

Brentwood Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402126
Inspection date	25 January 2008
Inspector	Lynn Denise Smith
Setting Address	The Old County Ground, Shenfield Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8AJ
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Registered person	Janet Violette Torris
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?

Brentwood Day Nursery is privately owned. It opened in 1974 and operates from two rooms in a cricket pavilion. It is situated in the centre of Brentwood. A maximum of 31 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open 08:30 to 17:30. All children share an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 59 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 34 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine staff. Of whom, five of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop a very good understanding about keeping healthy as they follow the staff's clear directions and procedures. Their environment is kept very clean and hygienic, for example, the tables are sprayed and wiped clean in between uses and especially before meals are presented on them. Staff wear different coloured plastic aprons when carrying out their various tasks such as serving meals and changing children's nappies.

Children enthusiastically wash their hands after they have used the toilet and before they sit down to eat snacks and meals. They confidently tell staff that they wash their hands to get rid of germs, clearly recognising the importance of this practice.

Children's medical needs are effectively shared with the staff as parents complete a clear registration form and an information sheet detailing any likes, dislikes, allergies or special requirements. Children who have accidents within the setting are comforted and have their injuries proficiently dealt with by first aid trained staff. A clear record of any injuries or incidents which occur during the nursery day is logged and shared with parents and carers at the end of the child's session. The setting's first aid kit is regularly checked and items which are out-of-date are removed and replaced.

Children enjoy an exciting range of meals during their nursery day. They are provided with a substantial mid-day snack which usually comprises of fresh fruit and vegetables. They sit together with staff and share this important time of the day for gentle conversation. Children have some opportunities to develop independence when they help to set the tables for lunch and help to clear away again afterwards, however, opportunities for them to play an active role in the preparation of snack time is limited. The fruit and vegetables are generally cut up by the cook in the kitchen and the children's drinks are mostly poured by staff.

Parents are made very aware of the menu which is planned in advance each week as staff present a poster on the main door informing them what will be provided each day. Children's individual dietary needs are acknowledged and alternative menus are provided in order to meet all of the children's requirements.

Children thoroughly enjoy fresh air and exercise on a daily basis when they play in the enclosed pre-school garden or go for walks onto the large playing field situated adjacent to the pre-school building. They play outdoors every day and staff demonstrate a sound commitment to ensuring that children receive fresh air in all kinds of weather.

Children have exciting opportunities to develop their physical skills both indoors and outdoors. They use a wide range of tools to extend their fine manipulative development such as scissors, paintbrushes of varying sizes, dough materials, construction sets and puzzles. They fish ducks from a paddling pool with small fishing nets and draw large scale pictures on the floor with chalk. Outdoors they learn to negotiate space well as they run around the pre-school garden. They ride bikes and cars and learn to play together with some communal wooden toys which require patients and cooperation. Children participate in exercise sessions such as touching their toes, reaching high and running on the spot. They discuss with staff how they feel after the exercise, and articulate effectively that they feel hot and out of breath.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a bright and attractive pre-school environment. They have use of a large room within a sports pavilion and some smaller rooms for small group work or stories. The large room is made welcoming and exciting as staff present an interesting range of colourful posters and examples of the children's creative work around the walls. Many of the posters are positioned at the children's height to extend their learning. The room is presented in an effective way with low-level partitions separating areas such as the book corner. The low-level tables and chairs are set out to enable children to move freely around the room and to access the full range of activities on offer.

Children have regular access to an enclosed outdoor area which is also made bright, interesting and fun by the effective presentation of posters, letters and numbers around the outer fence. Additional outdoor play space is available as the setting has use of a large field for organised walks or games.

Children safely access the exciting selection of toys and play materials on offer to them each day, as staff set them on tables and on floor mats. The range is alternated each day to provide stimulating and interesting play and learning opportunities. Children play with clean and well maintained equipment as staff follow a clear cleaning routine. They carry out thorough cleaning days and make clear inventories of the equipment available.

Children are safe within this setting as staff follow the group's clear procedures with regards to keeping the premises indoors and outdoors safe and secure. They carry out daily risk assessments and record their findings. Children practise regular fire evacuation procedures and a clear record of the procedure and how effectively it was carried out is always available. Children are very secure within the setting as the main door can only be opened by a buzzer system activated by staff. Children develop an awareness of staying safe as staff talk to them about walking sensibly indoors and considering each other's space when playing outdoors.

Children are well-protected from potential harm, as staff demonstrate a sound understanding of child protection procedures and their responsibilities. They have attended recent training and are aware of the current policies for referring concerns to the appropriate authorities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very actively involved in purposeful play throughout their nursery day. They enjoy a good amount of free play for the majority of the session and participate in some organised activities. They form caring and warm relationships with the staff who are on hand at all times to help and support them.

