

My Little Angels Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	118621
Inspection date	29 January 2008
Inspector	Toni Hanson
Setting Address	Gardiners Corner, Aveley Road, Upminster, Essex, RM14 2TN
Telephone number	01708 222450
E-mail	
Registered person	Sonia Lampitt
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

My Little Angels Day Nursery opened in October 2000 and is located in the London Borough of Havering. It operates from a single storey building, situated on the edge of a residential area of Corbets Tey. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas. A maximum of 12 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 23 children on roll. Of these, 12 receive funding for nursery education. Children may attend all day or for morning or afternoon sessions only. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and currently supports children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 08:00 until 18:00, all year round, apart from bank holidays. The nursery's owner manages the setting. She employs an additional three members of staff who work directly with the children. All staff hold early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, hygienic and very well-organised environment. They benefit from the nursery's effective hygiene procedures designed to minimise the risk of infection, such as the cleansing of tables before children eat. One member of staff holds a current, relevant paediatric first aid certificate and a rolling programme is in place to ensure the rest of the staff team update their training as necessary. Staff implement procedures such as the recording of accidents and administration of medication accurately to protect children's good health. Children are learning about the importance of personal care. Pictures of a child hand washing displayed in the children's bathroom are used to remind children of this important hygiene routine. They respond readily to gentle reminders to wash their hands before eating lunch. Paper towels are provided for hand drying, to reduce the risk of cross infection.

Children's menus are healthy, balanced and contain lots of fresh fruit, salad and vegetable options. Meals are wholesome and cooked from fresh ingredients each day. Children tuck in readily to meals such as fresh mackerel, mashed potato, carrots, broccoli, peppers and peas. They show a good sense of humour when they joke with staff that they want 'spiders, slugs and snails for lunch'. Their understanding of healthy eating is promoted well through topic work, such as making a large art display about different food groups. Children talk about foods that are good for them at snack time. Staff work closely with parents to ensure children's individual dietary requirements are catered for. Although children are offered drinks at lunch and snack times, they do not have free access to drinks of water at other times of the day when they may be thirsty. This limits opportunities for children to learn to meet their own health needs. Children have frequent opportunities to practise and improve their physical skills. They use a wide range of small equipment and tools with increasing confidence and control including pencils, chalk, knives and forks. They learn to move their bodies in different ways as they join in with action songs and rhymes. Children use the large play equipment in the outdoor area with enjoyment and go for nature walks to the local woodland area regularly. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure any child requiring a rest or sleep can be accommodated comfortably.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe and secure nursery environment. The nursery is made bright and welcoming through the use of colourful posters, pictures and displays of the children's work. Many of these however, are placed at adult eye level, so children cannot easily see and enjoy them. Very few creative displays show children's personal, individual artwork. Staff work hard to make the nursery environment attractive. For example flowery table cloths are used to decorate the children's tables. Daily risk assessments are completed and recorded by staff to ensure risks and hazards are minimised and children's safety is promoted. Staff supervise children well. The nursery building and grounds are secure. Visitors are monitored and supervised and a record of their presence maintained. Secure procedures are in place to ensure staff are appropriately vetted and suitable to work with children.

Children have easy access to a good range of play equipment and resources, most of which are presented at their level, so they can easily find what they need. This enhances children's learning and increases opportunities for them to be independent. Nursery equipment is checked and

cleansed regularly to ensure it remains in good condition. Children benefit from a broad range of safety measures, including a regularly practised emergency evacuation procedure and a secure outdoor play area. Children have ample space to play and move around the premises confidently and safely. They learn simple rules that keep them safe when playing, such as ensuring they walk rather than run indoors. Staff have clear policies and procedures to follow if they are worried or concerned about a child's welfare. They attend local authority and in-house child protection training to keep their knowledge and understanding up to date. This supports children's well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly greeted by staff as they arrive at nursery. They enter happily and separate from their parents and carers with confidence. New and settling children are given warm and sensitive support to help ease the transition from home. Children enjoy opportunities to make their own choices from the play resources easily accessible to them. Younger children are becoming increasingly independent, for example as they put on their own coats when going for a walk and attempt to tie their messy play aprons. They become skilful communicators expressing themselves well as they play. Staff listen to children carefully and give them sufficient time and opportunities to talk about things that interest them. The younger children snuggle up to staff to look at books and chat about the pictures displayed. Children use their imagination in situations such as role-play in the home play area. They explore a range of different media and materials such as chalk, glue, glitter and collage materials. However, opportunities for them to express themselves freely and be independent in art and craft activities are more limited as many art activities are adult led and prescriptive.

During free play time, children enjoy exploring and investigating play resources. They become competent learners as they build towers from bricks, thread beads, draw with chalk and learn to use knives and forks to eat their lunch. However, staff plan some large group activities and experiences at the same level for all children and as a result younger children are not always fully involved and effectively supported. For example, the two-year-old children are given pencils and worksheet activities to complete, rather than age appropriate, first hand play activities that support the development of their eye hand co-ordination.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Although staff understand how three and four years olds learn and have an appropriate understanding of the stepping stones and early learning goals, they rely heavily on worksheet activities rather than providing children with meaningful, practical, first hand learning experiences. Children are keen to play and learn and concentrate well at activities that interest them.

Children's communication and early literacy skills are developing well. They confidently talk to staff and each in both large and small group situations. Children are given good support to participate in discussions and are listened to carefully. They excitedly share their news and talk about events that are important to them, such as a recent trip to the shops with friends. Children listen with interest and pleasure to stories and are keen to share their thoughts about what may happen next. The book corner allows them to independently enjoy looking at books. Children know they must handle books with care and turn the pages correctly. Children have free access to writing tools and materials, such as paper, chalk, crayons and pencils. They have

frequent opportunities to complete work sheet activities and use pencils with very good control. Most children can write their own names correctly using mostly correctly formed letters.

