

The House That Jack Built Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130549
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Inspector	Karen Molloy
Setting Address	Building Research Establishment, Bucknalls Lane, Garston, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25 9XX
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Registered person	Building Research Establishment 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The House That Jack Built Nursery was registered in 1993. It operates from a self-contained unit within the grounds of the Building Research Establishment (BRE Ltd) in Garston, Watford. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round, closing for one week between Christmas and New Year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from six months to five years on roll. Of these, five receive funding for early education. The nursery serves staff working for BRE and has recently opened its provision to external users. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery have recently completed the Hertfordshire Quality Standards successfully, which they originally completed in 2003. They are a member of the National Association of Day Nurseries.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Younger children are given the necessary support to clean their hands and staff wipe their faces after they have eaten. Older children's independence is encouraged as they bring individual wash bags to nursery and staff help them to use their own flannels, toothbrushes and towels. Children stay healthy as there are effective procedures to protect them from cross-infection. Nappies are changed regularly and disposed of appropriately, dummies are sterilised and a no-shoe policy in the baby room ensures children's well-being is considered. Children do not attend the nursery if they are unwell or infectious and this information is clearly shared with parents. The majority of staff hold a current first aid qualification, therefore they respond to children appropriately if they have an injury or accident. All the relevant documentation is in place in relation to accidents and medication.

Children enjoy regular physical activity which contributes to their good health and helps to develop their physical skills. They have access to a spacious outdoor area and participate in a range of physical play opportunities such as climbing and manoeuvring around obstacles and cones. Wheeled toys and a small climbing frame enables children to develop large motor skills whilst bats, balls, skipping ropes and hoops promote their co-ordination and balance. The outdoor area is organised effectively to enable the children to use it freely for most of the day. Indoors, children have opportunities to increase their finer manipulative skills. They manipulate dough, use pencils and control their movements when building with bricks. A music and movement session provides a fun opportunity to move in different ways as children enthusiastically clap, move around the room and learn to respond quickly to instructions to stop and start. They are beginning to learn to dress themselves as they change their clothes after using the water tray. Children rest and sleep according to their needs. Young children follow their own routines and staff ensure they have their comforters ready for their sleep. Children are checked regularly and staff respond promptly to them as they wake. Sleep times are recorded and this information is shared with parents to ensure they are well-informed.

Children are nourished and enjoy a generally well-balanced diet. Healthy snacks include raisins, fruit, cheese cubes and cucumber, whilst wholesome meals such as shepherd's pie and pasta dishes are made on the premises. Young babies feeding patterns are discussed with parents and adhered to. Bottles are prepared by the nursery staff and all equipment is sterilised appropriately. Babies benefit from fresh food that is prepared according to their individual needs. Lunchtime is a relaxed, sociable time where children's independence is encouraged. They are supported by staff who sit with them, talk to them and help them when necessary. Drinks are readily available and a water dispenser is used independently by the older children throughout the day. Children's individual dietary requirements are discussed and clearly recorded, to ensure their needs are met. Staff have completed food hygiene courses and this knowledge and understanding helps to protect children's well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment where risks are identified and minimised. This means that children can move around safely, freely and with some independence. Appropriate safety precautions are in place such as high door handles, an entry

phone system and a visitors book. Daily checklists are completed and cover all areas of the nursery; this ensures any areas of concern are identified and addressed. Fire drills are held regularly and recorded in a fire log, with fire routines linked into BRE procedures. Children are kept safe outdoors; the outdoor area is accessible to the pre-school room where children can move freely between indoors and the outdoors, with staff well-deployed to ensure both areas are sufficiently monitored. Children do not go on outings, although occasionally go for a walk around the grounds and parents consent is obtained for this, ensuring children's safety is protected.

Children use safe and suitable equipment. They have access to a satisfactory range of resources with most of the storage at low-level to enable children to make independent choices. Toys and play equipment is often rotated around the rooms to provide the children with further choices. These are kept clean and well-maintained with a checklist in place to ensure this is monitored. Babies toys are cleaned thoroughly, surfaces are cleaned regularly and equipment is sterilised where appropriate. Suitable equipment is available to enable babies to develop basic skills, for example, baby walkers encourage them to become mobile.

