures are thorough and sufficient staff are employed to ensure that ratios are maintained appropriately. Administrative support from head office enables the manager to be a visible presence within the setting, offering support and reassurance to staff, children and parents. Suitable arrangements are in place to provide cover in the event of planned and unexpected staff absences. However, available staff are not always effectively deployed to ensure the safety, welfare and development of children.

The staff team demonstrates a commitment to improvement and the nursery has achieved a 'Gold' quality assurance award. A variety of training has been attended by staff. Regular staff meetings are held and these encourage communication between the team and are used as an opportunity to cascade knowledge and training and promote everyday good practice. Management regularly monitor staff practice and this enables them to identify areas for improvement and staff strengths and weaknesses. However, there are some gaps in the systems for checking whether staff are effectively following nursery policies and procedures to ensure children's welfare.

Children are happy and settled in the welcoming environment offered by the nursery. They are able to experience a wide variety of experiences because space and resources are creatively organised and staff plan around their differing interests. Outside areas are used on a regular basis and provide children with space to run, climb and expend energy. Space outside is organised for children to take part in physical play and also for them to enjoy alternative activities such as reading books, building with construction toys and painting. Documentation required for the safe and effective management of the setting is satisfactorily organised and available for inspection. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management of early education is good. Staff are motivated and regularly monitor and evaluate their own practice and children's progress. They welcome support from the local authority and elements of good practice are shared between all the Catherine House nurseries. Senior management support the members of staff working with the Foundation Stage children and together they review staff training needs, the resources needed to support the curriculum and the range of experiences offered to children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the nursery was asked to: ensure that children have privacy when using toilet facilities; maintain adequate temperature throughout the nursery; ensure that children have enough space around them when they are put down to sleep; improve systems for recording children's individual information, and ensure that all staff are aware of child protection procedures.

Satisfactory improvements have been made to children's welfare. Low-level doors have been fitted to toilet cubicles and a suitable temperature is maintained throughout the nursery. Children have sufficient space at sleep times as cots and sleep mats are thoughtfully organised and children's individual information is appropriately recorded and confidentiality assured. The nursery has a clear child protection policy, which is shared with staff and thoroughly explained during the induction of any new staff. Most staff members have attended additional child protection training to ensure that they know the correct procedures to follow in the event of any concerns.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the provider was asked to: improve the content of the nursery brochure, improve staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and develop observation and assessment methods.

All parents are given a copy of the nursery parent information pack and this includes information related to the Foundation Stage. It provides parents with general information regarding the Foundation Stage, for example, it tells them about the six areas of learning and explains how all the areas are promoted within the nursery. A wealth of additional information is displayed on notice boards within 'Brown Bears' and staff are available to explain how they plan for children's learning. As a result, parents are now better informed as to how the curriculum is delivered and presented.

Positive steps have been taken to improve children's welfare and learning. Key staff that work with the Foundation Stage children have received relevant training and staff meetings and training days are used to consolidate and extend staff knowledge and understanding of relevant issues. Staff regularly meet with senior management to discuss how the curriculum is delivered and to share good practice. Observation methods have been improved and information from these is used to inform discussions with parents, children's individual progress records and future planning. Activity plans are displayed in 'Brown Bears' to inform staff and parents. These include reference to the learning intentions, for individuals or groups of children, based on observations and their differing needs and abilities.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been two complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004 that required the provider or Ofsted to take action in order to meet the National Standards.

On 6 April 2004 concerns were raised about staffing ratios at the nursery. This related to National Standard 2: Organisation. Ofsted made an unannounced visit to the premises on 19 April 2004 and actions were raised in relation to Standard 2: Organisation, 7: Health and 14: Documentation. Also, a Compliance Notice was served in relation to Standard 2: Organisation. A further monitoring visit was undertaken on 7 June 2004, which confirmed that the provider was complying with the National Standards. The provider remained qualified for registration.

On the 11 November 2005 concerns were raised regarding inappropriate handling of a child by a member of staff and failure to report the incident to Ofsted. These concerns related to National Standard 11: Behaviour, National Standard 13: Child Protection and National Standard 14: Documentation. Ofsted made an unannounced visit to the setting and raised three actions in relation to the concerns raised: to ensure that the behaviour management policy is fully understood and followed by all staff, volunteers and students; to make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedures to be followed if they have a complaint, including the details of the regulator (Ofsted) and to ensure that the practice reflects the policy in relation to the use of CCTV and to ensure that the policy is shared with parents. Ofsted was satisfied that the registered person took appropriate steps to address the concerns, and the provider remained 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.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- ensure that staff are deployed effectively to ensure the safety, welfare and development of children
- take positive steps to promote safety within the setting with regard to risks; this specifically refers to the gaps in boundary fence between the nursery outdoor play area and the neighbouring garden and ensuring that radiators do not pose a hazard to children
- ensure that appropriate activities are planned and provided for those children who do not wish to sleep during sleep times
- improve staff knowledge and understanding of behaviour management strategies.

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 strategies to enable children to manage their own behaviour, deal with conflicts and show care and concern for others.

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