

Seabrook Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	105266
Inspection date	29 October 2007
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Registered person	Child Base Limited
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

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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?

Seabrook Day Nursery opened in 2000. It is one of over 30 nurseries in the Childbase Nursery chain, which operates in London, the Home Counties and the Midlands. The nursery operates from a two-storey purpose-built building adjacent to the Luton and Dunstable Hospital. The nursery is divided into four separate areas according to the age of the children. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 18.30 all year round except for closures on Bank Holidays. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 94 children. There are currently 135 children from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and come from a wide catchment area. The nursery makes provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 29 staff employed to work with the children, of whom 23 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager and two deputies are supernumery. The setting receives support

from the local authority and advisors from the company management team. The nursery has achieved the 'Quality Counts' quality assurance award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Exemplary practical hygiene practice is underpinned by extensive and professional documentation which is consistently implemented by staff. For example, all staff ensure that they wear protective clothing and gloves when changing nappies or supporting children with toileting needs. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. They know for example, that it is important to wash their hands prior to eating and after using the toilet. They access tissues independently to wipe their noses and discard used tissues appropriately. The staff sterilise resources, cleanse changing mats and tables with antibacterial spray after each use and clean toilets periodically throughout the day. Staff provide excellent role models to the children on hygiene practice. They make good use of antibacterial hand gel. Children have separate rest areas, with individualised bedding which prevents the spread of infection. These measures actively support extremely high levels of cleanliness within the nursery environment.

Children are extremely well cared for if they have an accident or become ill. All staff attend first-aid training and the first-aid boxes are conscientiously checked and re-stocked. Meticulously kept accident and incident records are complemented by sickness log sheets. All records are monitored rigorously as part of the risk assessment process. Policies and procedures are constantly subject to review and amendment to reflect the continually developing practice at the nursery. For example, records relating to continuing observation of children who develop ailments during the nursery day, now include body temperature monitoring. All policies are shared with parents and carers and include a statement entitled 'Definition of a well child'.

Children learn effectively about healthy living and lifestyles because the nursery undertakes regular health promotion projects, integrating these within the daily routine and expectations of the nursery. For example, children actively participate in regular structured physical exercise and topics include dental health. Children thrive as they enjoy an extensive range of physical activities and have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. Children have free-flow outdoor play in warmer weather. All babies get out into the fresh air regularly, enjoying walks in their buggies around the residential streets, down to the local park or around the hospital grounds. The outdoor area is in constant use throughout the day and has been developed to provide a delightful and stimulating outdoor learning environment for children. The garden reflects all areas of learning and includes a sensory area where herb plants have been planted in colourful wellington boots arranged on the trellis frame. Children become totally absorbed in a vast range of versatile learning opportunities which cover all areas of the curriculum. Children can choose whether to play indoors or out and enjoy varied and challenging activities, which enable them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. They climb, jump and balance on a versatile range of equipment. Children delight in music and movement sessions where they sing, dance and stretch to taped music. Their finer manipulative skills and control are actively encouraged through a vast range of interesting craft activities.

Children receive nutritious, balanced meals and snacks appropriate to their individual dietary needs. Staff promote positive messages about healthy food. For example, children talk with staff about the vitamin content of kiwi and raisins at snack time and discuss that vitamins are

good for the skin. Displays show children's drawings of fruit and vegetables with labelling which identifies which foods different children say they enjoy eating. All food is prepared on the premises from good quality, wholesome ingredients in accordance with the guidelines set by the company dietician. Children use age-appropriate cutlery at mealtimes and learn valuable social skills as they sit and eat at tables covered with tablecloths and a decorative floral centrepiece. Children have independent access to water throughout the day, according to their age and stage of development. For example, older children use a water cooler dispenser and toddlers have labelled water bottles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

This exceptionally well-run and effectively monitored nursery gives high priority to the safety and welfare of children and staff. Staff help keep children safe in the nursery and on outings because they fully understand and comply with health and safety requirements. Security systems are extremely robust and focused risk assessments ensure a very safe environment. The nursery is accessed through a secure door and every unknown adult is required to identify themselves and to produce an identity document before being admitted to the premises. Parents are reminded not to open the door to anyone. Staff rigorously record all visitors to the setting. All the usual safety measures are in place, such as door guards to prevent trapped fingers. Staff know what to do in the event of an emergency and practise their evacuation plan with robust frequency to ensure the safety of the children. Thorough daily risk assessments are in place and specific written assessments are prepared for certain activities such as going for a walk to the park.

