

Hungry Caterpillar Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY282909
Inspection date	21 November 2007
Inspector	Victoria Vasiliadis
Setting Address	Dragons Health Club, Rowdell Road, Northolt, Middlesex, UB5 6AG
Telephone number	020 8841 5611 tel 020 8845 6162
E-mail	
Registered person	Hungry Caterpillar Day Nurseries 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Hungry Caterpillar Nursery and Crèche is one of several run by Hungry Caterpillar Day Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2004 and operates from one room on two levels within L.A. Fitness Health Club, in Northolt in the borough of Ealing.

A maximum of 41 children may attend the nursery and crèche at any one time. The crèche is open five days a week from 09.30 to 16.00. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 44 children aged from three months to five years on the crèche roll and 48 children on the nursery roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area and/or are members of the Health Club. The nursery and crèche support children who speak English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties.

The setting employs 12 staff. Of these, eight staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and three staff are working towards a qualification, two staff are awaiting confirmation of qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected from incidents of infection and cross-contamination as the setting has in place appropriate written policies and procedures. For example, children must not attend the setting if they are unwell with a contagious illness. The setting records when children have an accident and these records are maintained in a confidential manner. There are clear procedures in place for the administering of medication and appropriate records are maintained. However, there are times when children's individual needs are not always met. For instance, children sit in wet clothes after returning from outdoor play for considerable periods of time before being changed.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy meals and snacks that are well-balanced and nutritious. For instance, lunch may consist of pasta and salad or chicken curry. Children are able to access water from the water coolers throughout the day. Staff are aware of the children's special dietary requirements and ensure these are met so children remain healthy. Lunch time is suitably organised, enabling children opportunities to sit with their peers and engage in conversations.

Children enjoy fresh air and exercise as they play in the secure outdoor area. However, the more able children do not have sufficient challenges to extend their large muscle skills in order to develop control, co-ordination and balance because the equipment used is basic. Resources available include little tyke cars, balls and small climbing cubes and slides.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a relatively safe and secure environment, most potential hazards and risks have been minimised. For example, written fire evacuation procedures are in place and clear security precautions relating to children's arrival and departure are effectively implemented. All staff are responsible for carrying out regular risk assessments on the premises and to ensure that equipment and the outside areas are clean and safe. However, potential hazards had been overlooked in the garden. For instance, a plastic bag was accessible to children and the wooden gate panels are broken.

Children have access to a suitable selection of toys and resources, which are safe and checked regularly. However, some of the resources are not clean or suitably maintained. For instance, the outside climbing cubes were covered in soil and leaves and the wheels of one of the cars do not work. The presentation of the toys makes it easy for children to self-select, as resources are in boxes and low-level storage units.

Children are suitably protected from possible abuse or neglect. Staff are aware of the setting's Safeguarding Children procedures and have a clear understanding of the reporting procedures if abuse is suspected. The setting has in place clear and concise written records which staff must familiarise themselves with to ensure the safety of the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are warmly welcomed into the setting each morning, and most separate with ease from their parents. Those children who are upset are appropriately comforted and supported by staff. Most children enter confidently and make choices in what activities or resources they wish to participate in.

Babies and toddlers benefit from a selection of interesting and fun resources that are enjoyed by them. The toddlers enjoy using their imaginative skills when involved in play with the hairdressing equipment. For instance, one child thoroughly enjoyed using the hair straighteners and blow-dryer on another child. The babies access a range of age appropriate toys such as rattles, shakers, bells and soft toys. They develop early communication skills as they attract the attention of staff who respond appropriately to their sounds during play. Children thoroughly enjoy taking part in singing and some of the older children know the words and actions to the different songs.

The children in the upstairs room have access to resources such as sand and water which they enjoy accessing. However, the poor organisation of the nursery routine for these children reduces the time they have to be engaged in purposeful free play. For example, children just become involved and engaged in a particular activity and are then told it is time to tidy up or to prepare for outdoor play or snack time.

NURSERY EDUCATION:

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff have some understanding and knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the stepping stones, but this is not being sufficiently implemented in practice. Although planning is in place and based on the six areas of learning, there are significant weaknesses. For instance, no evaluation takes place, the next steps in children's learning are not identified and planning does not extend the more able children's learning.

Children are occupied rather than being extended and challenged. There are limited opportunities for children to ask questions, talk about their work, be curious, explore and experiment. Staff do not extend children's learning and thinking sufficiently, they do not ask open ended questions or engage in conversations with children. Again, this is due to the poor organisation and deployment of staff, who are engaged in other activities such as cleaning up after lunch or completing written records. This has a detrimental impact on the children's level of engagement and involvement.

