

Alert Kids Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY282548
Inspection date	04 December 2007
Inspector	Jennifer Liverpool
Setting Address	806 High Road Leyton, London, E10 6AE
Telephone number	0208 558 8503
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Registered person	Alert Group 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?

Alert Group manage The Alert Kids Day Nursery. It opened in April 2004 and operates from six rooms in a purpose built building. The children's play area is open plan and age divided. The premises are situated to the back of the Children's Information Service office in the London borough of Waltham Forest. A maximum of 76 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are 73 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area and neighbouring boroughs, as most of their parents travel to work within the local community.

The nursery employs 19 staff. Of these, 17 staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification. The setting is currently participating in a quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is generally well promoted. Babies and young children in particular are cared for in clean surroundings as each has sole use of bedding, the area for making up milk feeds is hygienic and there are appropriate procedures in place for sterilizing bottles and eating utensils. In addition to this, staff follow suitable guidelines to ensure that germs and the spread of infection are minimised, as protective clothes are worn for nappy changing and when serving meals. However, children can easily access soiled paper towels as the bins are without lids and often filled to the top. The majority of staff hold valid first aid certificates and all first aid boxes are fully stocked. This means that appropriate care can be given to children in the event of sustaining minor injuries.

Staff follow babies' individual routine for eating and sleeping. This ensures continuity of care and contributes to their physical well-being. Babies' and young children's health is maintained as staff monitor, record and share their sleep, feeding and nappy changing routines with parents each day. The availability of an adequate range and variety of mobile play equipment and staff's support encourages babies to gain physical skills appropriate to their stage of development. Children regularly enjoy a range of activities such as music and movement; they have access to a large indoor ball pool and slide, hoops, balls and mobile equipment. This helps to keep them healthy.

Children learn about healthy eating as they are offered a choice of fresh fruits each day. Children's lunch is brought daily from a food company and they are provided with reasonably healthy and nutritious meals that include spaghetti Bolognese with cheese topping, vegetable gratin and chicken hotpot. Staff ensure that meals meet with children's individual dietary requirements when ordering. Fresh drinking water is available at all times and children confidently help themselves. Whilst children are encouraged to choose fruits for their snacks and help themselves to water, they are rarely given a choice of cutlery other than forks to eat their lunch with.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure environment where security systems such as closed circuit televisions and intercoms are in place. In addition to this, all visitors are monitored when on the premises and only authorised persons known to staff can collect children from the setting. Children have sufficient space to work and play indoors. The room provided for older children is located on the upper ground floor level with direct access to the outdoor play area.

Children and staff practise the emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis. This helps children to become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. Basic risk assessments, indoors and outdoors, help staff to identify and address potential hazards, such as mopping up spills, removal of broken toys and the storage of toxic substances above children's height. In spite of these measures, staff have overlooked the accessibility of electrical sockets and other slip hazards, such as children walking around on laminated wooden floors with only their socks on their feet.

Babies and young children are provided with a suitable range of toys that are age and developmentally appropriate. There is a sufficient amount of furniture and equipment for the comfort and safety of babies and young children. This includes high chairs, cots and nappy changing facilities. Children have easy and safe access to a range of resources that are labelled and stored at their level. This enables them to make choices about their play.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a sound understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and they know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing positive relationships with staff. Young babies receive attention from staff as they sit close to them, play games and attend to their personal needs. Children's emotional well-being is supported through staff obtaining relevant information about their care and development and respecting parent wishes. This enables staff to meet children's individual needs. Staff are familiar with the outcomes for children under three years and are using the guidance to provide a range of play experiences for babies and young children. For example, they have regular opportunities to explore paint and discover the marks and prints made by using their fingers and hands. Children are able to feel a range of different textures such as sand, jelly, shaving foam and bubble water in their play. These activities help children to respond in different ways to what they see, smell, touch and feel.

Children's communication and language skills are developing well through suitable activities, such as simple discussions, labelling, singing songs and nursery rhymes. Staff read stories to children and ask questions to develop and extend their language. Children are beginning to recognise and name primary colours such as 'red', 'blue' and 'green'. Some young children can count up to number eight. Flash cards, number displays and regular singing of songs such as 'five little ducks' help to support children in their understanding of numbers. Children enjoy and learn from a range of props, small world equipment and role-play materials that allow them to act out real life situations. They use cups and bottles to feed the dolls, make cups of tea in water play and bake cakes in the sand tray. Younger children are given appropriate support for developing personal independence skills such as toilet training and hand washing. However, children's independence at meals times is not always fully promoted.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children are making insufficient progress along the stepping stones towards most of the early learning goals. This is because staff have limited knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and they are not clear about how to support and extend children's learning. The system of observations and assessments is inefficient; some children's written assessments are carried out irregularly as reports are showing that no entries have been recorded over a period of five months. This means that children's progress is not regularly checked in order that staff can build on their current knowledge and skills. Whilst children are provided with an adequate range of activities each day, opportunities for children to develop their understanding and skills in communication, language and literacy, mathematical concepts and knowledge and understanding of the world are not fully promoted. In addition to this, it is not clear on the written plans what children are to learn from the activities provided and the scrutiny of plans over a period of time reveals that there were no activity plans for the previous week. Furthermore, one of the current activity plans is incomplete.