Soft music plays in the background in the entrance hall and creates a most pleasant ambiance. For example, Indian music is played to acknowledge that some families using the nursery may be celebrating Diwali. Children use an extensive range of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate resources which are well organised in child-height furniture to encourage independent access. The staff put up posters and pictures to make the rooms attractive for children and set out the equipment enticingly before the children arrive. Rooms are usually prepared in the evening in readiness for the next day. This ensures that staff are always ready to welcome and speak to parents and carers as their children settle to play. Innovative use of materials and bright displays of children's work enhance the environment and reinforce and consolidate topical learning in an age-appropriate manner. Interactive labelling of displays ensures that print is given good prominence in the environment and provides effective support for children's emergent reading skills. Displays are linked appropriately to 'Birth to three matters' or the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance for parent's information and staff reference.

Staff skilfully explain safe practices, such as the need to hold onto the handrail when descending the steps to the garden, so that children do not fall or hurt themselves. This helps children to learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Levels of vigilance and supervision are exceptional. Before outside play, the staff fully prepare the garden for the children and complete their risk assessment. This supports the frequent use of the garden and ensures that children can move from one activity to another without having to wait. Although the children are highly supervised the nursery staff are not over-protective, taking care not to take away children's sense of achievement and spirit of adventure whilst ensuring their safety.

Children's welfare is robustly safeguarded because they are protected by trained, informed adults who understand current child protection policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All staff attend child protection training. The child

protection coordinator ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities. Strong recruitment and induction procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience, training and vetting checks. Children remain the primary focus of care in this well-organised and managed setting and comprehensive recording of pre-existing injuries, protect the children and staff. Open relationships between home and nursery ensure that children's needs remain the single important factor.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy and make sustained progress in learning, leisure and personal development because the staff are confident, enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their childcare practice. Children of all ages thoroughly enjoy their time at nursery and have lots of fun. Staff confidently implement the 'Birth to three matters' guidance and actively use this framework as the basis for their planning and assessment for children under three-years-old. Young children extend their experiences through sensory play which progresses throughout the nursery in line with children's developmental stages. For example, staff in the Caterpillar room are able to talk confidently about the educational basis behind providing a black and white sensory area in the room. Children in the Ladybird room enjoy heuristic play and children in the Bumblebees Room use discovery bags. Keyworkers organise extensive interviews with parents and carers and the information gained forms the basis of competent baseline assessments when children enter the nursery and this information provides staff with a clear starting point upon which meaningful assessment can be based. Children make excellent progress in the development of their language skills because of the positive interaction and staff engagement in conversations and play.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The pre-school room is an exceptionally well-organised, child-centred educational environment where the emphasis is placed upon learning through play and exploration. Staff have an expert knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, rooted in long-standing experience and a genuine commitment to on-going training. They have a highly competent knowledge of how young children learn. Staff take every opportunity to affirm children's achievements, consolidate existing knowledge and then lead children onto the next stage. They consistently deliver a diverse range of inspirational practical age-appropriate activities. This motivates children's interest and desire to learn. For example, home corner play in the Ladybirds room, develops into household themes such as garage, kitchen and bathroom imaginative play scenarios. In the Butterflies room for older children, role play in the shop, office or doctors. Children are strongly encouraged to develop their personal independence and use their imagination throughout all the activities offered. An extensive range of equipment is available, both inside and outside, that efficiently supports all areas of learning in this friendly learning environment of exceptional quality.

Highly effective planning, observation and assessment for older children builds on the Foundation Stage curriculum and interlinks positively with children's progression and achievement. When planning, staff are skilled at including activities and interests initiated by the children. The planning cycle is completed through the competent use of observation, assessment and evaluation, effectively tracking children's progress against the stepping-stones. Levels of attainment are superb. Staff make excellent use of individual profiles to plot the next stages in children's learning. Highly innovative teaching, rigorous assessment systems are well planned and executed activities ensures children make rapid progress through the stepping stones, given their age, ability and starting points.