Children have lots of opportunities to explore a wide range of different materials, for example, they play with 'gloop', dough, clay and shaving foam. They are encouraged to think about and articulate how they find the materials.

Children thoroughly enjoy creative play and are provided with free-play crafts activities as well as more structured ones. They have fun dressing up in an interesting range of dressing up clothes and expressing themselves in the role play areas. They enjoy learning about past and

present and have fun weighing ingredients from large containers and placing them into brown paper bags in the 'old fashioned shop'.

Children's language development is fully supported and extended by staff encouraging them to add new words to their vocabulary and by asking them open ended and simple questions.

Younger children's needs are well met as staff articulate their sound understanding of the requirements of children aged under three years. They incorporate the 'Birth to three matters' guidance within their daily planning and consider effective ways of adapting activities to ensure they are suitable for younger children.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

Staff demonstrate an extensive knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Their understanding is constantly updated through training and in-house meetings with the main nursery education coordinator. Their proficiency is apparent in the language they use with the children and in the way in which they effectively deliver nursery education and adapt the activities to meet the needs of all children.

The setting has clear and effective long, medium and short term planning in place. All staff play an active role in organising the planning and ensuring that it covers all six areas of learning. The planning is effectively presented for all staff to see and follow. The short term plans are based on adult-led and child-initiated activities. The planning clearly shows the types of resources staff will require, the size of the group and the language they will try to include.

Children's progress and achievements are very effectively observed through a key worker system. Staff make daily observations of the children participating in a wide range of activities. They also do monthly detailed observations and tracking exercises. All observations are then effectively plotted onto the children's individual stepping stones booklets. This enables staff to gain a clear picture of where each child is and what step they need to cover next.

The nursery sessions are extremely well planned providing children with ample opportunities to explore their environment through free play as well as to concentrate on more focussed activities. Staff use an extensive range of methods to deliver nursery education such as large group times, small group times and individual activities.

Children learn in a very calm and relaxed environment as staff maintain a reasonable noise level by gently reminding children to lower their voices if they become too noisy. Children know the daily routine well and respond quickly to the staff's requests.

Children are very caring towards each other. They learn to take turns effectively as staff encourage them to play together and to share the resources. They are motivated to learn as they are provided with exciting and stimulating activities. Children develop an excellent awareness of their own and other's feelings through discussions with staff and by being encouraged to consider how their friends feel. They are asked to consider the consequences of their actions, for example, when a child takes a toy from another child. Children make definite choices about their play and learning throughout the day. They are asked what they would like to do and have access to a good range of resources which are presented at their height on storage containers so they can help themselves. They initiate independence with regards to putting their own coats on and getting ready to play outdoors.

Children are extremely proficient speakers, they re-tell real and imaginative stories to each other in both small and large groups. Children learn about linking sounds and letters as the setting focuses on a letter of the week. They talk about the letter during circle time and children enthusiastically think about words which begin with the same letter. The letter of the week is currently 'p', a child initiates a conversation with an adult about turning the letter upside down, then it would be a 'd'. Children listen very attentively to stories in large and small groups. Children have excellent opportunities for mark-making indoors and outdoors. They use diaries and pencils on a table in the garden and use chalk to write on the floor and on boards. Children are encouraged to recognise and write their own names on all of their work.

Children have superb opportunities to develop their mathematical skills. They are provided with an exciting range of resources which enable them to compare different sized objects, to weigh and measure different amounts of materials and to count in everyday activities. They recognise numerals as they are presented with an exciting selection of posters both indoors and outdoors. They participate in activities such as fishing the numbered ducks from the paddling pool. They are encouraged to recognise the number, count the ducks and catch them in sequence, for example, staff ask them whether they can catch number one, then number two and so on.

Children have exciting opportunities to enable them to make sense of the natural world and the world around them. They explore and investigate through first hand experiences, for example, they take the left over food from snack time out to feed the birds in the garden. They talk about the weather and proficiently tell staff that the sun is hiding behind the clouds as it is a cloudy day. Children explore an exciting range of natural materials such as clay, 'gloop', dough, soil and snow. They cook on a regular basis and learn about planting and growing when they plant tubs of flowers in the summer and grow cress and tomatoes. Children have the use of two computers and an exciting range of programmable toys.

Children are creative, they have opportunities to express their own ideas through painting, sticking and a good range of crafts. They actively participate in music and movement sessions. They use a wide range of materials and tools to express themselves creatively and are able to communicate their feelings effectively.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely settled and content within this group. They enter the nursery with ease and become actively involved in play. Their individual needs and requirements are superbly known by the staff as parents share relevant information with them through an 'all about me sheet'. The knowledge obtained by staff enables them to chat confidently with the children about their likes, dislikes, siblings, pets and family set up. This creates a kind and caring atmosphere within the group and gives the group a very 'homely' feel.