Children's early understanding of mathematical concepts is promoted sufficiently. They confidently count how many children are present and work out how many children are left when someone goes home. Children join in with number rhymes and songs enthusiastically. They have frequent opportunities to name and recognize basic shapes and colours, solving problems of shape and size as they turn the pieces of a puzzle until it fits and the picture is complete. Children design and build using construction kits. Their understanding of mathematical concepts such as the 'longest' and shortest' are not effectively supported, as they colour in worksheets rather participate in meaningful, practical activities such as sorting real items into size order.

Children have regular opportunities to explore information and communication technology. They happily tap away at the child size laptop, pretending they are 'ordering' items of clothes from the clothes catalogue. They work out how to operate technology toys and make press button story books play. At group circle time, children talk about the passing of time, discuss the day of the week, the weather and what clothing is appropriate to wear for the day's weather conditions. Children have regular opportunities to explore and investigate and make sense of the world around them. They explore the natural world as they look at different types of trees and shrubbery growing in the local woods.

Children enjoy being creative. They sing familiar songs and rhymes at group time and have regular access to musical instruments. Children explore and talk about the different textures of chalk, paint, glue, tissue paper and card as they complete collage pictures designed by staff. They use their imagination well, when dressing up and playing 'schools'. Although staff say children have opportunities to freely paint, draw and express their own ideas through art, very few examples of children's own creative work are displayed. This means that their pride in their own work is not effectively promoted.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and included in the life of the pre-school. Children become aware of their own and each others' needs through discussions with staff and topic work designed to develop their awareness of the wider world. Staff organise a nativity play for parents at Christmas. The children make candles to take home as part of their Diwali topic and they eat figs, kiwi fruits and other exotic fruits at snack time. Older children have French lessons once a week and are able to say simple phrases and sing songs in French. Children have access to an appropriate range of positive play resources, including posters, books and puzzles. They explore their local community as they go for nature walks to the local woodland area. They enjoy outing on buses to visit places of interest linked to topics, such as a pet shop. The nursery's special educational needs coordinator is appropriately experienced and qualified. Staff work closely with parents to ensure children's individual medical and dietary needs are known and met effectively. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is appropriately fostered.

Children's behaviour is very good. They discuss nursery rules at morning group time, when they are reminded that they should 'share' and 'sit and listen nicely'. They comply with nursery routines willingly, including lining up patiently ready to walk to the eating area. Staff deal with difficulties between children calmly and use discussion effectively to help them learn to take turns and share fairly. This helps them gain an understanding about why their actions are not

acceptable and how this affects other people. Children develop personal independence as they choose the play equipment they need and decide which song they would like to sing at circle time. All children are keen to help staff sort and tidy away toys at the end of an activity. Older children learn about responsible behaviour as they help set the tables for lunch and take worksheets to be photocopied for their group.

The staff team are keen to work in partnership with parents. The key worker system, daily report sheets, information displayed on the parents notice board and quarterly newsletters ensure parents are kept up to date with their child's care, achievements and progress. The nursery actively welcomes suggestions and ideas for improvements from parents, through an annual parental feedback questionnaire and then act on the suggestions they receive. Parents say they appreciate the warm, welcoming, family type environment staff provide for their children. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive useful information about the Foundation Stage curriculum through the pre-school's prospectus. Information about the daily activities on offer and current topics is exchanged through the children's individual daily reports and quarterly newsletters. Parents are encouraged to further support their children's learning at home by contributing to topic work and following on from activities provided at nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit as staff work effectively together and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Good communication systems and team work ensure that the nursery operates efficiently and the children's day runs smoothly. A higher than required child/staff ratio is maintained and the deployment of staff is good. This ensures children are well supervised and form close trusting relationships with staff. Children's safety is a priority and their health needs are met well. A high standard of hygiene and safety is maintained throughout the nursery and healthy eating for children is promoted well. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children are happy and well cared for. They receive warm, consistent care from staff and their learning outcomes are satisfactorily promoted. Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and the planning of the curriculum are not fully secure. Although learning activities for children are carefully planned, they do not always effectively meet children's individual developmental needs. Staff's over dependence on worksheet activities, limits opportunities for children to explore and learn through first hand, practical experiences. Staff are keen to work in partnership with parents and provide a supportive and flexible childcare service. Secure links between home and nursery help ensure children feel settled and secure. All the required documentation, necessary for the safe management of the nursery is maintained appropriately, extremely well-organised and stored securely.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, opportunities for children to develop their personal independence skills have improved. Most play equipment is now stored in purpose made shelving units, that allow children to learn to choose and select equipment for themselves. Pencils and pads are now provided in role play areas such as the 'Little Angels School'. This allows children to practise their early writing skills through play.

Children freely access the role play area, acting out real and imagined events in their lives. However, most of the art work displayed is very adult directed and shows limited opportunities for children to express their own thoughts and ideas creatively. This remains an area for improvement.

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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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):

- promote children's pride and self esteem in their own creative artwork by incorporating this work within displays of work that has been adult led
- improve planning to ensure that all activities provided for the younger children are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs
- provide further opportunities for children to express their own thoughts and ideas through art and creative activities. This recommendation also applies to nursery education

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):

- improve the quality of teaching and children's learning by planning and providing more first hand, practical play experiences for children.

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