

Elms Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	227172
Inspection date	23 January 2008
Inspector	Lisa Jeffries
Setting Address	33 Edgbaston Park Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, West Midlands, B15 2RS
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Registered person	The University of Birmingham
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The nursery was registered in 1993 and is situated in the Edgbaston area of Birmingham. It operates Monday to Friday between 07:55 and 18.20. There are large outdoor areas for recreational play.

The group is registered to care for a maximum of 86 children at any one time and there are currently 81 children on roll; this includes 41 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. 24 staff are employed, all of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

All staff follow highly effective health and hygiene procedures to successfully support children's personal needs. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection and precise cleaning routines and daily rotas ensure that a maximum level of hygiene is maintained at all times. For example, staff consistently wear gloves and aprons during nappy changes and tables are routinely wiped with anti-bacterial spray before use to reduce cross-contamination. Children receive optimum care in the event of an accident or if they become ill and are comforted by caring, committed staff. To support this, staff are trained in paediatric first aid and first aid kits are fully stocked and easily accessible. Robust systems are in place to record any accidents and the administration of medication.

Children have many opportunities to develop their independence which encourages a sense of responsibility. Staff inspire the children's interest through discussion and by providing equipment to encourage their self-help skills. They are actively involved in tasks and complete simple errands such as assisting the staff. Excellent toilet and hand-washing facilities encourage children to move towards independence. Steps are provided and signs remind children to wash their hands. All of the children's routines in relation to eating and sleeping are willingly accommodated and their individual needs are continuously met in-line with parental preferences. Children are proactively learning about aspects of a healthy lifestyle and making healthy choices. For example, dental nurses have visited the setting to talk about the importance of regular tooth brushing and nursing students have led discussions around healthy eating.

Children experience a wide range of healthy, nutritious meals which are supplied by an external caterer and prepared by the house-keeper. These include roast dinners, cottage pie, chicken and vegetable casserole, haddock and lamb bolognese. Alternatively, children can savour vegetarian options such as vegetable hot-pot, quorn fillets, mushroom quiche, cheese and leek pie or pasta and leek bake. Children's understanding of healthy eating is fully consolidated through topics and they enjoy opportunities to try new foods whilst celebrating festivals. In addition, children take pleasure in baking. Older children are encouraged to self-serve, pour drinks and lay the table, with staff close by to supervise and offer support if required. Children voluntarily access drinks throughout the session to ensure they are well-hydrated and all specific dietary requirements are meticulously met.

Children's physical play experiences are unmistakably promoted through an extensive range of activities. They enjoy access to several outdoor play areas where they enhance their skills using a variety of outdoor equipment such as ride-on toys, trampolines, stilts, hoops, nets, quoits and balls. Large play apparatus, including climbing frames and slides encourages children to develop coordination and balance. Children take pleasure in the sensory garden where they feed the birds, explore flowers and plants and follow nature trails. In addition, children hide in the camouflaged den and they watch in excitement as narrow-boats and trains pass the back of the setting. Indoors, children respond enthusiastically to music, movement and drama sessions, circle games and action rhymes. As a result, children benefit from substantial exercise and fresh air and they become skilful in a range of movements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children play and learn in an exceptionally well-organised setting which fully supports their care, learning and play. Rooms are vibrant, appealing and aesthetically pleasing and children have plenty of floor space to initiate and extend their activities. Considerable thought is given to bright, colourful and temporary displays. In addition, an abundance of children's artwork is displayed on the walls, helping to create a stimulating and welcoming learning environment. The manager is highly vigilant in ensuring that the premises are maintained to an excellent state of repair. Children use extremely safe and suitable equipment and confidently self-select from an extensive selection of toys. Resources are stimulating, fun and offer sufficient challenge.

Staff are committed to taking positive steps to minimise risks and prioritise children's safety. Thorough risk assessments are routinely conducted and staff carry out frequent visual assessments of each area. To support this, a comprehensive health and safety policy and systematic cleaning checklists are consistently implemented. Children are considerably well protected from the risk of fire as all staff receive annual training and the emergency evacuation procedure is sensitively rehearsed with the children. Unquestionable priority is given to ensure that the premises and outdoor areas are secure. Access to the provision is fully controlled and attentively monitored. There are highly effective systems for the safe arrival and collection of children.

