

City Nursery Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 226965 |
| Inspection date | 05 December 2007 |
| Inspector | Caroline Wright |
| Setting Address | 18 Northampton Square, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE1 1PA |
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| Registered person | City Nursery Ltd |
| 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?

City Day Nursery is run by a private company. It opened in 1980 and operates from a large four storey building in the city centre, close to the railway station in Leicester city centre. A maximum of 160 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:45 to 18:00 all year round. The nursery also offers places to three to 14 year-olds on Saturdays and during the school holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area on the roof.

There are currently 85 children aged from birth to under eight-years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and or disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 18 members of staff to work with the children: 13 of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications; one members of staff is working towards a relevant qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children effectively learn about personal hygiene through regular routines such as washing their hands before eating or after using the toilet. They brush their teeth after meals and make posters to put in the bathroom to help them to remember the importance of good personal hygiene. As a result, they know that they need to wash their hands after painting, 'because it's dirty and the paint makes you poorly.' Staff act as suitable role models, wiping down surfaces before serving food and after children have eaten to help children to stay healthy. They wear aprons and hats when serving meals and snacks to reduce the risk of food becoming contaminated.

Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences. They run around and exert themselves outdoors on the roof in all kinds of weather and they learn the importance of regular fresh air and exercise. They develop good physical co-ordination and learn new skills such as riding bicycles, they enjoy pushing each other in the car or running races with their key-workers in the indoor 'gross-motor' area. In addition, children benefit from regular physical activities with 'Rhythm on the Road', they engage in activities to music and learn about how their bodies work. This helps them to develop good muscle control, feel relaxed and develop a sense of general wellbeing.

If the children become unwell or have an accident whilst they are in the care of nursery, up to date records are in place to make sure that appropriate care is given. Staff follow procedures effectively to make sure that parents are well informed about accidents or any medication that their children receives whilst they are in the nursery. Staff are qualified in paediatric first aid so that they know what to do in the event of an accident. However, although rotas are in place for day to day cleaning duties in the nursery rooms, the monitoring system is not effective in ensuring the quality of the cleaning or for making sure that all staff follow the nursery's procedures for changing babies' nappies. As a result, some areas of the nursery are not clean enough and children's ongoing good health is potentially compromised.

Children learn about healthy eating through direct experiences, such as painting pictures of their favourite foods or making sandwiches for their tea. Their nutritional needs are very well met by the dedicated cook who liaises very well with their key-workers to make sure that children's daily meals, special diets and allergies are well catered for. Children thoroughly enjoy their meals, which are well balanced and varied. In addition, an effective system has been established to ensure babies' dietary needs are well met. Staff label bottle feeds each day to make sure that babies are not given the wrong feed by mistake, they sleep and feed according to their own routines so that they are relaxed and happy. Staff make good eye-contact and cuddle babies when they give them a bottle feed to ensure that they feel secure; they give plenty of support to those babies who are beginning to feed themselves from a spoon and develop new skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move around safely under the constant supervision of the nursery staff. They learn how to keep themselves safe, with young children waiting for their turn to come down the slide so that they do not bump into each other. High locks prevent children from accessing areas

that are not safe, such as the main entrance area, without adult supervision; doors in the basement area, which older children who use the holiday play scheme can reach, have alarms to alert staff when they are opened. This ensures that children are unable to leave the premises unescorted by an adult. In addition, children learn about staying safe outside the setting, holding hands if they go for a walk in the nearby locality with their key workers. They know that they need to cross the road using the crossing and staff take advantage of the play 'road' on the roof play area to re-enforce children's understanding of road safety in play situations. Visits by Police Officers help children to understand about 'Stranger Danger' so that children learn about keeping themselves outside of the nursery.

Children use interesting resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, and these are checked regularly by the nursery staff to ensure they are in good condition and are safe. A soft surface on the roof-top play area, secure fencing and sun shades to protect them from the sun's rays, help to keep children safe when they play outdoors.

