

Head Start Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY217518
Inspection date	29 October 2007
Inspector	Naomi Bold
Setting Address	54 Station Road, New Barnet, Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN5 1QG
Telephone number	01438 840 681
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Registered person	Head Start Day Nursery
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?

Head Start Day Nursery opened in 2002. The nursery premises is a detached house on three floors which has been fully refurbished for the purpose of a nursery. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 71 children from three months to five years on roll. This includes 20 funded three-year-olds and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery offers full day care and opens five days a week all year round. Part time places are offered to meet parents needs.

There are currently 17 staff working directly with the children. All the management team hold a suitable qualification; a high percentage of staff hold a recognised child care qualification. The remainder are working towards obtaining a qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

Since registration the setting has received an investors in people award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The nursery has very well considered procedures in place to promote children's continuing good health. Medical procedures are in place and a wide range of consents are regularly updated for all children. Accident, incident and medication records are consistently maintained to ensure that parents are always informed of anything that happens in the nursery that might affect their children's health, for example, staff make a note of any accident or incident forms in the daily diary that is shared with parents so that their signature is always sought. The nursery staff show a highly responsible attitude towards protecting the health of children in their care, for example, the setting has taken considerable steps to communicate several recent measles cases in the area to parents and has provided notices and literature for parents and staff to ensure that all are aware of symptoms and necessary exclusion periods to protect children at home and in nursery. Staff are all qualified in first aid and records are maintained to ensure that any member of staff whose certificate is close to expiry are sent on training as soon as possible. This, together with appropriate consents for emergency treatment ensures that all children are protected in case of an accident in the nursery.

The nursery is clean and staff show a high regard for maintaining a hygienic environment. Nappy changing guidelines and routines are rigorous and staff wear disposable gloves and aprons when carrying out nappy changes. Bottles are prepared in a dedicated 'milk kitchen' to avoid cross contamination from food preparation areas. There is a clear routine in place for the sterilising of all bottles and preparation equipment to protect children from germs. Children are extremely familiar with good hygiene practice. They are able to wash their hands without support from staff and clean their teeth after eating using individual toothbrushes labelled with their name. This considered approach, together with photographic instructions above hand washing areas, ensures that children are able to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene, for example, reminding each other to put their hands over their mouths when they cough and directing each other to the boxes of tissues that are freely available in all rooms.

Children are developing an understanding of the components of a healthy diet and how it can keep them healthy. Staff take the time at meals and through a series of activities surrounding seasonal events, for example, Harvest Festival to talk to children about foods that they should eat every day. Children are offered a wide and varied range of tasty and nutritious meals, prepared by a dedicated cook on the premises. The menu is varied to engage children's interest at mealtimes. Fresh food is delivered to the nursery at several times during the week and the nursery owner uses local suppliers wherever possible so that children begin to make links with the outside community. 'Rolling snack areas' in the older children's rooms means that children are able to feed themselves from a series of nutritious snacks and fresh water to keep themselves hydrated at all times.

Children have daily opportunities to take part in physical activity. There is an extremely well considered garden area that has undergone much recent improvement, with the result that children are able to use several of the areas all year round. There are a number of individual areas that offer children free play on a range of textures including brick, bark and grass. Children enjoy a range of balancing equipment and are able to hop and jump between several stepping stones and balance on a range of logs and tyres. Older children show good levels of control

while playing with a wide range of outdoor play equipment including bikes, trikes, construction toys, climbing frames and water play. Children also take part in 'stretch and grow' sessions to offer indoor physical activity and to support large muscle development. Younger children are able to pull themselves up on furniture in their playrooms and are supported and praised in their efforts to walk by staff which helps them to develop confidence and skill in their mobility. Opportunities for small muscle development are widely available for older children as they manipulate cutlery, drawing and painting equipment, scissors, sand and water toys. Staff take groups of children to several local open areas which gives them a change of scenery and builds great enthusiasm for physical play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery is bright and welcoming to children, parents and visitors. A photo board and many examples of children's work that cover the walls demonstrate the child-friendly atmosphere in the nursery. Children are kept safe as staff use daily risk assessments and visual checks to minimise potential risks. Staff use a number of systems including head counts and clear registers to ensure that children can be accounted for and supervised at all times. A series of safety gates on every staircase limit the access that children have to stairs and to hazardous areas including the kitchen. There are numerous reminders around the setting to keep gates closed and the catches are able to be opened quickly in case of an emergency evacuation.