Children are generally interested in the activities that are set out for them each day. Older children concentrate well when linking train tracks and they persevere in completing puzzles. Children are beginning to show care and concern for their environment as a number of them help with wiping down tables before snacks. Children's behaviour is generally good apart during the lunch time period when staff members in the room are mainly pre-occupied with the serving of food rather than supervising children. All children visit the toilet independently and are able to put their aprons and coats on with little or no adult support. Overall, their personal independence is generally encouraged.

Children's communication and language skills are developing well as they are learning to recognise their names and words from labels on display and resources; they enjoy listening to stories and they are encouraged to participate when listening to the story of the 'hungry caterpillar'. Although staff talk about the organisation of books, they do not focus on the print or the sound of the letters in order to challenge and extend the literacy skills of the older children. Children are beginning to learn to write for different purposes as they are supported to make marks on postcards for Father Christmas. Although some older children can write their names independently, staff do not encourage them to write their names on their work. Children have opportunities to use a range of materials in their drawings and models, for example, breakfast cereal boxes, pipe cleaners and shiny and tissue papers. Children enjoy singing songs and they have opportunities to explore sound when using musical instruments. There are opportunities for children to develop their imaginative skills through the range of role-play equipment and small world equipment that is readily available to them each day.

Many children can accurately count up to 15 and some beyond. They also use numbers in songs, stories and in their play. Children are asked to assist in sharing out snacks; however, they are not encouraged to solve mathematical problems as staff asks questions and immediately tell them the answers. Activities to promote children's understanding of weights and volumes are not regularly catered for through the different provisions of play, such as sand and water. This means that children have limited opportunities to compare sizes and to learn mathematical language. Children learn about their environment as they are taken to the shops, parks and local farm to see animals. They have some opportunities for investigation and exploration through observing the growth and change of daffodils bulbs and they are also encouraged to record their observations in drawings and paintings. Children have some access to the compact disc player for listening to music or stories. On the whole, opportunities to help them learn how and why things work are limited.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children come from a variety of different backgrounds and they are all welcomed into the setting. Staff have positive attitudes towards diversity and provide children with opportunities to learn about different cultures and festivities by celebrating Black History month, Eid and Diwali. Children also have access to a satisfactory range of resources that reflect positive images of race and gender. This helps them to develop an awareness of themselves and others. There are appropriate systems in place to support children with physical or learning disabilities. Children's behaviour is generally good. Younger children are learning to take turns and share play equipment. Older children are given responsibilities to assist in helping to clean the tables before lunch. All children are given praise and encouragement, which helps to develop their self esteem. This positive approach ensures children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are provided with information about the Foundation Stage curriculum, they are able to view activity plans that are on wall display and they receive informal and formal reports about their children's progress on a regular basis. This allows for parents to be kept informed about their children's learning. Although staff share relevant records with parents, they do not always encourage them to countersign their child's accident records. Staff promote parental involvement by providing a suggestion box for comments and make available to them a copy of the self assessment report. Staff also invite parents to attend meetings, to celebrate the setting's third anniversary party and attend the children's mini sports games in the summer. In addition to this, all policies are easily accessible to parents and regular newsletters keep them informed and up to date with care issues.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are secure, settled and comfortable within the setting and space is sufficiently organised to meet their individual needs. Information kept about children is relevant and helps to promote their welfare. The management of the setting is aware of their responsibilities for informing Ofsted of significant changes and events. However, not all of the required documentation has been sent, notably the notification form. There are satisfactory procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Policies and procedures are understood by all staff and guide them in their daily practices.

All children receive appropriate care and support throughout the day. The babies and young children in particular are progressing well in their overall development. Children are generally kept safe and their health is reasonably maintained. The management and staff know and understand the procedures for child protection and complaints. All relevant documentation for the safety and welfare of children is maintained. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is inadequate. This is because staff have insufficient knowledge and understanding the stepping stones and the Foundation Stage curriculum and as a result of this some of the activities provided for children do not extend or challenge their learning. Incomplete planning and a lack of clarity about what children are to gain from the activities result in children not getting the best out of the activities provided. In addition to this, not all children's progress is regularly monitored.

The manager is new in post and is beginning to identify staff's additional training needs and examine samples of children's work. There are no systems in place to monitor or evaluate the provision for nursery education. Consequently the weaknesses identified within teaching are not addressed and restrict children from being able to make sufficient progress in their learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the nursery was asked to develop systems for planning and assessments, ensure medication records are countersigned by parents and to obtain a copy of the special educational needs code of practice. The nursery was also asked to develop children's independence in practical activities.

The nursery has adequately addressed and developed systems for the curriculum and assessment for children under three years. They use the guidance to support children's developmental

needs and consequently young children are progressing well in their all round development. However, the current system for the curriculum and assessment of the children receiving nursery education is inefficient and limits children's progress in learning. Parents are encouraged to sign each entry of their child's medication records in order to confirm notification and share daily records. Staff now have regard to the code of practice and they know about the requirements to support children with learning difficulties and physical disabilities. Children's independence is generally promoted in practical routines such as helping themselves to snacks, assisting with tidying up and developing personal independence skills. However, independence is not always fully encouraged at meal times.

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 are not able to gain access to soiled materials in the bathroom
- risk assess the accessibility of electrical sockets and slip hazards and take steps to reduce these
- further promote children's independence at meals times particularly with regards to eating utensils
- ensure all parents countersign their child's accident records
- submit a completed DC2 form for the manager at the earliest opportunity.

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:

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how to implement a rigorous system for planning, observation and assessments

- develop and implement a robust system which successfully evaluates the effectiveness of the nursery education programme.

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