Children are actively learning to keep themselves safe through topics and through gentle prompts from staff, for example when using scissors, utensils and tools. Simple signs incorporating photographs are displayed around the nursery reminding children and staff to take extra care, for example, on the stairs. As a result, children show an excellent awareness of space, themselves and others. Children enjoy highly organised and safe outings which staff use as a valuable opportunity to discuss road safety. In addition, visits from police officers, doctors and nurses enable children to learn about people who help us. Safety and security information is proactively disseminated to parents through signs and newsletters. The setting is proactive in identifying and reducing all risks to children.

Children's welfare is paramount and they are unreservedly safeguarded from harm. Staff have a strong knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection and are well aware of local procedures. They are immensely knowledgeable about the children in their care and fully intuitive of their needs. Reference guides and relevant contact numbers are kept close to hand and there is a designated member of staff responsible for safeguarding children. Children's records are accurate and kept up-to-date and all staff have received relevant training. This ensures that best practice regarding child protection is consistently followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extraordinarily happy and enjoy their time at the setting. They benefit from the staff's caring attitudes and enthusiasm for providing high quality learning experiences. A key-worker system is used effectively to gain information about children's personal routines, needs and preferences and provides a continuity of care that ensures children feel secure and nurtured. Children enjoy taking on responsibility for tasks within the daily routine which helps to develop their confidence and independence such as during meal times or when it is time to tidy-up.

Staff demonstrate an exceptional understanding and application of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Weekly plans are designed for children at all stages of development and children are sensitively supported to help them access all activities. Babies and younger children play with a wide range of stimulating and imaginative toys and resources and they experience a rich variety of experiences to excite and motivate them. For example, messy play, water play and the use of natural resources such as dough and sand. Children are provided with lots of opportunities to develop language and communication and to interact with others.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff plan a dynamic and balanced educational programme to ensure that children are engaged in an extensive range of interesting activities. Children benefit from a variety of teaching methods such as effective questioning and they make rapid progress towards the early learning goals. A strong emphasis is placed on building children's self-esteem and staff form close relationships with the children, act as good role models and use creative methods to inspire the children in their care.

Effective planning and assessments ensure that children are consistently engrossed in a broad variety of developmentally appropriate activities that cover all areas of learning. Plans distinctly show how activities are adapted to provide sufficient extension for older and/or more able children and additional support for younger and/or less able children. As a result, children's individual learning needs are always consistently met. In addition, staff constantly evaluate activities to ensure that all learning intentions are achieved.

Observations and assessments are used extremely well to measure children's individual progress. Cohesive developmental records are maintained and contain examples of children's work, spontaneous observations, photographs and assessment checklists. Children benefit as staff show a considerable understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and are flexible in their approach. Staff are highly skilled at helping children to consolidate and extend their learning, for example, through sensitive intervention in their play, by responding to their interests and through using encouragement to try new things.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is expertly threaded through the curriculum. Children develop high levels of independence, have positive self-images and take full responsibility for their environment. They form close friendships and develop a sense of community through external visits and visitors to the nursery. Children have excellent opportunities to develop their attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve. They share, take turns and learn to cooperate due to the consistent levels of support they receive from staff. Children are keen to share their understanding and respond well to challenges. They demonstrate good levels of curiosity, imagination and concentration. Staff have high expectations and encourage children to attempt to complete activities independently but also sensitively support children when required.

Children see lots of printed language around the nursery, are starting to recognise and form their own names and sustain attentive listening. They are learning to say the initial sounds in words and are beginning to understand that letters represent some of these sounds. An extensive selection of interesting materials are available for children to practise mark-making help to create reading books. Children are currently learning Spanish and have also learnt popular words and phrases in French. Through a topic about the story of the 'Three Little Pigs', children learn new words to describe characters, encouraging their use of adjectives. Children's

communication, language and literacy skills are fully endorsed through reading, writing and lots of opportunities to share in discussions.

Maths is skilfully incorporated into daily routines. Children also use mathematical language throughout their play as they practise counting and apply problem-solving skills. Staff make good use of activities to extend their skills. For example, children learn about quantity as they use jugs during water play. Children sing number rhymes and use construction toys to promote logical thinking. Through different activities, they look for clues and follow instructions and they confidently use a number line attached to the wall. In addition, children have conducted a traffic survey and are given opportunities to estimate, record and predict. Colourful number displays around the room help children to understand numbers in familiar contexts. As a result, children begin to see connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures.