Children have regular opportunities to access a range of mathematical equipment such as scales, rulers, abacuses, clock, puzzles and dominoes. However, staff do not bring children's attention to these resources and they remain unused by the children. In addition, children have too few opportunities to investigate mathematical language such as shape, height, size, position or quantity within their environment.

Children are gaining independence and making choices, they have opportunities to strengthen self-help skills and foster their independence. For instance, they help themselves to equipment, play materials, use books independently and serve their snacks and lunch.

Children are developing an understanding of diverse cultures and their own beliefs when participating in festival celebrations and there are some visual images displayed around the

nursery that reflect positive images. But, there are insufficient opportunities for children to learn and understand about living things within the natural environment and how and why objects work.

Children are developing their fine motor skills; they use a range of tools appropriately and safely. For example, pencils, crayons, construction resources and puzzles which assists their early writing skills and develops hand eye co-ordination. However, children have too few opportunities to develop an interest in writing through play and to write for a variety of purposes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

In the main, children are generally well behaved and polite in response to the expectations of staff. They are encouraged to take turns and to have regard for others. On the whole, staff manage children's behaviour appropriately. They talk to children at their physical level and give clear explanations which are appropriate to the age and understanding of the children. This approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, at times children's behaviour is not addressed in particular in the room for the older children. This is due to the fact that staff are busy doing other things, such as preparing for meal times, changing nappies or getting children ready for outdoor play.

Children are provided with a range of resources and visual images that reflect positive images such as puzzles, dolls, books, posters and photos. These resources are beginning to increase the children's awareness of diversity and understanding of others within the wider community.

The setting has a clear understanding of the needs of children with learning difficulties. There is a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) worker present and written policies are in place to support practice. In addition, the setting works with the SENCO Liaison Officer from the Local Authority to devise Individual Educational Plans.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The setting has devised appropriate communication systems with parents. For instance, staff exchange information with parents and carers on a daily basis about the child, parents' evenings take place twice a year, written reports based on the six areas of learning are given to parents, also staff are available to speak to parents about their child at any time. Information relating to topics, themes and planning is displayed on the notice board within the room. In addition, monthly home-link activity sheets are issued to parents to keep them informed of the activities within the setting and what activities they can do at home with the children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the setting is inadequate. Significant weaknesses in the leadership and management mean that there are not robust systems in place to reflect, monitor and evaluate the educational programme. There are weaknesses in planning and the delivery of the curriculum programme. There is a lack of identified next steps in children's learning, this means children are not making sufficient progress along the stepping stones.

In the main, staff are sufficiently deployed in order to support children in their care, learning and play. However, due to the poor deployment of staff in the room were the older children

are situated; they have limited opportunities to become really involved and engaged in activities. In addition, there are times when children's individual personal needs are not attended to and children's behaviour is not always addressed.

Children appear happy and settled as ratios are maintained. Over half the staff working directly with children hold a recognised childcare qualification. The premises are suitably organised and space is set out to maximise play opportunities for children. The legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting were required to risk assess the garden prior to children using it, keep an accurate written record of medication administered to children and improve opportunities for physical play. The setting now has clear systems in place for the administration and recording of medication. This ensures the safety of children. Risk assessments are now carried out prior to children using the garden. However, issues remain in relation to the effectiveness of the risk assessments. The opportunities for children to develop their physical skills has not been sufficiently addressed, in particular for the more able children. Therefore, some of these issues have again been raised as a result of 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 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

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):

- ensure children's individual needs are met, in particular their personal needs
- ensure all resources are clean and suitably maintained
- ensure risk assessments are effectively implemented to ensure potential risks to children are identified and addressed.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- strengthen the programme for physical development by providing robust physical challenges and a wider range of exciting activities
- ensure children are encouraged to participate in a wide range of problem solving activities and to use mathematical language in everyday situations
- improve planning and evaluation and identify clearly the next steps in children's learning
- provide opportunities for children to write for a variety of purposes and to recognise their names, letters and words in their environment
- ensure that plans give children sufficient opportunities to develop their natural curiosity, explore and experiment
- pose opened questions to extend children's language and thinking
- develop systems to monitor and asses the quality of teaching
- organise the structure of the day for the older children to allow them to become highly involved in activities (also applies to care)

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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