

Gange Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509058
Inspection date	17 December 2007
Inspector	Bharti Vakil
Setting Address	68 Canning Road, WEALDSTONE, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 7SN
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Registered person	Harrow Council
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Gange Children's Centre opened in 1979. The registered provider of this setting is the Harrow Local Authority. It operates from a purpose built building in Wealdstone in the London Borough of Harrow. There are fully enclosed, secure outdoor play areas. The centre is registered to provide sessional day care as well as holiday care. A maximum of 40 children from two years to under five years may attend the sessional care and up to 20 children from three years to under eight years may attend the holiday care at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.00 to 16.00 all year round. Morning sessions are from 09.00 until 12.30 and afternoon sessions run from 13.00 until 16.00.

There are currently 38 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for early years education. Children come from a wide catchment area and attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and welfare are thoroughly promoted, they are learning excellent hygiene practices and developing self-care skills. For example, they are encouraged to wash hands at appropriate times and cover their mouth when sneezing. Some children use the bathroom independently, they proudly show their 'clean hands' to adults.

Children are protected from infection or harmful bacteria as the staff have a good understanding of health and hygiene procedures. They wear protective clothing during nappy changes. They cover tables with clean table cloth before serving food at meal times. Effective policies and procedures are in place to manage accidents and administer first aid and medication, thereby helping to ensure children are well looked after.

Children have many good opportunities to develop their coordination and enjoy fresh air daily. The setting's outdoor covered and open play areas provide plenty of room for children to explore freely, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Children enjoy putting their hoods up and wrapping up warmly to be outside when it is cold. Older and more able children are offered challenge and daring as the outdoor play area includes a climbing frame. This enables children to gain confidence and skill. Children are gaining an awareness of space when navigating and steering bikes. They have fun as they use the vegetable patch to plant and care for runner beans, carrots and cauliflower. This gives them first hand contact with seasons and the natural world and develop their understanding of the importance of being active and having regular exercise to keep healthy.

Children enjoy nutritious and well-planned meals, such as chicken soup and lentil curry. Fresh vegetables, fruit and milk are routinely provided. Children's individual dietary needs are known and carefully observed by the cook and childcare staff. A vegetarian option is available everyday and food such as Halal meat is provided. The independence of the older children is encouraged as they regularly serve themselves at mealtimes. Children enjoy relaxed sociable meal times as they sit with staff and chat about their day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming and child-friendly environment. They explore safely and freely as they experience a wide range of stimulating play opportunities. Staff make very good use of the space available to allow children opportunities to be active and engage in table top and floor activities both indoors as well as outdoors. All children enjoy their time in the bright and attractive play areas. Children's needs are met effectively because there is a good range of furniture, toys and equipment which is well maintained.

Staff are deployed effectively and are vigilant about children's whereabouts which enables them to supervise and interact with children. Security procedures such as an entry phone and closed circuit television, help to ensure that the premises are secure. Other precautions are in place to protect children, for example, all visitors are required to sign in and out of the premises. Fire drills are carried out at least once each term however, practices are not frequent enough, which means that not all staff and children have opportunities to experience how the evacuation procedure works in practice.

Children's welfare is protected because staff have a clear understanding of their role in relation to child protection issues. They know the indicators of abuse and the procedure to be followed for reporting concerns. Good policies and procedures are in place in the event of suspected abuse and an allegation made against staff. Children are safeguarded in the nursery as they are cared for by staff who are appropriately vetted to care for them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children have good opportunities to make progress in all areas of their development. The good settling in procedures ensure children are happy and secure. Parents are encouraged to settle their children when they first start and staff are warm and kind. As a result, children are confident and keen to explore and investigate their surroundings and extend their learning.

The Birth to three matters framework, which supports children in their earliest years, is incorporated into the planning of the routine and activities. Staff have sound knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and are beginning to implement this effectively within the setting. However, the planning, observing and evaluating children's progress in line with the new framework has not been refined. Children have good opportunities to develop problem solving skills as they sort objects, post shapes and build with blocks. They are developing their creativity as they paint and chalk. They are developing their imagination as they participate in role-play where they enact familiar scenes, for example, in the home corner. Children are exploring different textures as they pat the sand, squeeze play dough, splash water and handle pasta and lentils. Children have many chances to develop their early writing and reading skills, as they enjoy drawing with pencils and crayons and begin to take interest in books. They are interested in looking at books such as 'My First Potty' in small groups. However, the organisation of large group story and singing time is not meeting needs of all the children because some children lose interest, stand up and move away.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and how children learn and progress. They plan a well-balanced curriculum which helps children to make good progress in all areas of their development. Staff observe and record children's progress to help them identify the next steps for their individual learning. They provide suitable support and challenges to help children achieve. The setting is beginning to implement The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which will be mandatory from September 2008. Although, the system in place is being developed the teaching sessions are well organised to allow all children to participate at their own level.

Children are making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They have many opportunities to develop their independence. The lay out of the play rooms has been carefully considered and staff set out toys and resources to enable children to make choices independently. Children are interested, excited and motivated to learn as they persist at chosen activities, for example, when pouring water over water wheels and fitting puzzles.