Children play in an environment which is extensively rich in posters and positive images of diversity and equality. They have daily access to an exciting range of toys and books which portray people of different cultures and religions. Children have excellent opportunities to celebrate a wide range of festivals and special occasions throughout the year. They use foods, dressing up clothes, outside speakers, role play and crafts to fully explore each festival.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are expertly supported within the setting as staff demonstrate an extensive knowledge of how to care for and adapt activities to meet the needs of a wide range of children. Two staff have undertaken the full range of training

and work very effectively with other agencies. Staff are extremely committed to providing a fully inclusive nursery for all children.

Children are extremely well behaved. They understand right from wrong as they follow the staff's clear directions. The high number of adults present each session enables the children to be fully supported. Staff are very relaxed and allow the children to guide their own play and learning. They are on hand to supervise them and intervene when they feel they need to. Children learn the rules of the setting as they are gently reminded by staff. They also look at a hand made book which contains a range of photographs of the children walking sensibly, being nice to each other and washing their hands after using the toilet.

Parents are kept extremely well-informed about the setting and how it operates as they are provided with clear and effective information about the staff, the policies and procedures and the activities which are included in the planning. Some of the parents using the nursery, also attended it when they were children.

Verbal feedback received from a number of parents during the visit was extremely complimentary of the group. Strengths identified, include the warm family feel, the good mix of mature and younger staff, the flexibility of the owner and the confidence of the staff caring for their children.

The partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their children's learning as they provide staff with information about their children's home achievements and starting points. Parents are provided with information about the coming week's themes and topics and how they can extend their children's learning at home.

There is currently no formal way of sharing information about children's progress and achievements, however, this is done on an informal basis and parents are regularly reminded that they can come into the group at any time to talk to their children's key worker.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children enjoy each other's company and build good relationships with the staff. They are confident and understand the daily routine within the nursery. Children are kind and caring and develop a sound understanding about sharing and cooperating through the staff's clear guidance. They learn to consider each other's feelings and to take responsibility for their own actions.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by an extremely committed and caring group of staff. The owner and manager has worked at the group for over 40 years and has been the registered provider of the setting for over 30 of those years. Many of the staff have worked at the group for over 10 years and some have joined the team more recently. All staff are very committed to furthering their childcare knowledge through training and day courses.

Effective and robust procedures are in place for checking and vetting all staff. A clear record that checks have been undertaken is kept with the staff details and the registered person clearly understands her responsibility to ensure that her staff are suitable to work with children.

The setting operates to a high adult to child ratio, this enables staff to fully support the children and to provide individual care and attention to those feeling poorly or who are finding it difficult to settle. The staff team consists of some full time and some part time staff, this ensures that there are always additional staff available to work extra hours or to come into the group on their day off to cover for sickness or emergencies.

Staff have attended many training courses and always ensure that they keep up-to-date with current guidance and working practices.

The sessions are very effectively organised to promote children's learning and flow smoothly from large group activities to smaller group work. Staff are very confident and demonstrate a sound understanding of their daily roles and tasks.

Clear and comprehensive written records and policies support the staff's practices and provide relevant information to be shared with parents. The records are available at all times and are well-maintained.

The leadership and management is good.

The setting is effectively managed by the registered person and her daughter. They each have specific roles with the owner's daughter playing a much more active role in the delivery of the nursery education. The management are very forward thinking and are committed to keeping ahead of the game with regards to changing childcare practices. They have attended briefing session on the Early Years Foundation Stage and are already considering ways in which their planning and assessment can be adapted to meet the new requirements.

The staff team consists of some mature staff who have worked at the setting for many years and some newer staff who are currently undertaking training. The team works very well together and meets on a regular basis to discuss working practices and to review the day to day operations. Staff are able to use their individual skills and strengths within the setting and to share their aspirations with the manager through an informal appraisal system. Staff are actively encouraged to pursue areas of interest or training and are fully supported by the owner.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection, the setting was asked to increase the opportunities for children to hear and use letter sounds and to write their own names and increase the opportunities for children to develop problem solving and calculation skills. Children are now provided with greater opportunities to use letter sounds and to write their own names on a more regular basis, through planned and free activities. They are provided with activities which enable them to develop problem solving and calculation skills in everyday activities.

They were also asked to develop the children's use of the outdoor area, ensure that the child protection procedure for the nursery complies with local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures and include Ofsted's contact details within the complaints procedure. The outdoor area is now used on a more regular basis providing children with very good opportunities for outdoor play and fresh air. The child protection procedure has been updated to include current guidelines on the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Ofsted's contact details are included in the complaints procedure for parents.

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.

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):

- review procedures for snack and meal times to enable children to play a more active role in the preparation and to develop greater independence through everyday activities.

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):

- review procedures for sharing information regarding children's progress and achievements with parents.

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