

Deerlands Day Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY103599
Inspection date	10 September 2007
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	Ferry Road, North Fambridge, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 6LS
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Registered person	Deerlands Day Nursery
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Deerlands Day Nursery is owned by a family run limited company. It opened in 2002 and operates from five playrooms within a purpose built building, situated within walking distance of the railway station in the riverside village of North Fambridge, Essex. All children share access to secure, enclosed, outdoor play areas. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Operating times are from 07:30 until 18:00.

There are currently 82 children aged from seven months to five years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions or full day care. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 24 staff, of whom 14 of the staff, including the managers hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are five staff currently working towards a recognised early

years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority, the National Day Nurseries Association and the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children constantly develop and test their physical skills through taking part in stimulating and energetic outdoor play. The outdoor area is divided into sections that allow children to explore an extensive range of physical experiences. Challenging resources and superb apparatus are provided that cater for all children attending the nursery. Children successfully and confidently balance and climb and enthusiastically manoeuvre wheeled toys to avoid obstacles. They recognise the effect that exercise has on their bodies and after running energetically children discuss with staff why they are breathing faster and feel thirsty. Staff are mindful of the effects of very warm weather and the children are very conscious of the need to avoid becoming sun burnt. They always wear sun hats when they play outside and sun screen is regularly applied. Canopies provide plenty of shaded areas to allow children to play outdoors in comfort on hot summer days.

Babies thoroughly enjoy fresh air and exercise every day. They eagerly anticipate their trips out, smiling and clapping their hands as they are strapped into their pushchairs for the journey around the locality and to the park. The staff recognise the signs of tiredness in babies and children and they act on this knowledge to plan and support appropriate periods of rest and activity. The younger children in the nursery rest or sleep according to their needs. Each child has a separate cot or mattress with individual clean bedding and they are closely supervised as they sleep peacefully.

Children thrive because they are developing an excellent awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They carefully wash their hands after using the toilet or before eating and know that this is important to protect them from germs. They are further protected from the risk of infection as staff diligently implement effective hygiene procedures such as cleaning tables before meals, wearing disposable aprons and gloves for nappy changing and ensuring that bed linen is washed frequently. Visitors to the baby rooms are asked to remove their shoes to keep floor surfaces clean and to allow young children to crawl and play in comfort. Excellent hygiene is maintained in the nursery kitchen. Staff know how to prepare food safely because they hold food hygiene certificates and the kitchen is regularly inspected by an Environmental Health Officer. The sick child policy is comprehensive and information about infectious childhood illnesses is easily accessible. There are always staff with appropriate qualifications in first aid available to deal with children who may be sick or injured. First aid kits are well stocked and readily accessible. The staff are extremely well aware of any allergies or dietary requirements so that individual children's needs are met. All staff have had training to use an EpiPen and know how to deal with an anaphylactic shock.

Children have excellent opportunities to make healthy choices at meal times. They choose from a range of fresh fruit and vegetables at snack times and freshly cooked nutritious meals are provided. Menus are varied and includes food from other countries, which educates the taste buds and adds to topics of conversation. Learning experiences include cooking activities and finding out about different fruit and children enjoy making healthy desserts such as mango fool. Children have healthy appetites and enjoy eating their lunch in social groups where they can see and talk to each other. Staff treat meal times as an opportunity to help children to

