

ACE Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY284088
Inspection date	31 July 2007
Inspector	Caroline Wright
Setting Address	6A Priory Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB5 8HT
Telephone number	01223 366355
E-mail	ace_nursery@tiscali.co.uk
Registered person	ACE Nursery School
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

ACE Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by a committee-led parents' co-operative. It opened in 2004 and operates from converted community premises in the centre of Cambridge City. A maximum of 17 children under three-years-old may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:30 to 17:30 for 48 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 38 children aged from one to under three on roll. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of staff. Seven of the staff, including the manager and part-time cook, hold appropriate qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a relevant qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The needs of babies and children under three years are well met by the key workers who have a good understanding of their developmental needs. Children are able to rest and sleep according to their own individual routines and they bring in comforters or special blankets to help them to feel secure. A wide range of attractive and interesting large and small equipment inside and out enables younger children to develop new physical skills according to their stage of development.

Young children learn about personal hygiene through regular routines such as washing their hands before lunch and after nappy changes. Children as young as one-year-old turn on the taps in the bathroom and wash their hands, following the older children's example. Very good procedures for maintaining a clean and healthy environment for the children have been established, and as a result all areas are scrupulously clean. This helps children to remain healthy and protects them from cross-infection. Key workers act as good role models, wiping down surfaces before preparing or serving food, to help children to stay healthy. If the children become unwell whilst they are in the care of the nursery, up-to-date records are in place to make sure that good care is given. A very good procedure ensures that children with special dietary needs and allergies are given the correct food so that they remain healthy and safe.

Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday experiences. They have water or milk at snack time each day and are given a drink of water when they want one. A superb range of vegetarian meals and snacks are freshly prepared each day. Children thoroughly enjoy eating their lunch, with fresh vegetables such as cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage and potatoes, followed by a desert of fresh fruit or other healthy option. Organised activities, such as shopping for ingredients for making bread or cheese straws, help children to develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating through practical experiences. As a result, children are beginning to know about the benefits of eating good food: they remark that 'carrots make you see in the dark' and 'dinner makes you grow big and strong.'

Children are able to run around and exert themselves during outdoor play so that they learn the importance of regular exercise and develop new physical skills. However, they are not able to access the outdoor play area freely to enable them to pursue their own interests in the natural environment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment and as a result they feel secure and are safe. They access the toys and resources easily because they are well organised to enable them to become independent. An effective risk assessment procedure ensures that all risks are minimised and children move around safely under the constant supervision of the nursery staff. The outdoor play area is very safe: a specialised safety surface ensures the minimum trauma if children fall over while they play and the area is free from hazards of any kind. Children learn about keeping themselves safe according to their stage of development: staff remind them to 'be careful' and not to run in the nursery. Children demonstrate their increasing knowledge of personal safety when they talk about their lunch that that is 'very hot. You need to blow on it.' In addition, adults use safety chairs for babies and harnesses where

necessary when children sit in their chairs for meals. Staff regularly check sleeping babies in the sleep area to maintain their ongoing safety.

Children's overall welfare is maintained by procedures and documents that promote their safety. For example, the staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Children use suitable toys and equipment, which are checked by the nursery staff to ensure they are in good condition. Tables and chairs are the correct height to promote their independence further. The parents' co-operative committee take responsibility for making sure that ongoing repairs to the premises are carried out effectively to maintain a safe environment at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children enjoy their time at the nursery and form very good relationships with each other and with their key workers. They take part in interesting activities over time that help them to make progress. For example, they play with oats and sand to learn about texture and develop their vocabulary, talking about 'making flapjacks for tea'. They use cause and effect toys to learn about how things work and to develop hand and eye co-ordination. They use paint, pencils, glitter and glue to make their own pictures which are displayed attractively on the wall for everyone to enjoy or sent home for parents to share. Younger children learn about their own bodies and what they can do with them when they sit on the floor, stretching over to grab the toys placed close to them by their key workers. Toddlers spend a long period of time playing with their key workers who help them to extend their ideas as they play. Babies 'babble' their personal commentary as they try on hats in the role play area, developing their imagination and becoming confident communicators. Their eager attempts to communicate are sensitively refined by their key workers' encouraging comments and skilful questions which encourage children to think. Additional toys are organised so that they are within children's reach to stimulate their interest and encourage them to investigate further.

Babies of all ages enjoy sharing stories with the nursery staff, who help children to turn the pages of books and learn that text carries meaning. Staff use photographs of the children in the nursery in interesting ways to help children to learn new skills, such as how to wash their hands in the bathroom, and to encourage children to develop a sense of belonging.