An effective risk assessment of the premises is carried out before children arrive each day and addresses any potential hazard to children's safety. For example, adults cover large concrete pillars with padding to protect young children if they should fall; they make sure stair gates are closed and electrical sockets are covered in all areas where necessary. A record of visitors to the premises is maintained and visitors are escorted whilst they are on the premises to maintain children's safety and welfare. However, the system for recording staff and children's attendance on a daily basis is not monitored to make sure it is used effectively. For example, children are not always recorded as present as soon as they arrive and staff do not always sign as present on the day. This has the potential to impact upon children's safety.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a sound understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All staff receive child protection training during their induction at the nursery so that they are able to act in children's best interests. Staff maintain a record of any concerns for children's welfare and are confident to refer their concerns to the appropriate outside agencies. Staff work effectively with other agencies to support vulnerable children and their families to promote children's ongoing safety and welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and form good relationships with each other and with adults. They are confident and motivated by the range of activities provided. A range of interesting resources and equipment is prepared before children arrive to help them to make good progress in all areas of development.

Children explore the play based activities that staff plan, using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help them. For example, children play in the role play area, learning essential self-help skills for the future when they put on dressing up clothes, and telling their own stories. Children actively learn about capacity when they fill vessels with water, noticing how the water drains out through the holes in the watering can. Adults are on hand to facilitate this exploration and encourage children to use a range of descriptive language to discuss what they have learned. They talk with babies to help them to become confident communicators. For example, they take turns in early 'conversations' and use their voices to encourage babies to respond by practicing new 'words' and sounds. Babies explore natural materials such as jelly or oats so that they learn about texture and develop their senses as they play. They are able to pull themselves

to standing using the sturdy furniture and look at themselves in mirrors so that they learn about the world around them and develop new physical skills.

Staff working with children under three-years-old observe children and monitor their progress. However, assessment records are not consistently maintained and key workers' assessments of children's achievements are not linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Key workers do not use their observations of what children can do and enjoy to plan future activities. As a result, some activities offer inappropriate challenge for younger children and babies and children's creativity is compromised. For example, staff use templates for children to paint Christmas snowmen and provide babies with brushes or glue sticks when they are not ready to use tools. This affects babies enjoyment and their interest in these activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children use their imagination in a range of situations such as 'Santa's Grotto' or playing with the small world cars and track. They explore their creativity in art and craft, cutting and sticking or painting at the easel. Children use number names in their play and count groups of items reliably at snack time. They communicate effectively and use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas and talk about what they know. They talk to adults about their thoughts and anticipate what might happen next; 'I'm tidying up the toys and then I'm going outside.' Children discuss what they do at home and talk about their families with understanding. They learn about the natural world, monitoring the seasons through topics, such as growing sunflowers and through their observations of the weather at circle time each day. Visits to the space centre and journeys by bus to local places of interest develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world in which they live.

Children look at books alone and with adults; they turn pages from front to back carefully and listen with interest to stories. They enjoy music and movement and sing their favourite songs to each other, clapping their hands to the rhythm which helps them to develop their understanding of sounds and pattern making. However, children do not always have access to enough resources to enable them to read and write for a purpose or to use numbers and calculations in daily routines and play situations.

Some written plans for activities lack detail. Although the plans are linked to the stepping stones, learning intentions are not clear and planning is not informed by key workers' observations of what children already know and enjoy. As a result, some activities lack challenge for older and more able children; opportunities to extend children's learning through daily routines and play based activities are missed. Staff miss opportunities to use questions and discussion to enable children to demonstrate what they know. This impacts upon children's learning. Nonetheless, staff working with funded children have a sound knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage 'areas of learning'. They have a clear understanding of how the activities they provide contribute to children's progress towards the early learning goals. Key-workers regularly observe children playing so that they can record their achievements and plan the next steps in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet key-workers and each other upon arrival at the nursery each morning. They eagerly hang up their coats and join in with activities

that are on offer. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Older children share experiences at circle time discussions and adults encourage children to respect each other's needs and to use conventions such as 'please' and 'thank-you'. They work together co-operatively during group activities and learn to care for their environment through activities such as helping to tidy up before they go outside to play. They discuss how they should 'be gentle with pussy-cats' because 'that's very kind'. Adults help children to learn what is expected of them by clearly explaining to children what they want them to do in a way that they can understand. Children learn about the world they live in, they look at books and take part in a wide range of cultural and religious celebrations to help them develop positive attitudes towards diversity. They talk about their families and what they do at home to learn about each other's family culture.

The nursery has a good system in place to support children with learning difficulties or disability and are currently exploring ways to further develop the way they help children who speak English as an additional language use their 'home language' to build on what they already know. As a result, children communicate with confidence and they are eager to take part in the full range of activities provided.

