

Bluebird Kindergarten & Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	322378
Inspection date	01 November 2007
Inspector	Margot D'Arcy
Setting Address	Elm Hall Drive, Liverpool, Merseyside, L18 1LF
Telephone number	0151 728 8627
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Registered person	Sheila Carmichael and Joanne Carmichael
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Bluebird Kindergarten and Nursery is situated in Allerton, a residential suburb of Liverpool. The provision has been operating for almost 40 years. It is privately owned and managed and was registered in September 1996. Children are accommodated in three rooms within Elm Hall Methodist Church premises. Children also have access to the large church hall at agreed times. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.00 to 16.00 during school term time and at half terms.

A maximum of 60 children may attend at any one time. Currently there are 59 children on roll aged between two and four years. Of these, 41 receive funding for nursery education. Attendance varies significantly between children, with some attending full time and others for a variety of half-day sessions in line with parents' preferences. Relatively few children have special educational needs and a very small minority speaks English as an additional language.

The provision employs 13 staff, six of who hold appropriate early years qualifications. Ancillary staff are employed to prepare children's lunches and clean the premises. Bluebird Kindergarten

and Nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association. It networks with and is supported by Liverpool Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The premises are clean and good steps are taken to ensure hygienic routines. These include using anti-bacterial spray to clean equipment and staff wearing plastic gloves to distribute food. Children learn the need to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating food at lunchtime, but are not required to wash their hands before snack. There are good systems for hygienic storage and preparation of food. Healthy eating is promoted, for example, when children learn to make vegetable soup. Lunch menus and snacks include a good range of healthy foods, such as raw and cooked fruit and vegetables, wholemeal bread and fresh water, but less healthy, sugary, foods are also provided at these times. Individual children's dietary requirements or food allergies are recorded and taken account of.

There are clear systems to look after children who are unwell and exclude any suffering from infectious diseases. Policy and record keeping procedures for logging accidents, administering medicines and first aid are rigorous.

Good opportunities are provided for the children to take part in physical exercise. The large hall is used regularly for keep fit and dance sessions. Here, children run, march and skip around happily to music. In doing so they develop control of their movements and become aware of some of the effects that exercise has on their bodies. Whilst there is no outdoor provision, one of the classrooms is large enough to house a climbing frame and safely allow children to ride and manoeuvre wheeled toys. A good range of activities is provided to develop children's dexterity in handling small tools and equipment, such as scissors, writing implements and puzzles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The registered person does not comply with the National Standard for child protection in relation to ensuring that all staff have undergone the required police checks. This puts children's safety at risk and is a breach of regulations.

The premises are appropriately maintained. Good precautions are taken to ensure that the premises and equipment are safe. Risk assessments are comprehensive and regular, for instance a daily assessment is made in relation to the suitability of toys than may have been damaged. Children are reminded of the need to observe simple rules and routines to maintain safety, for example not running in classrooms, holding the stair rail, and tidying away resources at the end of sessions. In appropriate ways, children are helped to understand how good behaviour towards each other and appropriate use of toys and equipment helps them to keep safe.

There are effective security systems for entering the building and logging visitors and callers. The procedures for registration and the collection of children are rigorous, as is the system for escorting children on outings, including obtaining parental consent for this. Staffing ratios are good and are frequently increased when children are taken on outings. Documentation and practice to support health and safety, such as emergency evacuation, checks on equipment,

and fire drills, are comprehensive. Staff are aware of how they should respond to child protection issues and there is a clear system to deal with any allegations or suspected abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children arrive happily and show enthusiasm and confidence in choosing where to work from the good range of activities that have been prepared for them. They are greeted warmly by the staff who chat and play with them. This helps the children feel secure and increases their readiness for learning. The children greet friends as they arrive and they eagerly begin to play together, for example having a telephone conversation in the home corner or sorting through a selection of autumn leaves. The staff give children lots of praise and encouragement, which promotes their self-esteem and helps them to see themselves as successful learners. Children's enjoyment and good achievement is underpinned by thoughtful planning of activities that require them to be actively involved in learning, using all their senses to explore and discover. The children also enjoy and respond well to established routines, stopping work immediately and raising their hands in the air as the bell is rung for tidy up time. At registration, children's good manners and mathematical development are promoted well as they call out 'Good Morning' to their teacher and remember the order of children on the register and the day of the week. There is a good balance of child initiated and adult led activities. Resources are good overall, but whilst books are ample and in good condition they do not reflect cultural diversity sufficiently well. This is also true of other resources, such as role-play clothes and equipment. This issue pertains to all aspects of the provision and places some limitations on children's cultural development.