Registers are completed for the whole nursery and signing in and out sheets are completed in each room to ensure that staff can be accurate about children who are present in the case of an emergency. At sleep times all children sleep downstairs and staff complete a signing in and out sheet to record those present in the room at any one time, ensuring that all children could be accounted for in the case of an emergency evacuation. Fire evacuation procedures are sensible and regularly practiced so that all are aware of the procedure in an emergency. The nursery has appropriate fire safety precautions and the fire officer has visited the premises and is content that the nursery complies with all necessary precautions.

Staff check equipment and play areas regularly to ensure that resources are safe and suitable for children's use. Resources are organised appropriately to enable children to access them independently according to their needs. Most resources are organised clearly for children. Children are reminded to put equipment away and to store coats and bags appropriately to keep their play area clutter free and safe.

Children are protected from abuse and neglect as staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. The written policy is clear and staff are aware of its content and are aware of their responsibility to communicate concerns so that children are protected. Staff are all appropriately vetted upon recruitment to the setting and undergo a detailed induction programme to cement their understanding of all policies and procedures. This has a clear positive impact on the continuing safety of children in the nursery. Currently there are no steps in place to determine staff's continuing suitability in the time period between Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosures that are renewed every three years. This impacts on children's safety as there are currently no mechanisms for staff to disclose any information that might make them unsuitable to care for children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the nursery with enthusiasm and play happily in small groups and individually. Babies and toddlers are given access to a range of natural and familiar household objects, including treasure baskets filled with spoons, cloths, mirrors, sponges and pegs. Staff support these children in their explorations, encouraging them to make sounds and to experience the smell, taste and feel of a range of resources. Babies are able to play with edible playdough and delight in making patterns in the dough with their hands. Staff challenge children by encouraging them to manipulate a range of simple cutters and rollers. All children are offered plenty of outdoor experiences and the garden is clearly designed to meet the needs of each different age and ability group in the nursery. For example, older children are able to use the climbing equipment, jumping from log to tyre and climbing on the climbing frame. Younger children have a number of paved areas to use push along toys and to make marks on the bricks using paints and chalks. All children have access to a 'story tent' stocked with books and sleeping bags, in which they can snuggle down and explore a range of well maintained books. Staff consistently use clear and open questions to extend children's individual learning experiences and use generous praise to increase their confidence in their ability to learn and achieve. For example, children are able to plant a range of bulbs in garden planters. They enjoy plunging their hands in compost and using a range of tools to dig holes for the bulbs. One child states that 'I am making a hole,' to which the staff member replies 'why are you making a hole?' The child replies 'so I can make a plant.' The discussion then moves on to include different types of plant that the children can grow from bulbs and to discuss what plants need to grow. Staff offer similar experiences to all children, demonstrating their high regard for offering challenges to children of all ages and to support them in making connections.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and assess a range of learning experiences for children. Staff use observations and focussed activities to assess their achievements. While these assessments are evaluative, ideas for next steps are not always elaborated with learning intentions so children's progress is not always as rapid as it might be. However, staff show a clear working knowledge of the children in their groups which has a positive impact on their ability to plan appropriately to meet their individual needs.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear and demonstrable knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and of how children learn. This is evident in the wide range of activities that they plan to cover the six areas of learning in varied and exciting ways.

Children's learning is supported by staff who are comfortable to allow children to self-select from a range of activities, introducing a planned activity when they identify a need for a particular child. This is evident in much of the planning documentation, as individual staff have identified children who would benefit from a particular activity. Staff support children's learning by using mainly open questions and listening clearly to their responses which contributes to their good progress. For example, a child is drawing a picture of themselves, supported by the member of staff who encourages the child to write their name, to identify individual letters in their name and to describe features in the picture. The discussion is expanded to discuss who the picture would be given to, to which the child replies 'my imaginary turtle at my house.' The member of staff then talks at length to the child about the word 'imaginary' and different meanings and uses of this word, demonstrating how staff can use one activity to cover several areas of learning. Resources in the setting clearly cover the six areas of learning and staff have

organised visual resources particularly well to make an impact on the progress of children in the nursery. For example, a large number line has been set up along the outdoor fence, which enables staff and children to use this resource in mathematical games and rhymes, increasing children's visual familiarity with numbers.

Children have good opportunities to explore the wider world around us. For example, they are able to plant their own bulbs and seeds and use plastic bottles to measure rainfall at the weather station that has been set up in the garden. Children have also created family trees to help make sense of their place in the world today. This also supports the development of a sense of age and time.