However, although older children choose what activities they want to take part in and move around the indoor environment freely, children under two years-old are not able to access additional resources easily to initiate activities for themselves. Resources at adult-led activities for younger children are limited and they are not encouraged to select additional materials or to explore their creativity independently through the pursuit of their own interests.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive early education is good. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. They engage in daily discussions with key workers about what their children do and the 'Stay and Play week' enables them to work alongside their children to support their learning. They are provided with clear information about nursery activities, play plans for the next steps and details of their children's progress so that they can support their child's learning at home. The attractive notice boards in all areas of the nursery and regular parent consultation meetings ensure that they are well informed. Regular written reports, with key-workers' observations of children's achievements, enables parents to be well informed about their children's progress. Key workers collect detailed information when children start at the nursery, including children's likes and dislikes, special 'comforters' and feeding times to help children to feel secure and settle easily. A daily diary, which is shared with other settings where appropriate, makes sure that children's individual needs are well met.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All areas of the nursery environment are well organised, attractive and provide plenty of space for children to move around safely and independently. Children and their families are warmly welcomed into the setting each day by staff who greet them with smiles and encouraging comments. The registered provider uses successful recruitment procedures, which ensure that the staff are well experienced and hold the necessary qualifications to carry out their role effectively. All staff are rigorously vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The induction procedure and comprehensive operational plan, with up to date information for staff, makes sure that all members of the team are secure in their knowledge of procedures for child protection and maintaining children's overall welfare.

The nursery staff are well supported by regular meetings with their line manager, who ensures that their ongoing training needs are well met. A good system has been established to enable staff to take responsibility for sharing their skills and supporting their colleagues. For example, senior nursery nurses and deputy managers assist in day-to-day supervision of staff. All of the legally required documents, which contribute to children's health, safety and well-being, including a procedure to record complaints or concerns, are in place and regularly reviewed. However, the system for monitoring that nursery procedures are consistently maintained is not yet fully effective. This has the potential to compromise children's welfare and to affect their progress.

Leadership and management of early education is good. Regular meetings enable staff to work effectively as a team. Ongoing training and development is identified by a good system of supervision and appraisal for all members of staff working with funded children.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to continue to develop current practice and embed the new 'Birth to three matters' programme, ensuring that activities are child-led. Also consider ways to implement new and future developments in child care and early years' practice. Since the last inspection the nursery has improved staff's knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and activities for the majority of children are child initiated. A system of appraisal and regular training ensures that changes in early years practice are reflected in the setting. However, younger children are not able to access additional resources other than those set out by adults or to initiate their own activities. This will be carried forward for further improvement following this inspection.

At the last inspection of early education the provider was asked to ensure the assessments of children's learning are effectively used to inform future curriculum planning, to ensure the learning needs of children as individuals are catered for; provide adult-led activities of an appropriate length to sustain the interest of younger children; make more effective use of the space and resources available to improve children's opportunities to initiate their own learning in all areas of the curriculum; continue to ensure that all the clusters relating to each area of learning are covered and re-visited to secure children's learning and provide parents with information about their child's next steps in learning to enable them the opportunity to support children's progress in the home environment. Adult-led activities have been adapted to ensure that they sustain children's interests; they make very effective use of the space and resources and children are able to initiate their own activities throughout the session. A system has been introduced to ensure that all clusters are covered in curriculum plans but children's observation and assessment records show that some of the aspects are not covered well enough to help children to effectively learn about mathematics or communication, language and literacy. Parents are provided with good information about their children's next steps to learning and how they can support this learning at home. However, curriculum plans are not yet effectively informed by children's observation and assessment records. This will be carried forward for further improvement following this inspection.

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 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 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 system for monitoring practice and ensuring consistency across the provision: this refers to hygiene procedures being followed according to nursery policies, registers of attendance being accurately maintained, assessment records being maintained and used to support children's progress
- improve younger children's opportunity to investigate and explore materials and resources: provide them with increased opportunities to pursue their own interests and make decisions to promote exploration and creativity.

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):

- continue to develop planning and assessment procedures: use observations by parents and key workers of what children enjoy to plan activities indoors and out; make sure learning objectives are clear and that activities offer appropriate challenge
- improve mathematics and communication language and literacy: provide children with opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of numbers and calculations and to write for a purpose through daily routines and self chosen activities.

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