Children are able to write spontaneously and for a variety of purposes, for example, shopping lists during role-play in the home corner. They happily use pencils, crayons and ask for 'grown up pen' to use with the clip board in the pretend office area. They have access to a selection of books which they look at independently and use them to locate information. Children listen attentively to stories and staff use props such as flash cards and puppets to provide further

support for children with English as an additional language and/or learning difficulties. Children have opportunities to link their name to their photograph and see letters and words used in displays. This helps them to recognise letters and simple word formation. Children have good opportunities to explore language during discussion times and during practical activities.

Children are provided with good opportunities to find out about their environment and the natural world, for example, the life cycle of a butterfly. Through use of photographs, children are able to recall past events. Awareness of customs and cultures is gained through planned projects and activities. Children enjoy planting and caring for peppers and cress, observing the changes as they grow. They extend their learning experiences as they use these vegetables to make sandwiches. Children use a range of equipment such as keyboards, telephones, water wheels and magnifying glasses with increasing confidence.

Children are developing their number and problem solving skills as they participate in a wide range of activities, for example, threading, posting, measuring, constructing and calculating. They are encouraged to use numbers in practical situations, such as calculating how many more chairs are needed to accommodate all children around the table.

Children have lots of opportunities to create and develop their imagination. These include exploring colour, texture and shape as they stick with a variety of materials, paint and draw. They enjoy exploring different textures such as play dough, sand, and corn flour and water. They enjoy playing musical instruments and can sing songs from memory. The well defined and the well equipped role-play areas encourage children to play imaginatively and purposefully.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered in a warm and friendly environment where differences are valued and respected. Children's individual needs are met well because staff find out from parents about the children's routine and development. Children are developing lots of confidence and self-esteem as they explore independently in this safe environment. In addition, they confidently talk about their family and recall past events, such as their outing to the library. Children have access to a meaningful range of resources to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their understanding of diversity, for example, dressing up clothes, dolls, books, posters and puzzles. They participate in activities and celebrations of various festivals throughout the year, for example, Chanukah and Christmas.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend the setting. Staff work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and other professionals such as the speech and occupational therapists to ensure children's individual needs are met sensitively and effectively.

Children's behaviour is appropriate for their ages and stages of development. They are supported in understanding right from wrong as staff use appropriate strategies. They learn to take turns, share and be kind and considerate towards each other. Children are valued for their efforts and achievements and receive praise and encouragements in their daily activities. This helps develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Children benefit from the good relationships the staff have with their parents and carers. Parents are encouraged to share information about their child before they start. This helps staff to settle the children successfully and consequently, children feel happy and secure. Parents receive regular information about the setting via newsletters and the notice board. There are

regular meetings to share children's progress and development. Information about the setting's policies and procedures are readily accessible at each session. Therefore, parents are clearly informed about the arrangements for the care of their children.

The partnership with parents whose children receive nursery education is good. The setting holds regular workshops where information is given about the Foundation Stage of learning. Parents are able to discuss their child's development with their key worker on a regular basis and every six months they meet formally to discuss the progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. Managers and staff are clear about their role and responsibilities and as a result, the day runs smoothly for the children. There have been difficulties recruiting staff and therefore, several agency staff are currently providing cover. This has some impact on developing evaluation and assessment systems of children's learning. Rigorous recruitment procedures are in place. Children's safety and welfare is promoted well. This is helped by agency staff who have worked in the setting previously and therefore, are familiar with some of the children and the setting's routine.

There are clear procedures in place to monitor the quality of teaching. This is done through observing staff and regular one to one meetings. Good communication systems are in place such as yearly staff appraisals, regular staff and planning meetings.

The premises are well organised and children are happy, secure and confident in their surroundings. Their individual needs are met effectively because staff have a good understanding of child care and development and they work well in partnership with parents. Good policies and procedures are in place and work well in practice to keep children healthy and safe. They are regularly reviewed and updated as legislation changes. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to update the complaints procedure to include Ofsted's role. This has been updated and parents have access to the comprehensive complaints procedure.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was required to provide opportunities for children to link sounds to letters, name and sound letters of the alphabet. Staff draw children's attention to sounds in their environment and to rhyming words. Children have opportunities to write for a purpose such as shopping lists. The setting was also required to: offer opportunities for children to explore calculation through practical activities; and provide further resources for children to explore and investigate how things work. Staff have developed these areas in the nursery. Children are participating in a wide range of activities which help develop their number and problem solving skills. They are encouraged to use numbers in practical situations, such as calculating how many more chairs are needed to accommodate all children. There are now more opportunities to explore why and how things happen such as ice melting. Children use a range of equipment such as telephones, torches, computer, measuring tapes, magnifying glasses and cameras. This improves the children's learning opportunities and provides a more exciting curriculum.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make sure fire drills are held with sufficient frequency, to ensure staff and children are familiar with the evacuation procedure
- continue to develop knowledge and understanding of Birth to three matters framework

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):

- review the organisation of large group activities to meet needs of all children (also applies to care)

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