Staff understand how children learn and are extremely perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play. They use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and language skills. This is a language rich environment in which the children are developing good skills for speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy. Frequent open-ended questions are asked to encourage the children to think about what they are doing and why they are doing it. Children receive an excellent grounding in the many aspects of phonics, language and communication through an enjoyable games scheme which utilises the ideas presented in 'Letters and Sounds'. Notable priority is given to the promotion of children's mathematical skills within the daily routine and staff use many delightfully unusual resources to support children's learning about numbers. For example, a hand mitt to illustrate the rhyme 'Five little men in a flying saucer' has faces representing different cultures on the fingers.

Children have many opportunities to learn about the natural world and their environment using exploratory skills, direct observation and investigation. They construct using a wide variety of objects, materials and tools. Their digging area of the garden provides a wide range of opportunities for investigation and observation, together with the sensory garden and flower garden. Children learn to care for living creatures and help to feed their rabbit called Maisie and their guinea pig called Bob. 'Barnaby Bear' goes on special treats and holidays with the children and travels the world, providing a highly useful focus for discussion to support children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The computer is effectively used to support children's learning in all areas. Children learn about cultures and beliefs through topics and festivals.

A wide variety of opportunities, both inside and outside, enable the children to move, climb and balance. They have an excellent awareness of space. A wide selection of small and large equipment is freely available both inside and outside, giving the children the opportunity to develop their skills with balls, bikes, scissors and pencils. During a fast-paced and highly active physical exercise session, children move like fast and slow animals and have lots of fun, before moving onto the skills section of the lesson, where they practise throwing bean bags 'overarm'. Children learn the importance of 'warming up' and 'cooling down' to care for their muscles.

Children's work is valued by staff for the learning process and is not governed by the end product. Children enjoy daily music-based activities and are familiar with a wide range of songs and rhymes. Good use is made of percussion instruments. Children effectively use their imaginations and express their ideas through art, dance and stories. Creative work effectively reinforces learning in other areas

A flexible approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child-led learning allows children to learn at their own pace. They plan first-hand experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. Staff attend 'Standardisation meetings' to ensure that all staff are implementing the National Standards in a consistent manner and to share good practice which the owner believes is key to continuous improvement in childcare.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children become highly motivated, independent learners who develop an exemplary awareness of others and this helps them to join in, take responsibility and play a truly productive part in the setting. Highly effective planning of experiences and activities helps children to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Children enjoy taking part in activities that develop their understanding of their own and other cultures, including a wide range of visitors to the nursery

and trips out into the local community. Staff make sure that children are provided with a wide range of anti-discriminatory and anti-bias play materials and resources which promote a growing awareness of others. Each room has an equal opportunities folder where they collect evidence of activities and displays. Celebration boxes contain a range of equipment and information for staff to talk about with the children. For example, if children show interest in a new baby or in Chinese New Year, staff are able to respond promptly, using the items in the box. Children learn about different lifestyles, disabilities and cultural practices which means that children's awareness of the wider world is actively promoted in an age-appropriate manner and this enables them to develop a positive attitude to others. Careful planning ensures that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are integrated fully into nursery life. Staff work well with professionals and parents to make sure that all families are fully welcomed into the nursery. Children who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate intervention and referrals to suitable professionals outside the provision.

All rooms have codes of conduct for staff and children to understand and follow in line with the nursery behaviour management policy. Staff provide excellent role models for children by being calm and polite. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and praise children freely, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Therefore, children are well-behaved in response to the consistent expectations of caring staff. Behaviour within the setting is consistently of a high standard as children of all ages have a mature understanding of right and wrong. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents are highly complimentary about the level of service provided. The first visit to the nursery is the starting point of the staff and family working together to share information about cultures, home languages, interests and specific needs. Staff give a generous amount of time to new enquirers and ensure that parents and carers have ample opportunity to become familiar with the setting. Parents clearly value the service and take the time and trouble to come into nursery to speak to the inspector. Some parents who are unable to visit the nursery on the day of inspection, are so keen to voice their support of the nursery that they phone in to speak directly to the inspector. There are lots of positive comments and the staff are highly praised. Parents and carers pay compliments regarding their support and encouragement through the trials and tribulations of parenthood, particularly commenting upon diligent working in partnership to resolve issues such as biting. Parents state that they value the openness and honesty of staff. This supports the appropriate sharing of information in sensitive situations. Wipe boards are completed outside each age group room for parents to see at a glance the activities that are being carried out that week. These boards also shows the links to the appropriate curriculum. The staff take photos of the activities going on during the day and load onto digital photo frames for parents and senior staff to view at any time. Any complaints are dealt with in a highly appropriate manner and parents and carers have their own representative who can liaise with management on relevant matters.