Staff who work with the youngest children have good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This ensures that appropriate activities are planned for the children and that staff know exactly what to look for to measure their progress and achievements.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn and make effective use of curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage to plan work and assess children's progress. Individual records are maintained, and each child has a 'scrap book', organised into the six areas of learning, that contains work or other evidence, such as photographs, of their achievements. Children with special educational needs are well supported by staff and the good links that exist with specialist agencies. These partnerships ensure that children's needs are met through additional support and through activities that have been thoughtfully developed or adapted to enable the children to make progress.

Children's behaviour is good and stems from the clear expectations set by the staff. They learn to share and take turns, and pick up well on the role model set by staff, for example, by commenting positively about each other's work. Children show interest in books and staff have ensured that they have a good understanding of how these work and that print conveys meaning. Children often choose to work at the writing tables, experimenting with the coloured pens and crayons to produce drawings, patterns, letter shapes and words, such as their names. Staff give good support on how to hold pencils and form letters.

Children's mathematical development is promoted well in structured activities, such as sorting leaves, counting games and puzzles, and tasks based on shape and pattern. Staff also capitalise

on incidental opportunities and frequent singing of various action songs help children understand ideas about addition and subtraction and counting forwards and backwards.

The children gain a good understanding of the world as they investigate natural materials, such as conkers, leaves and twigs and use magnifiers to look closely at these and describe what they see. Outings and visitors help them to learn about jobs and services in the community, such as the lollipop person. Staff provide many opportunities for children to be creative. Children love making different sounds with the instruments and marvel at the prints they produce from leaves and cross sections of fruit. Drama activities and role play opportunities, such as enacting a birthday party or time at the hairdressers, promote children's imaginations. Staff throw themselves into playing alongside children, modelling language and appropriate behaviour, and this really enhances children's enjoyment and learning. Children's physical development is promoted well in specific 'keep fit' and dance activities, where staff model quality movements. A good level of adult support and encouragement for children in a wide variety of art and other table-top tasks also promotes their physical development, helping them become more skilled in manipulating small tools and materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff model anti-discriminatory practice and displays include some positive images to promote the idea of equality of opportunity, for example of disabled children enjoying and achieving in life and school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Visits into the locality help the children learn about their place in the community and develop a simple awareness of how society works. Children's performances for old age pensioners at Christmas and their donations of food for harvest hampers helps them to understand how they can give something back to the community.

Children with special educational needs are welcomed and supported well, setting a good inclusion example for all the children. The high expectations of children's behaviour are underpinned by simple rules that they can understand. This ensures that children know the difference between right and wrong and begin to understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in different situations. At lunchtime and snack time, for example, good manners and social chat are promoted and children are taught how to use cutlery correctly. A thanksgiving prayer is said before lunch and, at the start of the day, songs are sung to give praise and thanks for good things in the world, such as flowers and creatures. Displays include some positive gender images and of individuals from minority groups in key positions in society, but overall resources do not promote cultural diversity well enough.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good. Regular liaison and the sharing of individual records ensures parents are kept well informed of their children's progress.

Initiatives, such as the lending library for two year-olds and the reading packs that go home with the older children involve parents in the learning process and enable parents to support their children's literacy development. Parents are also given comprehensive information about the curriculum and the provision's policies and procedures.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The registered person has not complied with the requirement to make sure that all staff are suitable to work with children. This is a breach of regulations and presents a risk to children's

safety. Consequently, the provision does not meet the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Staff are well qualified and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They understand the provision's policies and procedures and implement these appropriately. Staff are encouraged to attend training to improve their skills and enhance the provision. Staff deployment takes good account of the numbers and age range of children present and good routines exist to plan and support children's learning. Most of the required documentation is in place. The certificate of registration is displayed for parents along with a copy of the registered person's public liability insurance and other key documents to keep parents informed.

A record of children's attendance is maintained. There is also comprehensive information recorded about individuals, such as emergency contact numbers, immunisations and diet.

The quality of leadership and management of nursery education is good. Planning to promote children's learning and development is thorough and takes good account for national guidance. The work of children and staff is monitored and good action is taken to improve things; for example, introducing prompt cards to support staff's promotion and assessment of children's learning, and simple homework tasks that involve parents in their children's education. Good liaison with the provision's special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that all children are given equal opportunities to progress as well as they can.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to prepare a written procedure for escorting children safely on outings and review registration procedures for children and staff. Both of these recommendations have been addressed. There are now clear procedures for escorting children on outings and the registration procedures for both children and staff are rigorous. The action taken has improved these elements of how the provision supports children's safety

At the last education inspection the provider agreed to improve opportunities for older and more able children to develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The provision has acquired a laptop computer and a range of appropriate software. It was not possible to see children using this equipment as it had developed a fault and was being repaired.

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure the appropriate checks and documentation are in place to show that all staff have been checked to determine whether they are suitable to work with children and that where this documentation is not in place the staff in question do not have unsupervised access to children

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- increase resources to reflect cultural diversity so that children learn to understand, value and tolerate peoples differences (also applies 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