Children have access to wide range of realistic play materials and props to encourage creative development. The role-play area is frequently transformed into different themes such as a baby clinic, hair salon or animal centre. Children engage in a range of arts and craft activities and explore colour, shape, texture, form and space. In addition, they work creatively on a large scale and use a variety of interesting materials for junk modelling. Through small world play, children introduce storylines and narrative and they link their play to personal experiences. Music and movement sessions are extremely popular and children dance enthusiastically to music and enjoy experimenting with musical instruments. Consequently, children's creative development is very well supported.

A wide range of activities are provided to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children have lots of opportunities to investigate aspects of the living world such as exploring natural materials, observing seasonal changes and using technology. They enjoy a variety of activities that enable them to grasp early concepts of science, including cooking and growing plants. Staff are skilled at making use of impromptu opportunities to extend children's learning, for example, when talking about the weather. Children enjoy investigating objects and materials, using all of their senses and asking questions about why things happen and how things work. For instance, children develop an effective awareness of change as they explore and observe ice and water and make simple predictions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are unquestionably valued as individuals and demonstrate an extraordinary sense of belonging. They behave exceptionally well and benefit from the staff's consistent and clear approach to managing behaviour. Children consider others and know what is expected of them. Older children are familiar with rules and all children enjoy the security of well-established routines. Staff manage behaviour sensitively, taking into account individual children's levels of understanding and maturity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

An extensive range of resources and activities promote positive images of diversity. Through discussions, observations and celebration of festivals, children develop a comprehensive awareness of the wider world and the diversity of adults and children. In addition, the setting actively supports charities through fundraising events, encouraging children to acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others. Staff demonstrate a highly positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and are unmistakably dedicated to providing an all-inclusive environment.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive extremely high quality information about the setting at registration and considerable information relating to the Foundation Stage. Parents have excellent opportunities to share in their child's progress through displays, newsletters and formal meetings. There is a constant flow of informal information at arrival and collection times to ensure that contact between home and nursery is successfully sustained. Comments from parents demonstrate that they feel significantly involved in their child's development and highly regard the optimum continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is well-supported because staff are qualified and experienced, and prioritise the well-being of all children. Although the manager is closely and successfully supported by her deputy, she is not yet suitably qualified. However, this will be promptly rectified as the manager is due to complete and achieve a level three qualification. The key-worker system is effective and the organisation and deployment of staff means that children are supported well and form close bonds with the adults who care for them. Efficient employment and staff checking procedures ensure that children are fully protected. Children are happy, safe and comfortable, and benefit from the secure and child-focussed environment.

All staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the setting demonstrates a clear commitment to ongoing professional development. This further enhances the quality of care and education offered. Regular staff meetings ensure that staff offer consistent practice and share a common goal. The good level of clear documentation, policies and records ensure children's health, safety and well-being are always carefully considered. The attendance of children and staff is effectively monitored. High staffing levels are maintained and this enables children to gain close attention.

Leadership and management is good. Although the manager does not hold a qualification suitable to the post, she is forward thinking and highly motivated and is currently working towards this criterion. The manager is committed to ongoing improvement and is confident in her vision for the service she provides. Staff work as an effective team and are good role models. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and appropriate action is consistently taken to improve and develop. The manager works successfully with all staff to promote good practice and team meetings are used as the basis for future plans and reflective practice. Staff working with the pre-school children have strong knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the expertise to inspire children to learn. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to ensure that departure times are included in the visitor's book. This record now holds all relevant information, including departure times and ensures that staff are fully aware of who is on the premises at all times.

In addition, the provider was asked to update the risk assessment to identify actions to be taken to minimise risks. Thorough risk assessments clearly show what action needs to be taken to eliminate or minimise the risk or hazard. Staff take positive steps to promote safety within the setting.

Finally, the provider was asked to ensure all accident records are signed by parents. Accident record sheets are completed in detail and are consistently acknowledged by parents. The setting

demonstrates a commitment to adhering to their agreed procedures and acting in children's best interests.

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 the parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

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 that the manager holds a level three qualification appropriate for the care of development of children. (This also relates to care.)

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