

Highbury Community Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131695
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Inspector	Valerie Fane
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Registered person	Highbury Community 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 inadequate – notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Highbury Community Nursery is run by a charitable company that was registered in 1985. It operates from a large house in Highbury and has a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The nursery serves the surrounding area.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 88 children on roll. Of these 35 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

There are 20 staff who work with the children. Of these two have appropriate qualifications to Level 2 and a further 15 are qualified to Level 3 or above. The nursery receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health is compromised because some areas of the premises and many items of equipment are not kept clean. For example, the rugs and toys such as cloth books in the all the baby rooms are dirty, the sand tray in the pre-school room is dirty and so is most of the outside play equipment. Children receive suitable care in the event of an accident on because several staff have current first aid knowledge. However, their continuity of care is not ensured because staff in some base rooms do not consistently record children's full names or ensure that parents sign the accident records. Children's privacy is also compromised because the accident books have multiple entries on each page so that confidentiality is not maintained. In other respects children's health needs are met. Babies' routines are known and maintained and all staff are aware of each child's needs because their individual routines and particular needs are clearly displayed in their base rooms. Children develop some awareness of good hygiene. Older babies and pre-school children learn to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating and the pre-school children help to clean tables after messy play.

Children learn about healthy eating and nutrition because their snacks and lunches are healthy and they have fresh drinking water available at all times. Young children become independent eaters and begin to exercise some control over their eating because they have opportunities to choose how much they want of different types of food. Older children extend their knowledge of healthy eating through activities linked to stories such as 'Handa's surprise' when they read the story and make a wall display of the different fruit in the story.

Children have excellent opportunities for outdoor play and exercise. They spend long periods of time outside each day in almost any weather conditions and parents are asked to send them suitably dressed. They have additional opportunities for exercise indoors because a large ball pool is provided. Children enjoy physical activities outside that provide excellent challenge for all age groups. They develop very good climbing and balancing skills using the climbing frame and balance plank or using the natural features of the garden. They balance on logs, climb the tree stump or use a flight of steps to help them climb into a small tree and jump off the lowest branch. They develop throwing and catching skills with a range of small equipment such as balls and Frisbees and dig in the flowerbeds with gardening tools.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are not fully safeguarded because the registered person has not taken positive steps to promote safety in the outside area. Although staff carry out monthly safety checks they fail to identify all hazards to children. The garden is not free from poisonous plants; cleaning equipment, such as dirty mops, is left within reach of children; some of the rubbish bins are located in the children's play area and the bark chippings are not always checked for rubbish. Additionally, children are able to help themselves to toys from the sheds but toys on the higher shelves are stacked so that there is a risk of them falling on to a child. Children are generally supervised well when they are at the nursery but they are not safeguarded in an emergency situation because there are no written procedures in place to be followed in the event of a child being lost.

Children use premises that are suitable and provide adequate space for the number of children but cleaning standards are unsatisfactory. They use a suitable range of toys and equipment including child-sized furniture. Most of the equipment is of good quality but it is poorly-maintained. Children access toys independently because most of them are stored in low-level containers.

Children are safe on the premises because these are secure. The front door is kept locked and an intercom system is used to check who is at the door before anyone is admitted. The outside play area is fenced securely. There are clearly defined procedures in place for emergency evacuation of the building and these are known to all staff. Children develop awareness of their personal safety because they have regular opportunities to practise the procedures including using different exit routes from the higher floors of the building.

Children enjoy safe outings because staff visit any new destination first to assess any risks. When children visit local parks staff do a visual risk assessment of the area before they allow children to enter. Children's welfare is ensured because a high ratio of staff accompany them and all necessary equipment and contact information is taken on the outings. They learn to keep themselves safe because staff talk to them beforehand about road safety and when they are out they help them to identify safe places to cross roads and to decide when it is safe to do so.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow if they were to have concerns about a child in their care. Children learn to protect themselves from possible abuse because they become confident communicators who understand that they do not have to tolerate unacceptable behaviour from other children and are confident to ask them to change their behaviour.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages settle easily and enjoy the family atmosphere of this friendly nursery. They develop good relationships with the staff, particularly with their key workers. Children are placed in different base rooms according to their age but they spend until 10:00 each morning altogether in the garden or if they prefer in one of the baby rooms. This gives children of different ages regular opportunity to socialise. Older children move to their base rooms at the time of their choice after their rooms have been opened for the day.

