

Places For Children

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY260754
Inspection date	05 November 2007
Inspector	Vivienne Rose
Setting Address	106-108 Morning Lane, London, E9 6LG
Telephone number	020 8986 0051
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Registered person	Places For Children
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Places for Children Day Nursery opened in 2003 and is part of the Places for Children nursery chain. It operates from two rooms in open plan purpose built ground floor premises in Homerton in the London borough of Hackney. There is access to an office, toilets and staff room.

A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 hours until 18:00 hours. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children aged six months to four years on roll. Of these, 17 receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel in to work around the area. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a range of energetic physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They develop confidence in their physical skills as they use a wide range of indoor and outdoor toys and equipment including bikes, hoops and tyres. They use spreaders, scissors and knives and forks well to support their physical skills. All children learn to listen to their bodies and describe when it's cold because the window is open. Children are able to be active and rest according to their needs.

Older children learn the importance of good hygiene, however, this is less so with babies as staff sometimes forget to wash their hands before eating to ensure their good health. The children's health is generally well protected because staff share information about special dietary and medical needs. Most documentation is in place although the dosage of medication administered to children is not always recorded effectively to ensure children's well-being. Most staff hold first aid certificates which are regularly updated.

Babies and younger children are cared for in a clean, warm environment. Babies are held closely for feeding which supports their welfare. However, staff do not develop appropriate strategies to support the children's settling-in process or to support their emotional well-being and sometimes children's personal needs. For example, undressing is not carried out to ensure the children are fully involved in this process to make it a fun learning experience.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy helping themselves in the cafeteria style snack and drink arrangements area. One child was quite joyful in his independence saying to the other children 'I have more' after helping himself at lunchtime. Younger children are regularly offered drinks so that they do not go thirsty.

The staff take account of parents wishes. Children are introduced to a range of foods to excite and develop their tastes. For example, children's menus are wide and include Chickpea Curry and Macaroni Cheese and Tuna salad wrap for snack time. Plenty of fruit throughout the week ensures that children are learning about the foods that keeps them healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, well-maintained environment. They are cared for in two rooms according to their age. There is sufficient space and adequate resources for children to play, eat and rest at the nursery. The equipment is mainly in a satisfactory condition and toddlers and older children can make their choices from storage boxes which they can easily reach. However, home life resources are insufficient and lack variety, which limits children's choices in this area. There are checking arrangements in place for the resources and regular risk assessments ensure that most of the areas used by the children are safely maintained. Good security systems are in place which include a visitors book and the secure entrance system. However, staff have overlooked the fact that not all sockets have covers on them. Most of the time babies are given appropriate care and supervision. However, there are some inconsistencies in the supervision of younger babies, for example, when the appropriate ratios are not fully maintained. This impacts on the safety of children. Older children are developing a satisfactory understanding of how to keep themselves safe and to recognise dangers when staff remind

them to be careful in the garden and not to run. However, at times, because of poor staff deployment, this causes children's behaviour to deteriorate which can at times impact on their safety and well-being.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the setting has all the required policies and procedures in place. Staff have a sound knowledge of the child protection procedures to ensure children's welfare is paramount. The manager has recently updated her training to ensure that her knowledge and skills are current.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

There are some differences between the quality of experiences offered to babies under two and those provided for older children. Younger children and babies have satisfactory relationships with their key workers which supports their sense of well-being. Children begin to play happily together with each other and with adults, however, there are limited opportunities for the younger babies to be appropriately challenged within their play. Staff are beginning to use the Birth to three matters framework, however, the planning methods do not at present cover all areas appropriately. Staff interaction does not always sufficiently support the individual developmental needs of the children. For example, children are rarely encouraged to make choices, explore, investigate and make connections in their play. The lack of evaluation in the provision means that staff are not able to see where they are successful in promoting development and learning and where there are aspects for improvement. The present methods for observation and planning do not always identify relevant next steps for children. However, managers are aware of these weakness and are seeking support and developing methods to address them.

Children from two years and the funded children take part in a range of activities which encourage them to concentrate and develop their independence skills well, for example, serving themselves at lunchtime and taking themselves to the toilet. They listen quietly to stories, sing songs with enthusiasm and enjoy playing outdoors which develops their sense of confidence and well-being.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good elements. Staff plan a satisfactory range of play and learning activities for the funded children. The short term planning enables children to use resources and take part in activities which stimulate their learning and independence skills. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and they are beginning to develop systems which help children progress, however, as yet the systems do not use the stepping stone approach. This means that children are not progressing as well as they could. Staff do observe children's development and are beginning to plan for their next steps of learning. However, the lack of clear aims and learning intentions means that children do not get the most from the activities provided.

Children communicate well. They are confident to speak in groups and to express their feelings and they concentrate and listen to stories. They enjoy small group times, for example, when discussing firework night and their fears, they discuss fire engines and the sound that they make. Staff make use of effective questioning which helps them to develop ideas and to extend their vocabulary and thinking. Children begin to recognise their names on cards at the lunch table and on the name chart. They learn the sounds of letters, and staff encourage their listening

and speaking skills well when they play the Miniature game. However, there are fewer opportunities for the children to practise their writing skills for a purpose in everyday activities. The use of capital letters used on some labelling is confusing for children. Staff do not always support children to reinforce the use of the correct letter shapes to support their learning and understanding.