enjoy their food and become independent in feeding themselves. The older children select their own food from serving dishes and learn about the food that is good for you. They grow vegetables in the nursery garden and often eat the produce they have picked that morning. Children are encouraged to take regular drinks throughout the day and the older children manage this themselves, responding well to their own bodily needs when they are thirsty. Toddlers have named, covered drinking cups within eyesight at all times. Babies are fed from bottles with staff sitting on chairs to ensure they are held comfortably.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely welcoming, vibrant and stimulating environment, where safety is of the highest priority. The comprehensive safety policies and procedures are consistently implemented and reviewed. Risk assessment covers all aspects of nursery life, including the premises, equipment, activities and outings. Each day the staff meticulously check that the play rooms and outdoor area are safe and clean before use. Fire equipment and electrical appliances are regularly checked. Fire procedures are clearly displayed and the children regularly practise fire drills to ensure that they can quickly and calmly evacuate the building in the event of an emergency. The staff are extremely vigilant about the security of the children. There is a secure key pad entry system and no unauthorised person is allowed access. The nursery gathers photographs of all persons authorised to collect the children. Identification documents of visitors are scrutinised and the visitors book is signed before entry.

Children learn to keep themselves safe and understand the need to hold hands and walk sensibly on outings. They are very conscious of the need to use resources and equipment safely. They sit down to use scissors safely and carefully spread butter onto bread. Themes and activities are planned to promote children's understanding of safety in the wider environment. They learn about road signs from the Highway Code and discuss potential dangers in the home, for example, when they talk about things that may be too hot to touch.

Children use an excellent range of high quality toys and equipment that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. These are stored where children can self-select and make choices easily and safely. Toys and play materials are regularly rotated to provide added interest and stimulation. All items within reach of babies are safe for them to explore using their hands or mouth. Good quality, child-sized furnishings are provided to allow children to eat, sleep and play in comfort.

Children are safeguarded because their welfare is given a very high priority. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. There are clear procedures in place to ensure that concerns are dealt with appropriately and staff have confidence in their ability to record and refer information if necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Babies and toddlers enjoy a wide range of fun learning opportunities designed to enhance their rapid development, with comprehensive planning guided by the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Younger children enjoy tactile experiences such as finger painting and playing with natural materials within the treasure basket. They respond well to music and have fun dancing, singing and playing musical instruments. Information about activities is displayed each day and the evaluation process ensures that the babies and toddlers have a extensive range of

experiences and are making excellent progress. Plenty of positive observations are shared with parents and the youngest children each have a photograph album depicting their achievements.

The younger children's and babies' welfare is extremely well promoted. They are cared for tenderly and with great affection. Staff are attentive to babies' differing needs and easily distinguish and know the difference between their cries and sounds. As a result babies feel secure, settle quickly and become extremely confident. Children share a special bonding with their key worker and are also confident and happy to communicate with all members of staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff really understand how young children learn and demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Children relish their time in the nursery. They have an outstanding attitude towards learning and are very happy, settled and purposefully engaged in their play. Children have access to a vast range of innovative, exciting indoor and outdoor activities. A strong aspect of the nursery's provision is its very attractive, well-equipped outdoor area. Children benefit greatly from having such a large exciting outdoor classroom. There is a very good balance of activities between those taught by the staff and those children choose for themselves. Children are confident in trying out new activities and experiences. They revel in their tasks and give them their wholehearted interest and attention.

Children play a dynamic part in the life of the nursery. They are enterprising because their curiosity is skilfully nurtured. When children ask questions and demonstrate great interest in aspects of the world around them, staff use the ideas raised by the children to introduce topics and themes. For example, after children spend time observing spider webs in the garden the staff introduce a week of activities and learning experiences linked to the topic of spiders. Children relish challenge and each week the staff complete a sheet to evaluate how they can extend and support each child's learning and also provide home links to share with parents.

Children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points and capabilities. Staff frequently observe children and record their achievements as they learn through play. The staff understand about the uniqueness of each child and individual profiles with clear targets and next steps are set. Very effective systems are in place to support the children's varying needs and abilities.

Children develop a heightened sense of responsibility and independence. They respond extremely well to the staff's expectations for good behaviour. There is a great emphasis on children developing their independence skills and they adeptly deal with their own care needs and willingly help staff. Children are extremely proud of their achievements and enjoy showing visitors their completed artwork and by pointing out the displays they have been involved with.