Babies enjoy opportunities to experiment with a wide range of different media. They explore the texture of a tray of desiccated coconut with different parts of their bodies. They scoop it up with their hands and let it run between their fingers and they stand or sit in the tray and feel it with their feet. Older babies have many different opportunities to make marks and symbols. They use brushes to paint freely and they make marks in dry sand with a range of tools and look at the different marks they have made with brushes of different sizes. Children listen and respond to stories and songs. They enthusiastically listen to 'Where's my Mummy?' and enjoy using props from a story sack. Children each hold an animal and hold it up when the duckling comes to ask if they are its mummy. They learn to express feelings because they talk about duckling being upset at losing his mummy and show happy faces when he finds her. Children make good progress because staff in the base rooms for children under three years of age all plan appropriate activities linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and observe children closely to identify targets for their individual learning and development.

Children of school age who have previously attended the nursery are offered care in the school holidays. They enjoy an interesting range of age-appropriate activities because one member of staff has attended training to support children of this age and is aware of their different needs. They enjoy outside activities such as climbing trees or face painting one another and they join the younger children on trips to places such as the new local football stadium where they enjoy an obstacle course set up by the stadium staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from the staff's clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff provide a balanced framework of planned activities that they then expand as they follow children's interests and leading. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is outstanding because they become confident, independent learners who initiate their own learning. Staff are aware of children's starting points because they carry out detailed observations, discuss children's stage of development with their parents and receive detailed information from children's key worker in their previous base room. Children progress well because staff observe and record their learning and development and use the observations to set targets for individual children and to inform future planning. Children behave well because they are involved and interested in their play and because staff manage their time well to provide high quality and carefully timed input. Staff provide the necessary resources for children to benefit from activities but the toys and equipment provided are frequently either dirty or poorly-maintained. This potentially deters children's enthusiasm for learning.

Children thoroughly enjoy water play both indoors and outside. They fill the indoor container themselves and decide what toys they want to put in it. They explore different materials as they fetch some sand and investigate what happens when they mix it with the water. They use different tools as they pour water from one container to another and mix it with a spoon and develop their creativity as they pretend to make a pancake. Outside they use the hose under staff supervision to fill the shallow water tray and they add washing up liquid to the water. They have great fun making giant bubbles with a hoop and experiment to see what happens as they move away from the water tray pulling their bubble.

Children are confident initiators of ideas to extend their play. They decide that they do not like the wall at the bottom of the garden and ask staff if they can paint it blue. They go inside with the member of staff to fetch the necessary equipment and she extends their knowledge of colours as she asks them whether they want it to be light blue or dark blue. They discuss this together and agree they want it to be light blue. They mix the paint and find some proper paint brushes and come back outside to paint the wall. They show sustained concentration and interest to complete the task of painting the wall with great enthusiasm.

Children like to listen to stories. Staff engage children's attention using story sacks for stories such as 'The three little pigs'. Children guess which story they are going to hear from the bag of props. Staff tell children that there are four props and older children show an awareness of numbers because they immediately say that they are four years old. Children listen to the story and try to predict what is going to happen next because staff ask appropriate questions. They confidently act out the story and the children who are chosen to have the props take on the role of the different animals and confidently say the phrases said by the pigs and the wolf to the whole group. Children develop their understanding of mathematical language because the member of staff asks the wolf if he is full when he has eaten two of the pigs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children are not fully protected because there is no written complaints procedure which includes the name, address and telephone number of the regulator in place. Parents are therefore not aware of how to make a complaint should the need arise. In other respects children benefit greatly from the close relationships that develop between staff and parents. Key workers get to know children and their families extremely well and provide excellent support, especially in times of particular need. Children's links between home and nursery are strengthened because they each have a scrap book that contains information and pictures from home as well as photographs of them enjoying nursery activities. Children tell their key worker about things they have seen or done at home and the key worker helps them record it in the scrap book through drawings or writing.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents receive written information about the nursery's ethos for child-centred learning as part of the information pack at the point of admission. When children transfer to the pre-school room staff explain the six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage to parents so that they are aware of the different areas. Children are able to continue their learning at home because parents see the weekly planning displayed on the wall outside the pre-school room and this includes some specific targets for individual children. Parents are aware of their children's progress because they have open access to their record folders at any time and they receive an annual report covering the six areas of learning once a year.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children develop very good self-esteem because they are fully involved in developing their own play and learning and they are included in nursery decisions that affect them. For example, they discuss where they should eat their lunches while the kitchens are being renovated and what types of sandwiches or hot snacks they would like to have during this time. They are aware of our wider society because they use a range of equipment such as dolls, dressing up and musical instruments that reflects a variety of cultures and they discuss festivals in nursery that are celebrated by staff or children who attend. Children who speak English as an additional language or who are bilingual are valued and supported because the nursery has bilingual books and they see posters around the nursery in different languages. Children with little or no English learn to speak simple phrases in English and quickly become confident communicators.