Children show good personal independence for example, when they take themselves to the toilet, find their aprons and hang up their own coats. Children concentrate well on activities and show perseverance and concentration when they complete tasks such as making the tree using flower pots, sellotape and paper. Children show a strong sense of belonging when they greet each other and staff on arrival. They are interested and eager to learn.

Children are friendly and show concern for others when they share resources and play in the garden. Many children can count confidently from one to ten. They sing rhymes and songs to help consolidate their learning. Staff encourage children to count the plates and cups for the lunch table and how many chairs they may need. This helps to children to develop their problem solving skills well.

Children develop an initial sense of time and place and offer information about what their daddy said at home and where they went at the weekend. Staff respect children's ideas and comments. Children learn about their own cultural beliefs and those of others when they take part in a multi-cultural day. Children design and make using a range of tools and techniques. They enjoy constructing with bricks; two children concentrate well when they make a garage together.

Children do have access to a computer but this was not used during the inspection. Therefore, there are limited opportunities for the children to develop their understanding of simple information and technology. Children use their imagination in play and have fun singing songs, for example, Bob the Builder and when they play hiding game under the deep blue sea. However, although children are offered a variety of materials to paste and glue they are not able to access resources easily to extend their own ideas and imagination. There are limited opportunities for children to access good quality resources for mark making and role play to enable them to fully explore and develop their preferences for forms of expression. Creative activities are not always well presented and as a result children rarely show an interest in them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and staff attending the setting come from wide variety of cultures and backgrounds.

Children are encouraged to develop a positive view of the wider community by having access to a satisfactory range of resources to promote a positive view of the wider world. Multicultural days encourage children's awareness of the religious and cultural events.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Most children are fully encouraged to participate in all the activities provided. The setting has a comprehensive policy in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, staffs' limited understanding of the code of practice for children with additional needs means that children are not always fully supported to meet their full potential.

Children behave well in response to the setting's clear ground rules. They are encouraged to respect others. In the setting children are encouraged to use 'good listening skills' and to take turns and to wait for others to speak. Children are encouraged to say 'please and thank you' which they do most of the time when playing with others. A wall chart for behaviour encourages children to win stickers that state 'well done for good tidying' and 'good sitting'. These methods support the children's self-esteem well. Younger children sometimes spend long periods when they are not engaged in purposeful activities to enhance their learning and development. This has an impact on their well-being. In contrast, the older children behave very well in response to consistent routines and clear expectations.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Regular newsletters and notices ensure that parents are informed about current changes. There are displays which inform parents about the Foundation Stage and the Birth to three matters framework and the parents can have access to the setting's policies and procedures. Open evenings help parents to understand their child's developmental progress. Parents receive verbal reports daily about their child's progress and daily written reports are maintained in the baby room, although this information sharing is not always used fully to be effective.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. Children are generally busy and making sound progress in most areas of learning. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching for the funded children and the children under two-years. This has an overall impact of the care and education that the nursery provides. Systems to monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the setting are at present being developed by managers to ensure there is consistency of teaching for all children in the nursery. Staff have good opportunities to attend training courses and workshops, this is an area that is constantly developing. There are clear induction processes for new staff. This ensures that staff are suitable for the job and they receive effective support and encouragement at regular staff meetings to help them progress in their learning.

Children are cared for in a generally well organised environment. Most staff are clear about their roles and responsibility and effectively implement routines to give children a wide range of activities and experiences, although there are limited opportunities for younger children to explore and investigate in a challenging environment to consolidate their learning. Opportunities for mark making and free access to free creative activities, role play and simple technology are not always made accessible or stimulating to enable children to fully participate in these activities. Staff are caring towards children and know them well. However, staff are insecure in their knowledge of the code of practice for children with special educational needs which impacts on the planning for children's progress.

The management are in the process of developing new systems and procedures within the setting. All staff have had current Criminal Record Bureau checks to ensure their suitability. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of the setting's health and safety policies and procedures to ensure that children remain safe. However, sometimes the delegation of staff has an impact on children's overall safety and well-being. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to improve the system for recording the development of children and the planning for the next steps in their learning. The setting has made satisfactory progress in their improvement of this process. However, the observation and evaluation of children methods used does not clearly define the next steps for children to give a clear picture of their progress in all aspects of learning to enable staff to plan effectively. The setting has recognised this weakness and is at present revising their systems within the organisation.

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

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The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- develop staffs' understand and knowledge of the Code of Practice for Children with special educational needs
- improve interaction with children in the baby room to ensure that the children get the most from their play; and ensure staff are delegated appropriately to ensure the safety and well-being of children

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 the methods for observation and evaluation to ensure that planning is based on what the children know and can do (also applies to care)
- improve the opportunities for children to develop their individual ideas and imaginative skills, pay particular attention to the access to mark making, art materials and role play activities; simple information and technology.

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