Children are protected by staff who understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Staff have attended child protection training and share this information at staff meetings. Any concerns are recorded and shared with the nursery manager, who is the designated person for this area. A child protection policy is in place although it does not refer to up to date guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. As a result, staff are not fully informed of current guidance which potentially compromises children's welfare. All visitors are signed in and out of the premises, a staff photo board is on display and students wear name badges to ensure they are clearly identifiable, thereby helping to ensure children are safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They form positive relationships with their peers and the staff, and separate easily from their parents and carers. Staff are caring, attentive, kind and listen well to the children. They show an interest in their stories and tales. Staff respond promptly and sensitively to children and in turn, they are confident to approach staff for support or reassurance. A homely and family-orientated ethos has a positive impact on the children and as the older children visit the baby room, siblings show great delight, hugging each other and dancing round in a circle excitedly. Children's independence is promoted as they move around freely and make independent choices. Staff support children in accessing equipment and show them how to use them. Children develop confidence and self-esteem as they receive praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements. Staff are enthusiastic in their approach to the children.

Younger children's learning is promoted through the staff's sound knowledge of child development and the 'Birth to three matters' framework which they implement well. Staff use the framework to plan and organise play experiences and activities for children under three years which are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Younger children's progress is monitored through regular observations of individual children's play and achievements and all staff participate in this process.

Children experience a balanced range of activities and play opportunities both indoors and outside, to support their all round development. Children's early communication skills are

encouraged and their babbling and 'conversation' is encouraged, with meal times used as a time to talk. Children acquire new knowledge and skills. In the baby unit, early skills are supported as children pull themselves up and begin to move around the furniture. Children have opportunities to play, rest and be active, often at their own pace. They benefit from free play as well as more structured activities, such as group time when children's concentration and listening skills are promoted.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and this contributes to children's progress towards the early learning goals. Children take part in a variety of planned activities and play experiences that enable them to make progress in all areas of learning. They have a positive attitude to learning, they show interest, ask questions and resources are organised to allow them to make choices and gain independence. Staff build trusting relationships with the children. They are given appropriate support and staff ask questions to develop their thinking. However, at times, there are missed opportunities for children to learn through everyday routines, for example, during snack time children do not routinely count the children or cups. Time and resources are generally organised well to meet children's needs with many of the resources taken outdoors to provide interesting learning experiences. Children's behaviour is managed in a calm manner and small groups of children enables their behaviour to be monitored effectively. Children are given praise and recognition for their efforts which helps to promote children's confidence and self-esteem.

Curriculum planning includes long, medium and short term plans and is linked to the six areas of learning and to the stepping stones. All staff have input into the planning, with the areas of learning and learning intention identified. However, the planning is not always effective as it does not always reflect what is happening. Although staff know the children well, some planning and evaluations are general and it is not always clear how some children are supported or challenged. Therefore, some children's individual learning needs may not be met and potentially their progress may be limited. Activity plans are completed for each activity and include a learning objective, consequently, staff are aware of the aim for each activity. Observations are carried out and this information is collated and recorded in the six areas of learning. Children's individual files, with examples of their work and their progress record, are given to parents when they leave the setting.

Children communicate well. They are confident to speak in a small group situation and enjoy talking about their own experiences. They learn to take it in turns to talk and are encouraged to listen to others. Children listen well to instructions and follow them accordingly, for example, during the movement and music session children follow instructions to move various parts of their body. Children have some opportunities to link sounds to words through the 'sound of the week' and through 'Letterland' books. Older children are beginning to use a pencil with control as they take time to form letters and write their name on their picture. Children enjoy story time and are generally able to listen well. Children arrive happy and quickly engage in activities. They are aware of the boundaries and expectations, such as sharing and taking turns when playing. Children can express themselves confidently as they recall events, for example, when they fell over and had a cuddle, which made them feel better. Children are becoming independent, they make choices about their area of play, get themselves a drink and go to the toilet on their own. Children show kindness and consideration to others as they help each other in the home corner, make some food and thank each other for helping.

Children have opportunities to experience music, imaginative play and explore various materials and media on a regular basis. For example, they begin to recognise changes in musical sounds and speed and are competent in following the adults' instructions. Children thoroughly enjoy a music and movement session where they make loud and soft noises and play an instrument in time to the beat. They generally listen well, and are absorbed and interested. Their imagination is promoted and they enjoy doing the ironing in the home corner, taking their babies for a walk and posting a letter. Children enjoy using the water tray where they can play freely whilst learning about items that float or sink. During a topic of 'people who help us' children use paints to paint portraits of people who help in the nursery. Mathematical concepts are reinforced through measuring and weighing out pasta and discussing if it is heavier or lighter. They recognise numbers one to nine during an ambulance game and play an oversized snakes and ladders game outdoors, so they move around and learn about direction too. However, there are missed opportunities to develop children's learning of mathematical concepts or to introduce mathematical language through everyday activities, such as snack time.

