

Grasshoppers in The Park

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY288287
Inspection date	07 July 2008
Inspector	Lorraine Sparey
Setting Address	St. Thomas C of E Church, 37 Clapton Common, London, E5 9AA
Telephone number	020 8806 8440
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Registered person	Grasshoppers In The Park 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Grasshoppers in The Park Nursery opened in 2004 and operates from the rear of St. Thomas Church opposite Clapton Common in Hackney. It is run by a parent cooperative. There is an enclosed memorial garden which is used as a play area and the nursery has sole use of the premises while it is in operation.

A maximum of 14 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 14 children on roll, of these 11 children are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery operates from Monday to Friday 9:00 - 17:00 throughout the year except on Bank holidays and one week at Christmas.

A team of five staff work directly with the children, of these three are qualified in early years and two are on training programmes. The nursery receives support from the local authority and The Learning Trust.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children follow appropriate hand hygiene routines and generally support their own health. For example, a child tells an adult 'When you sneeze you need to use the tissue'. They know when and why they wash their hands. However, the resources do not minimise the risk of cross infection. Children share a hand towel to wash and dry their hands and face, and do not always have access to soap. Therefore, their health is not fully promoted. Generally the documentation is in place to support children's health and well-being such as a sick child policy, and accident and medication records. However, accident records are not well organised because the accident book is full and loose sheets of paper. Children are supported in the event of having minor accidents because all the staff currently hold an up-to-date first aid certificate and the children can be treated quickly.

Children benefit from healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. A cook prepares home-cooked organic meals such as vegetable soup with quinoa, vegetable lasagne, Italian frittata with mushrooms and cod in a white sauce with potatoes. Children enjoy a wide variety of fresh fruit throughout the day. Their fluid levels are maintained because children can access water throughout the day, in addition to milk or water at snack and lunch time. A weekly menu is displayed to ensure that parents are aware of what is on offer for their children. Staff and children eat together creating a social occasion and promoting good manners.

Children have good opportunities to play and exercise in the fresh air. They use a local park and field on a regular basis. Children practise their running skills as they chase each other around the large field. Their physical skills are developing well. Children confidently climb and move around the wooden adventure trail. Children confidently use a range of one hand tools to support their small muscle control such as scissors, glue sticks and cutlery.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe and secure because staff place a high emphasis on safety. Daily risk assessments and safety checks are carried out prior to the children arriving. On daily outings to the park children confidently talk about road safety and high staff ratios supports children's safety when crossing the busy road. Children benefit from staff allowing them to take controlled risks whilst at the field. For example, children enjoy climbing on the large tree roots and running down the hills through the grass. Staff constantly supervise the children and are fully aware of the potential risks when using the fields and parks.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe whilst in the setting. Children tell an adult 'We need to turn around with our arms outstretched' before they begin the game of 'sleeping bunnies'. Children are familiar with the procedure to evacuate the building in the event of an emergency. They correctly identify the safe door to go out and talk about when they practise the drill. At other times staff explain about using equipment safely such as scissors, demonstrating how to use them correctly. Children safely choose from a wide range of age appropriate toys and equipment. Resources are generally stored at low level to promote children's choices in their play. Children are confident to request additional equipment which the staff accommodate.

Children are safeguarded from harm and neglect because staff demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of signs and symptoms of potential abuse. They are able to describe effective procedures to follow in the event of a concern being raised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children confidently come into the setting and quickly settle into their chosen activity. They benefit from staff providing high levels of support and showing a genuine interest in their play. A child asks a member of staff for some help in making a book. The child and the adult work together to create the child's own story of Mickey Mouse visiting the seaside. The child shows obvious pride in their achievement and delights in showing the other children. Children's individual interests are followed to support their development and learning. For example, one child is particularly interested in volcanoes and staff enable the children to make a volcano and provide books about volcanoes to extend the children's learning. Children have opportunities to initiate their own play and learning, and other times benefit from the structured activities such as conducting experiments using various materials.