Children's progress towards the early learning goals is assessed continually through a process of observation and evaluation. However there is currently no reference to individual stepping stones or an assessment of starting points in the assessments which makes it difficult to track progress accurately enough to inform aims of the next steps for individual children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff behave with extreme courtesy towards children which ensures that they feel valued and learn from the good example that is set. The nursery uses a key worker system to the great benefit of children throughout the nursery so that all children are able to have a strong connection with at least one staff member at all times to increase their sense of belonging. Staff work closely with parents to create 'All About Me' books which use pictures of significant events in children's lives that they delight in reading with members of staff, pointing out themselves as babies and pictures of their family members.

Children take an extremely active part in numerous charity fundraising events to benefit local and national charities, which cements their idea of the diversity of both their local community and the wider world. This, as well as regular visits from local figures such as fire-fighters, the recycling service and visits to local sheltered accommodation for the elderly give children a true sense of place in their community.

Children show a clear understanding of behavioural boundaries. There are few disputes between children and staff implement the behaviour policy appropriately according to the age of the children. Children understand the idea of right and wrong and their considerable ability to manage their own behaviour is underpinned by clear and consistent boundaries set by the staff team. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The nursery has a clear Special Educational Needs policy and this, together with support from outside agencies and regular training, ensures that staff are able to take positive steps to increase the achievements of children of all abilities in the nursery. The nursery management team are able to assess individual needs effectively and are able to evaluate clearly the impact of any changes they might make to the organisation or the structure of the nursery building on children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are uniformly praising of the care and education their children receive and feel that they are fully informed about all aspects of the provision. The prospectus, handbook and settling in procedures are all used to firmly welcome parents and children into the nursery. Notice boards throughout the main entrance way and in each room provide incredibly detailed and useful information for parents and carers,

not only about the provision of the nursery but also of information relevant to all aspects of childcare, enabling them to feel supported by the nursery as parents. Staff constantly exchange relevant information with parents by daily feedback and a more formal system of diaries, enabling regular exchange of information which contributes heavily to excellent continuity of care. Children benefit greatly from the clear bonds that are made between nursery and families and this supports their sense of belonging and contentment in the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's well being is protected as the nursery has sensible and well thought out policies and procedures that are implemented well to promote good outcomes for all children. All the necessary policies are in place and are designed with the individual needs of the setting in mind to ensure that all children are protected and achieve well. The nursery manager works closely with an administrative manager and the nursery owner to ensure that records for both children and staff are well maintained. The administrative manager has also taken steps to ensure that vital information is kept on the nursery premises while more detailed records are stored more securely in the central office. Induction procedures are thorough and vetting procedures are used effectively to protect children, especially to ensure the suitability of new staff to the nursery. An 'on the job' training section of the induction programme further ensures that all staff have practical experience of necessary procedures in the nursery which further protects the children in their care.

Staff are deployed well throughout the various rooms in the nursery and all show a high regard to maintain ratios. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. The manager and nursery owner are supernumerary so that they can absorb any staff sickness in the nursery, which further ensures the protection of all children. The nursery management team show a high regard for the professional development of their team and staff are encouraged to attend training courses in order to continually improve their practice. Since the previous inspection they have attended courses in several areas, including Behaviour Management, the 'Birth to three matters' framework, Foundation Stage and Special Needs. Children benefit from their acquired knowledge and skills. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The nursery owner supports the manager through regular meetings and maintains a strong presence in the nursery in order to monitor the provision. Staff are able to take an active role in developing systems in the nursery to the benefit of all children through regular training days and staff meetings. The manager oversees the systems of planning and assessment and works closely with staff in developing new ways of working. The nursery has undertaken a series of audits to ensure that the nursery is in a state of continuous improvement.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection two recommendations were made. One concerned the organisation of meal times to make them a social occasion to develop children's independence. Children eat together as a group and chat happily to each other and members of staff during mealtimes. This helps develop their independence and confidence as staff can remind children about table manners and take opportunities to increase children's confidence when feeding themselves.

The second recommendation concerned the presentation of activities for the under two year age group. Activities are currently presented for the under two age group in an appealing and

accessible way, enabling children to explore a series of resources, encouraging their curiosity and helping them to enjoy their time in the nursery.

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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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):

- further develop existing staff vetting procedures to ensure continuing suitability between CRB disclosures

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):

- further develop existing assessment procedures to include reference to individual stepping stones so that children's progress can be more accurately tracked

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