

Alphabet Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123053
Inspection date	06 November 2007
Inspector	Janet Sharon Williams
Setting Address	Chatham Hall, Northcote Road, Battersea, London, SW11 6DY
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Registered person	Allison Jane McKenzie-Lewis
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Alphabet Nursery School was registered in October 1992. The group operates from a hall with an additional room and toilet facilities. There is an enclosed area for play outside. It is situated in Battersea in the London Borough of Wandsworth near local shops and public transport services. A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery school at any one time. It opens term times for morning sessions from 09:00 to 12:00, Monday to Friday and afternoon sessions from 13:15 to 15:45, Monday to Thursday.

There are currently 45 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 receive funding for early education. The nursery currently has no children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They support a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery school employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The nursery school uses traditional and Montessori teaching methods.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean environment where they learn to follow most hygiene habits, for example, they are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet. However, their hands are not washed before snacks and some children share the same towel, which can cause cross-contamination due to some children using it to wipe their face. Good procedures are in place for recording accidents and parental permission has been obtained for emergency medical treatment. Most staff have an up to date first aid certificate and there is a first aid box on site, however many of the items are out of date.

Children have healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit, each day. Staff are fully aware of children's special dietary requirements. Fresh drinking water is readily available where children can independently help themselves at any time.

Children have the opportunity to play outside and participate in physical activities, such as manoeuvring bicycles and sit-and-ride toys. During the summer months they make use of the local park where they also have a sports day event.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where all of the safety precautions have been taken to minimise accidents indoors and out, for example, risk assessments are frequently carried out, toys and equipment are checked to ensure that they are safe and in good condition, fire drills practiced and recorded and the well deployed staff ensure children are supervised at all times.

Children play in a bright and welcoming setting, where their painting and pictures are well displayed. Space is organised well to provide children with easy access to a range of toys and equipment. Resources are stored and organised at child's level to motivate children to want to make their own choices about what they want to do or play with, for example, there is a laid out home corner with play crockery and cutlery, this area is also set up as a shop or where children can dress up in various costumes and role play. Children also have access to a quiet area where they can look at books and enjoy floor and table top toys to effectively cover all areas of learning.

Children are protected and their welfare safeguarded through staff's sound knowledge of child protection. Effective child protection procedures promote children's well being and most staff have attended a safeguarding awareness training course.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled and show an interest in what they can do. They have access to a wide range of resources. Activities are presented to give children good opportunities to progress in their learning. Written plans clearly identify how children are learning, however they do not include the Birth to three matters. Children show an interest in themed activities, which are carefully planned and adapted to their ages and stages of development. For example,

this week's topic is Portugal; they talk about the country's environment and what the people like to eat, such as fish. They participate in making collages of fishes, using coloured paper, and also making the country's national flag. Although children enjoy being engaged in group play and activities, some creative craft activities staff over direct the children, which do not always give them the opportunity to use their own imagination. Throughout the session children have circle time where they sing songs and rhymes and enjoy doing actions. In addition, during the summer months, children enjoy trips to the farm.

Children make positive relationships, have opportunities to play alone or in small or large groups and there is a good balance of child initiated activities. Staff's knowledge about all the children helps them provide suitable activities. There is also an effective key workers system in place, where staff work closely with their groups of children throughout each session.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning and the Montessori teaching method has been integrated within the six areas of learning. Children's progress files clearly identify how children are learning and are moved on in their learning at a good pace. Staff create a stimulating environment where children's work is beautifully displayed and labelled. This shows children's work is valued. Their art work displays that they paint, cut and stick using various materials, such as tissue paper and coloured paper. Children also have many opportunities to use their senses and explore a varied range of materials, both natural and manufactured. For example, they enjoy playing with sand and water.

Throughout the session staff plan and provide a good range of practical activities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, they draw pictures that represent their experiences in their home life, such as what they do with their families. This gives them the opportunity and understanding of past and present and what is going on around them. However they have limited access to information technology.

Children speak very confidently to their peers and adults. At story time they listen attentively and respond well when asked to link sounds and letters together, such as 'M' and 'B'. They listen and take turns when speaking in large and small groups. They also reply to questions, such as what day, month and year is it, and talk about what the weather is like outside. Children have many opportunities to practice writing using pencils; many children can write their own name and other children's names. They are able to recognise and write letters from the shape or sound.

Children count confidently, at song time they choose number rhymes such as five current buns, where they learn to subtract. They learn about size, shape and using appropriate maths language through using puzzles and flash cards.

Children are very independent. They see to their personal needs such as dressing and undressing, visiting the toilet and washing hands, deciding when to have their drink and are exceptionally helpful when tidying up. Children's physical skills are good; they are capable at using small equipment such as scissors and glue spatulas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to accept differences, through learning about other religion, culture and disability awareness. A good range of activities and resources develop children's understanding of diversity, for example, books, puzzles, dolls and theme topics relate to countries around the world, such as Canada and the continent Africa.

Staff are secure in their understanding on meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The designated person ensures that they are able to meet and plan for children's individual needs. This also means adapting activities to make sure all children are included.

Children behave well through being fully occupied and cared for by staff who are good role models. They also learn to share and take turns while playing group and team games and benefit from lots of praise and encouragement from staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The nursery school has very strong links with parents and actively supports parental involvement. Parents are exceptionally happy with the service provided. They find staff friendly, supportive and approachable and value the ongoing support given to their children. Parents receive information about the setting, however, the detail on complaints is incomplete and does not include a contact address and telephone number for Ofsted.

Partnership with parents is good. They work together and share information about children's individual progress and development. A parents' day is organised and a letter issued every term to keep parents up to date. Parents are regularly involved with their children's learning, contribute to topics and help their child with their work book, which they take home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are well grouped and the key worker system ensures appropriate support and care throughout the session. Staff work well as a team and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating well-balanced programme. Most staff have a relevant child care qualification.

Children benefit from a well organised environment where they receive good adult support to help them feel secure and confident. The sessions at the nursery are suitably planned, allowing children time for quiet and active play.

Written policies and procedures and most of the mandatory requirements are in place. Although there is a system to record children's arrival times, this does not include their departure and the staff's attendance details do not include arrival and departure times. These are a breach of regulation.

Leadership and Management is good. Staff are fully involved with the planning and the day to day running of the nursery school. Plans are clear on how children are progressing in all areas of learning and to ensure children reach to their full potential. Staff are fully supported in their training and development as this improves the quality of education they offer to all children.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery school was asked to ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that reflect positive images of disability and that the premises are maintained at an adequate and comfortable temperature. These have all been satisfactorily addressed to meet children's needs effectively.

The last education inspection recommended formal opportunities for parents and staff to share records and reports of children's individual progress and development. They frequently meet to share written and verbal information on how children are progressing within the nursery school.

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):

- improve hygiene standards by ensuring children wash their hands before snack time
- ensure that the first aid box is regularly checked and contents are not out of date
- ensure that children's creative work is produced according to their own ideas and not over directed by staff
- ensure plans include the Birth to three matters.
- review information on complaints procedure and ensure that the correct information is available for parents, for example Ofsted's contact address and telephone number
- ensure registration details for staff and children include arrival and departure times

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):

- ensure children have access to information 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