Children have access to some opportunities that develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn about the living world as they plant herbs and vegetables in the garden, caring for them and eventually enjoying them for their lunch. Various festivals are celebrated so children are introduced to different cultures, with some resources, such as dolls available that reflect diversity. Children are beginning to investigate as they make ice cubes and talk about the process, using language to describe how it feels. They are introduced to technology with a computer readily accessible to them and some children use this with confidence and control.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. They are greeted warmly on arrival by staff and separate from their parents and carers with ease and settle well into the day. Children's individual needs are responded to effectively as children are settled in gradually and sensitively. Staff gather information from parents about each child, prior to them starting at the nursery. They discuss and record information about their sleep patterns, eating habits and favourite activities or songs. Children develop a sense of belonging as it is a small nursery with staff who generally know the children well. They have their own coat peg, individual wash bag with their belongings and a tray for their work, organised into key group colours, so it is easily identifiable to them. Children are able to make independent choices in an informal and relaxed setting. A welcoming staff photo board shows new children and parents who is who, so they become familiar with the staff team. Children moving from one room to another are settled in gradually and they visit their new room before making the final move. This enables them to become familiar with the staff and different routines, ensuring a smooth transition.

Various festivals are celebrated to introduce children to different cultures and there are some resources that reflect diversity, such as dolls and text in different languages. Children who have English as a second language are supported well. Staff discuss their needs with parents and gather information such as key words in their first language, to ensure they meet the children's needs effectively. Children who are bilingual are settled and able to communicate well with staff and their peers, enabling them to be happy and comfortable in their environment. There are systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) works in partnership with parents and other agencies, to meet the needs of the children and to ensure they are fully included in the setting.

Meetings are held with parents, staff and other professionals to discuss the way forward. Additional support is put in place for children when necessary.

Children understand responsible behaviour and play together very well. The small nursery and small grouping enables children's behaviour to be monitored effectively. Staff know the children well and equally, children are clear of the expectations. They are encouraged to share, be kind and to respect each other. Children are polite and use good manners, for example, children say 'excuse me' as they try to pass by another child. Although most of the children are under three, they are beginning to play together co-operatively, for example, in the home corner, they help each other get their babies organised so they can go for a walk and there is no evidence of any disruptive behaviour. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with promptly and appropriately. Children are asked not to do it and an explanation given. They are given two warnings and if they persist, they sit with a member of staff for a couple of minutes. Egg timers are used so children can monitor it themselves too. Any issues are discussed with parents. Children learn the rules and boundaries through positive role models and staff have worked with the children to develop a list of rules, which must be kept up to date to ensure all children are familiar with them. Good behaviour is promoted through use of various stickers and much praise. This contributes to children's confidence and self-esteem, as their efforts and achievements are acknowledged.

Children are cared for by staff who work in partnership with parents to meet individual children's needs. An emphasis is put on effective communication and this is done in a number of ways to ensure parents receive the information they need. Parents and staff share information about the children at the beginning and end of day, both informally and through daily and weekly feedback sheets. A transition letter is given to parents as children move rooms to explain the settling-in process and informs them of their child's key worker and the daily routine. Parents are encouraged to talk to staff about any concerns or questions, thereby allaying any fears or anxieties they may have. Parents are welcome into the nursery at any time and events are organised for them; parent's evenings to discuss children's progress and information evenings to inform them of subjects such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework. A recent Fun Day for parents, children and staff was successful with many attending, encouraging good relationships. Newsletters, an informative notice board, policies and procedures, a welcome letter, parent pack and intranet site all contribute to parents being well-informed with current information. A suggestion box and parent/carer questionnaires enables everyone to have the opportunity to feedback any concerns, suggestions or successes to the nursery, which they can then address. Feedback from parents is positive and comments on how happy they are with the care and activities provided, the good social experience and the effective way information is shared. Parents are particularly pleased that children are helped to be confident and secure during their time at the nursery. A complaints record is in place and parents are informed of this through the nursery's literature.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. They generally receive good quality information about the setting and its provision. The Foundation Stage curriculum is in the entrance for parents to read and they receive some further information about the early learning goals. A six-weekly plan of work is made available to all parents so they have a guideline to the topics and areas of learning being covered. Information about children's progress is shared with them formally at parent's evenings, held twice a year, and a weekly 'report' is shared with parents with general information about children's learning. Parents are encouraged to share information about what they know about their children when they first start and continue to do so on an informal basis. Records about the children follow them from the 'Little Learners' room into the pre-school room and during this transition time is spent discussing any