Children communicate extremely confidently and staff promote children's language exceptionally well, often covering several areas of learning simultaneously as they prompt responses through questions and discussions. Staff are very good at joining different threads of the curriculum together. For example, an enchanting feature is the shared delight and the sense of fun as children and staff take part in the imaginary search while on a bear hunt. Children are invited to create props for this adventure and they seek out leaves and twigs on a nature walk. They are invited to use their imagination and initiative as they discover that using a mini-shredder will turn sheets of paper into the grass that swishes and sways in the story. Children become totally absorbed when listening to stories and they contribute ideas as the storyline progresses.

They learn that information can be found in books when they use gardening literature in the role play area and understand that staff sometimes need to look up information to answer their questions. The mobile library van visits the nursery every fortnight and children can choose the books they wish to read for pleasure.

Children have opportunities each day to practise writing and mark making. They write their own names on their art work and make their own books. A wealth of labels and writing around the nursery and the outdoor area supports children in learning to recognise familiar words and names. They recognise the initial letter of words and show enjoyment in rhyme and rhyming words. Children practise emergent writing in the role play area when they use a pencil and diary to write down a food order in the café.

Mathematical development is intertwined with the development of communication skills so that children confidently count and use numbers as part of their imaginative play in the same way as they incorporate their developing language and literacy skills. Numbers are used as labels in the playrooms and within the outdoor area. Children calculate the number of plates, knives and forks needed when they prepare the tables for lunch. They can easily count up to ten and some much higher. Children show great interest in shapes in the environment and can explain that an oval looks a bit like a circle but has longer sides.

Children have great fun as they develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their construction skills are first-rate as they persevere when building, testing and modifying their design to make it work. They use a wide range of materials such as string, sticky tape or glue to attach and join items together and create intricate models of boats. There are excellent opportunities for children to learn about technology. Children find their way around computer programs with ease. They skilfully use the mouse to control movements on screen and enjoy explaining their actions and the correct way to play the educational games. Children are effectively introduced to a wide range of different cultures through well-planned topics. They investigate different bread from around the world and this leads to them learning simple French words. Interesting and educational outings are made to the nearby boatyard and marina. Children develop an exceptional awareness of the natural world by caring for the nursery's guinea pig and rabbits and through visits to see the deer and other animals on the adjacent farm.

Children are absorbed and engrossed in their imaginative play. The role play area is imaginatively themed and props, resources and costumes are frequently changed. For example, the role play area brings alive what it is like to work in a garden centre as children play with resources such as flower pots and tools. Outdoors, children help prepare a teddy bears picnic and invite all the children in their group. Name tags are written for the bears and children eat their snack alfresco with the staff. Plenty of creative opportunities are provided when children demonstrate artistic flair as they paint and model with recycled materials to produce highly individual pieces of work. Children sing with gusto and are building up a wide repertoire of songs. They enthusiastically use musical instruments from around the world to make sounds or beat out rhythms.

Children demonstrate a high level of physical aptitude as they move confidently around inside the premises. They benefit because the communal area in the centre of the nursery is available in addition to their home base for indoor physical play. Children's fine motor skills are developing well and they show good control as they use pencils, paint and tools with malleable materials. They have precise hand and eye coordination as they carefully pour their own drinks and empty and fill containers in the sand and water.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy, confident and settle well at the nursery. They enjoy very warm, friendly relationships with the staff, who know them exceptionally well. Children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging as they discuss the routine with visitors. They confidently explain where they put their coats and stow their shoes and bags. Children delight in introducing themselves to a new member of staff and they soon know each other by name.