A very interesting range of toys and activities provided during the course of the day, which are planned by children's key workers to make sure they are developmentally appropriate and help children to make progress. They use the continuous provision and regular observations of what children enjoy to plan future activities using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, the organisation of the session means that children are not able to make decisions or pursue their own interests at all times. Opportunities for them to explore activities at their own pace so that they can extend their learning are lost. For example, children are separated into two groups and are unable to play outside until it is their turn. When children are actively learning through their play with the oats, they have to stop what they are doing because adults say it is time to move onto the next activity. This affects learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Babies and toddlers are very confident and develop high levels of self-esteem. They show a strong sense of belonging and form very good relationships with others. Young children play alongside each other and join in group activities, such as snack time and singing time. Activities such as circle time and lunch time help them to become part of the nursery community and to feel secure. A very good system is in place to support older children through the transition to 'Big Ace' Nursery School so that they are confident in their new surroundings.

All children behave well and they are beginning to understand what is expected of them. They take part in regular routines and staff maintain consistent expectations. The staff take time to carefully explain what they expect children to do in a way that they can understand. They take time to listen and respond to children's babbling and attempts to communicate so that they feel respected and valued. The staff help children to respect each other's needs and play together in harmony; for example, they gently explain to babies about sharing and distract them by helping to find something else to play with instead.

Children sit together for meals and adults join them at the table. Key workers then talk with the children to help them to talk about what they do at home to begin to learn about each others family cultures and traditions. Children look at books and play with a good selection of toys that reflect all members of society to help them develop positive attitudes towards diversity. Children with English as an additional language are well supported so that they can communicate effectively by building on their home language. Although there are no children with disability or learning difficulties currently attending the nursery there is satisfactory system is in place to support any children who attend in the future.

Children benefit from very good relationships between the nursery staff and their parents and carers. The co-operative system of management gives parents a real opportunity to influence the way the nursery is run so that their children's individual needs are well met. Clear information regarding the daily activities children take part in, together with a menu and other useful information is displayed on the notice board in the attractive entrance area. Children's individual achievements are discussed and a brief written record of what children do is given to parents each day. However, parents' responses to the nursery's satisfaction questionnaire indicate that they would like to have formal meetings with key workers, to discuss children's progress and achievements in more detail. This would enable parents and carers to support their children's learning at home more effectively.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the nursery promotes positive outcomes for children. The nursery environment is very attractive, scrupulously clean and well organised. As a result children settle easily, are safe and healthy and they are confident members of the group. All areas of the nursery environment contain displays of children's work, photographs of children and their key workers and useful information for parents. The nursery provides enough space for children to move around safely and imaginatively, both indoors and out. However, the organisation of the session limits children's ability to freely explore activities at their own pace in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Parents' feel that they do not have enough opportunities to exchange information about their children's progress in a formal way. This impacts upon children's learning.

The registered person uses rigorous recruitment procedures, which ensure that the staff are suitable work with children. A comprehensive induction programme, in-house training and regular contact with local authority advisers ensure that all staff continue to develop their knowledge and skills. Staff receive regular updates in areas such as First Aid or Child Protection so that they are secure in their knowledge of procedures for maintaining children's overall safety. The manager of the nursery meets with staff regularly to identify areas for further professional development. All of the legally required documents, including a procedure to record complaints or concerns, which contribute to children's health, safety and well-being, are in place and regularly reviewed.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery agreed to develop a system that ensures that the training needs of the nursery and all staff are met; develop an operational plan, which includes an outings procedure; ensure that a system of risk assessment is in place and fire drills are undertaken on a regular basis.

The nursery have taken positive steps to improve children's safety and to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of current early years practice. The operational plan has been developed and includes a comprehensive procedure for keeping children safe on outings. An effective risk assessment procedure is carried out daily and staff take part in an annual risk assessment to address any hazards. Regular fire drills are carried out and records are maintained of any issues that arise as a result of the exercise to ensure that the premises can be evacuated quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. Regular meetings between members of staff and their line manager identify any areas for personal and professional development. A training plan is in place to ensure that ongoing training needs are well met. The nursery has developed a culture of ongoing improvement and responds positively to recommendations for development.

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 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

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.

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):

- improve the existing system and provide regular formal opportunities for parents to be updated about their children's progress and achievements
- improve the organisation of the session to provide children with more opportunities to make decisions and to explore activities at their own pace both indoors and out, so that they can extend their learning independently and pursue their own interests at all times.

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