concerns or questions parents may have. Although parents are welcomed into the nursery, there are no opportunities for them to be involved with their child's learning. Consequently, this does not enable everyone to work together to support children's learning.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are beginning to develop an awareness of diversity with some resources, including dolls and small world people used to support this. Different festivals are celebrated to broaden children's understanding of a wider society and children's birthdays are also marked with children making birthday hats and enjoying a cake together. Children are encouraged to be kind to each other, to share and take turns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a generally established and committed team of staff who have a high regard for children and a sound knowledge and understanding of child care and development. Nearly all of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and they are keen to develop their knowledge and understanding through ongoing training and development. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well-protected and cared for by staff who have the relevant experience, qualifications, knowledge and skills to do their job. Appropriate checks are completed on all staff and anyone who is not vetted is not left unsupervised with children. New staff complete an induction with time allocated to discuss the children and the expectations of their role. There is an expectation that all staff attend training in the areas of food hygiene, first aid and child protection to ensure they all hold this basic knowledge. Staff meetings are held regularly and a variety of issues discussed including topical issues. A diary is used in each room to share comments and messages and this ensures staff are informed, thereby promoting children's well-being. The nursery have successfully completed their Hertfordshire Quality Standards award which recognises and acknowledges good practice.

Children's needs are met effectively as staff are well-deployed and work well together. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Space and resources are effectively organised with some clearly defined areas and the adult to child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play. Consequently, children are relaxed and comfortable within their environment. They are confident to initiate their own play and make choices, yet still approach staff for reassurance or support. An effective key worker system enables children to develop good relationships with a member of staff to ensure their individual needs are met. Group sizes are small and promote children's all round development and well-being. There is a friendly, family ethos and older and younger children often meet up and are encouraged to play together and get to know each other. Policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety and enjoyment and these are reviewed regularly to ensure they are up to date with current practice. Staff records and a record of staff and children's attendance is appropriately maintained.

Leadership and management of funded children is satisfactory. There have been some recent changes of management and the nursery are currently recruiting a new manager. The temporary manager and deputy have worked hard and done well in keeping the nursery running smoothly to ensure as much continuity as possible for the children and parents. They are committed to ensuring children are safe, happy and making progress, whilst keeping parents informed too. Staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities and share information well between themselves. Staff supervision takes place every three months, although due to recent staff changes this has not been possible, and appraisals are held annually. These forums enable staff and managers

to work together to evaluate their practice, share any concerns, receive praise and identify any training needs. There is an open-door policy for staff to speak to the manager about any issues. The manager aims to spend time in the rooms to monitor and support staff, although this has been difficult more recently due to staff changes. Staff meetings are also used as a way of monitoring the quality of care and education within the setting. The nursery is committed to improving care and education for all its children and has recently successfully completed the Hertfordshire Quality Standards and is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association, which aims to enhance the development and education of children in their early years. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection an action was set to update the child protection information. This has been completed although it has not been updated with more recent guidance that has changed since the last inspection. This means staff are not fully informed of current information and this potentially compromises children's welfare.

The nursery was also asked to address a number of recommendations. This included developing documentation to include; a procedure for lost or uncollected children, a procedure for outings, a child protection statement to include procedures for allegations made against staff and the parents information sheet to include nappy changes. These are all in place and ensures parents are well-informed and children's safety is safeguarded. The milk kitchen and side gate have been made safe and secure and this also contributes to children's safety. A sofa has been purchased which enables staff to sit comfortably with young babies to cuddle and comfort them and meet the needs of the babies. Resources have been re-organised in the pre-school room to provide lots of low storage where children have easy access and can make their own choices.

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 satisfactory.

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 the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

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):

- ensure planning clearly shows how individual children are challenged or supported
- provide opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning.

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