Children feel valued as they celebrate and talk about their own birthdays, achievements or significant events in their lives. They learn about the local community and many of its features through regular visits within the village and through welcoming visitors into the nursery. For example, children visit the church where they discuss and act out what happens at a wedding. Children and parents take part in regular charity events such as a sponsored toddle or they collect items for the harvest festival.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The sense of wonder and satisfaction on the faces of the children is evident as they explore the natural world and explain how they have helped to plant and water the vegetables and flowers growing in the nursery garden. Children have great respect for each other and treat others with care and concern. An extensive range of festivals from around the world are celebrated and resources reflect the cultures and customs of different peoples. Children play extremely well alongside each other. They are repeatedly praised for doing well, sharing and cooperating with other children. Successful reward schemes boost children's confidence and self-esteem. For example, on the friendship bear chart staff display details about acts of kindness. The older children have the opportunity to become the 'superstar of the day' and help the staff with tasks such as preparing the tables for lunch. Children learn to manage their feelings and emotions very well because staff consistently show them how to do this very effectively. Themes and activities are planned to encourage children to talk about different emotions and they discuss when they might feel happy, sad, frightened or cross.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make impressive progress because their individual needs are supported exceptionally well by staff and outside agencies. The nursery provides a very successful and inclusive learning environment for all children. Innovative use of resources and excellent one-to-one ratios ensure that they are able to make very effective progress. For example, use of visual symbols and specialist resources ensure that they can join in activities and fully develop their skills. The level of professional cooperation between the nursery and primary schools prepares children extremely well for the next stage in education. Each child completes a personal passport with individual details to share with their reception teachers.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. There are many different methods of exchanging information and the parents are extremely well informed about the activities and their child's achievements. Regular newsletters are shared and high quality displays inform parents about the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Daily diary cards are written for the youngest children detailing their care routines. A wealth of advice such as fact sheets are at hand for parents relating to children's developmental and health issues. Open days and appointments with key staff ensure that this regular exchange of information with parents provides a valuable partnership in helping children make rapid progress in achieving milestones and agreed targets. Parents are involved in the assessment procedures and work closely with staff in identifying targets and helping children along the stepping stones.

Parents' contributions, views and skills are actively sought. Children benefit greatly from the involvement of their parents in projects such as reading stories, helping on outings or sharing their knowledge and occupational skills. Sports day is extremely well attended. Parents are fully appreciative of the wide range of activities open to their children and commend the care, love and attention shown by the staff team.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The management team has a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. The managers are proactive in implementing changes to improve practice. Staff are motivated and evaluate their work to identify strengths and weaknesses. Activity planning is regularly reviewed to ensure that the curriculum is enthusiastically developed with fresh ideas. The management provide time for staff to complete paperwork without distractions. Staff are committed to their ongoing professional development and are encouraged to further their knowledge and qualifications. There are robust recruitment and induction procedures for new staff and this is followed by regular staff meetings and individual staff appraisals. The nursery has achieved an Investors in People award.

Organisation of the nursery is exceptional. Ample space is provided for children to explore in hygienic and safe conditions and a great deal of thought and care is put into the provision of resources and equipment.

Documentation is extremely well-organised. All the required policies and procedures are in place to support all children and their families. These are supplemented by additional documents which reinforce the commitment to excellence at Deerlands Day Nursery. A wealth of information relating to health, hygiene and good practice is displayed throughout the nursery. Confidentiality is respected and information containing details about the children is stored securely in the office.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to seek advice regarding older early years qualifications, assess the risks to children regarding water play and to obtain information about the Disability Discrimination Act. Staff who held older early years qualifications have had the opportunity to attend fast track training. Water play activities are now incorporated into the nursery's formal risk assessment and parents give written permission for their children to use the large paddling pool. The nursery now holds a copy of the booklet 'Early Years and the Disability and Discrimination Act'. These improvements have enhanced the children's welfare and safety and staff have developed their awareness of the legislation relating to the inclusion of all children.

At the last inspection for nursery education there were no significant weaknesses but the nursery was asked to consider developing the programme for writing to offer challenge for the older and more able children. Children now write labels and simple captions for their artwork using their phonic knowledge for spelling. Consequently, children's communication, language and literacy has been enhanced.

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.

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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