Children generally behave well in the nursery because staff are good role models and are consistent in their expectations. They address behaviour issues positively whenever possible and place a strong emphasis on praising good behaviour rather than highlighting undesirable behaviour. Children learn to share and to take turns with toys or activities. They are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves rather than sharing being enforced by adults. For example, when they take turns to use the props for a song at circle time they pass the toys on to another child after their turn with only verbal encouragement from the staff.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good care because the staff liaise closely with their parents and, if appropriate, with outside agencies. Staff use guidance provided by outside agencies to develop individual education plans for such children and to provide appropriate support in the nursery. Children benefit because staff attend additional training such as 'makaton' to improve the support they are able to offer to children with particular needs.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are not fully protected because Ofsted has not been notified at the earliest opportunity of all changes in the management committee. Additionally, some members of the committee who are known to Ofsted have not submitted to checks prescribed in regulations as determined by Ofsted. Despite the good management of the nursery education there are serious concerns about the management's capacity to maintain the nursery at an adequate standard of safety and cleanliness as there have now been repeated concerns over a number of years. In other respects children are protected because the committee and the manager are aware of their responsibilities with regard to employment of staff and thorough recruitment procedures are in place. This ensures that all staff have been vetted and are suitable to be in contact with children.

Children benefit from the experience and expertise of well-qualified staff, nearly all of whom have relevant early years qualifications. Staff are committed to attending regular training to obtain further qualifications or to update and improve their practice. Children's welfare is generally safeguarded because most required policies and procedures are in place other than those mentioned elsewhere in the report. These are made available to parents as part of the induction process and on request thereafter. Parents also provide all necessary information and consents before their child attends the group.

Leadership and management of funded children is good. Children thrive because the manager is totally committed to her clear vision to provide high quality child-centred nursery education. This is planned so that children learn through play and staff follow their lead and provide opportunities and activities to develop individual needs and interests. The manager communicates her vision clearly to her dedicated team of staff and sets very high standards for the planning, observation and evaluation of children's play and learning. Staff work well together and are fully involved in the planning and implementation of the nursery education. The manager has a very clear view of the strengths of the group and has a clear plan in place to develop the areas for improvement that she has previously identified as part of the self-evaluation process. The management committee provide good support for the manager through monthly committee meetings and regular visits to the nursery.

Overall the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of care the nursery was required to notify Ofsted promptly of changes in the management committee and to take positive steps to promote safety in the setting. The nursery was also recommended to ensure that records of staff qualifications are available on the premises, to keep proper medication records and to ensure that the premises are kept clean and well-maintained in all areas.

Children are safeguarded in the following ways. Accurate medication records are kept that include signed written permission to administer the medication and parental signature for the dosage records. Photocopies of staff qualifications are taken at the time of appointment and are kept on record in the office. However, in other respects children are not safeguarded because the remaining actions and recommendations have not been met and further actions have been set as indicated elsewhere in the report.

At the last inspection of the nursery education the points for consideration were to improve the planning by showing links to the stepping stones and to carry out formal staff appraisals.

Good progress has been made in these areas. The medium term planning now shows clear links to the stepping stones. Regular staff appraisals are carried out and these give opportunities for staff to review their strengths and areas for improvement and to identify any training needs.

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 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that Ofsted is notified at the earliest opportunity of any changes in the registered person
- take positive steps to promote and ensure safety in the setting, both indoors and in the outside area
- promote the good health of children: ensure that the premises and the equipment are clean and ensure that a record is maintained of any accident that occurs that includes children's full names and is signed by parents
- ensure that all persons providing day care have submitted to checks prescribed in regulations as determined by Ofsted
- ensure that there is a written complaints procedure which includes the address and telephone number of the regulator and make this available to parents
- ensure that there are procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost.

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

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 the nursery education by providing children with equipment that is clean and well-maintained.

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