Parents and carers are given communication books and there is a wealth of information which is easily accessible which includes general care and educational literature. For example, information leaflets on a range of general childcare matters including meningitis and head lice, are available in the entrance hall for parents to help themselves. Regular newsletters contribute towards the strong partnership with home. Parents are warmly welcomed into the provision and are well-supported by staff during the settling-in process. For example, parents are encouraged to 'stay and play' and there are specific 'stay and play' sessions for grandparents and for fathers. Staff encourage parents to actively contribute towards individual assessment records. Therefore, children benefit from a two-way sharing of information between parents

and staff to enhance their learning. This underpins their progress in the nursery and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care, learning and welfare is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation and a commitment to continued reflective learning and improvement in this award-winning nursery. All required documentation is in place and readily accessible. Registration systems are suitably robust and well-thought out procedures ensure the efficient and safe management of the nursery. Regularly reviewed and amended, comprehensive policies and procedures underpin excellent professional practice. The loyal and hard-working staff team are well-qualified and dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education. They demonstrate a genuine commitment to on-going training to continually update their skills, knowledge and ability to meet the children's needs effectively. Staff follow children to the activities which engage their interest and provide consistently and effective support to draw the learning from play. This promotes highly positive outcomes for children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The staff team are well-supported by the actively-involved senior management team who oversee the daily operation of the nursery. A staff identification board sets out the achievements of all staff which demonstrates that they are highly valued by the nursery management team. The staff team are fully committed to ensuring that all children receive the highest quality of care and education. Through constant reflection, all staff constantly review and monitor their practice, utilising regular supervision meetings, personal development plans and annual appraisals. For example, all of the staff team contribute to the self-evaluation form, looking at one outcome for children at each staff meeting. Management set an overall target and encourage the room staff to think through how each outcome is met in their particular age group. This motivates staff and contributes to the dynamic ethos of the whole team. The manager shares her expert practice with the staff who all work together to ensure that teaching methods take full account of the children's individual needs and the diverse ways in which children learn. The high-quality training programme is carefully planned to meet the individual and collective needs of staff. This ensures that staff are able to deliver a highly successfully early education programme for all children.

The nursery manager has a clear vision for the continued development of the nursery and ensures that everyone involved has clearly designated roles and responsibilities. Staff are able to give their time and energy to the children who enjoy their time at this friendly and welcoming provision. The staff have ownership of their planning and assessment systems, which are manageable and achievable and thereby secure and progress children's learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of day care, the provider was asked to ensure the correct telephone number of the regulator's complaints line is available to parents. The nursery displays a clear complaints procedure on the parents information board, together with the Ofsted poster which publicises the contact telephone number.

At the last inspection of nursery education, there were no significant weaknesses to report and the nursery was asked to give consideration to developing practice in order to maintain high standards of education. A new manager has been in post for two years. This has provided a period of stability for the staff, enabling consolidation and the extension of good practice identified at this inspection, through stringent monitoring and highly effective self-evaluation. The setting continues to develop this reflective practice which has set extremely high standards of care and education for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

In July 2005, concerns were raised about ratios, qualifications and high turn over of staff, the number and frequency of accidents and nappy changing procedures. These concerns relate to National Standard 1: Suitable Person; National Standard 2: Organisation; National Standard 6: Safety; National Standard 7: Health and Hygiene; and National Standard 14: Documentation. Ofsted made an unannounced visit on 05/08/2005 and as a result set three actions. These were under standard 2, to make sure that staff sign themselves in and out of the building every time they leave and enter; standard 7, to make sure that all records contain sufficient detail, particularly recording the names of any witnesses to accidents; and under standard 12, to make sure that written records are kept from any meetings with parents, which are signed by everyone who was present. A satisfactory response was received and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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