Children use the main playroom throughout the day and at certain times the large area within the crypt to provide opportunities for the children to enjoy more physical activities. Children benefit from regular outings in the community and a group outing with parents to the seaside.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how young children learn and develop. Staff know the children well and plan a range of activities appropriate to their age and stage of development. Staff use various teaching methods to help the children progress. For example, staff use open ended questioning to extend children's thinking and encourage children to plan their own activities and learning opportunities. However, at times staff are not consistent in their approach and this results in children not being sufficiently challenged at all times. Children participating in an activity experimenting how various ingredients change when put into water. They observe changes and are absorbed in trying different combinations and are told by an adult that they need to pack away before they make a mess. Staff work well together as a team and provide support for each other. They complete some observations on the children to help them in identifying the next steps in their learning. However, this is not consistent and for some children it is not effective because their profiles have not been completed.

Children are independent and interested in their learning. They come into the setting, change into their slippers or shoes and confidently choose an activity. Children are developing good relationships with their peers and the adults. They warmly say good morning to a member of staff as they arrive. A child tells an adult that one of their friends likes to act out the role of the cat from the story. A member of staff thanks the child for being kind and reminding her. However, at other times children's behaviour deteriorates, they become boisterous and show a lack of concern for their friends. Children's language is developing appropriately. At times they confidently talk about significant events such as going to the cinema to watch a film with their family. Several children talk about various parts of the film. Children enjoy listening to well read stories. They join in with the familiar parts and actions. Children are encouraged to choose the storybook at circle time. Some children are beginning to form recognisable letters. A four-year-old works with a member of staff to make a book. The child tells them what they want them to write, whilst another child makes his own about volcano's and writes some familiar

letters. On other occasions staff automatically write the children's names on their creative work. Some children are beginning to recognise their names and others can with support.

Children count to 10 and staff use circle time to reinforce their learning. Some children spontaneously count whilst playing. A three-year-old counts to 10 before letting his car go down the slope they had built with wooden bricks. However, staff miss opportunities to extend children's awareness of simple shapes and problem solving. For example, one more or one less. Children enjoy designing and creating their own models from Duplo. Several children work together to create their own play park. A child builds a slide whilst another creates a climbing frame. Other children choose to build a submarine. Children have good opportunities to experiment using various materials. Previously children were involved in building a volcano and learning about how it erupts and the lava flows down. Children experiment with a range of materials such as pasta, flour, sugar and salt observing how they change when mixed with water. A child comments 'It looks like milk' when you add flour to the glass of water.

Children have opportunities to develop their creative skills and use their imagination. They enjoy using tissue paper to create their various ideas such as a butterfly, a tiger and a car. Children talk with staff about their ideas. A four-year-old explains to a member of staff they need some black for their tiger, because it has stripes. Children enthusiastically join in with actions and rhymes. They confidently sing 'Peter hammers with five hammers'. A musician visits on a regular basis to develop children's awareness and interest in music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are met. Staff implement sound procedures such as asking parents to record children's interests and needs on their registration form. Children are learning about their community through regular visits in the local area. Their awareness of the wider world is increased through discussion and there are some resources to provide positive images of our diverse society such as books and small world figures. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There are procedures in place to support children with additional needs.

Children's behaviour varies, at times they show consideration to their peers and the adults, and other times their behaviour deteriorates. Some children become very boisterous and jump on other children and the adults. Staff management of the children's behaviour is inconsistent. At times they give clear explanations. However, at other times children receive mixed messages. For example, at lunchtime children put their hands in each other's faces and push each other and staff did not respond. Children respond to the staff's use of praise and encouragement. They frequently praise children for, 'Good listening' or 'Good sharing'.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. They receive some information on the setting when their child initially registers. Children benefit from the staff and their parents developing positive relationships. Daily informal discussions provide opportunities for parents and staff to share information. A parents notice board and leaflets provide information on various topics such as behaviour management. Parents report that they are happy with the care and education their children receive. A range of policies and procedures provide parents with information on the service offered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide care and education.

Children are cared for by appropriate adults, there are some procedures in place to recruit and vet staff. However, the procedures are not followed with all applicants and some staff records are not complete or available. Children benefit from the high staffing ratios, at times there is a one adult to two children ratio. The space and resources are used appropriately to support children's choices in their play. Staff implement a range of policies and procedures to support them in providing positive outcomes for children. Generally these are effective, however, some policies and procedures such as hygiene and behaviour management are less effective. The setting generally has all the required documentation in place. However, some of the documentation is not well organised to enable staff to find it as required.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. There are sound procedures in place to monitor the nursery education provision. The person responsible for monitoring nursery education is implementing new systems with support from the local authority. Staff are currently working together to develop their key children profiles. Staff have an awareness of the settings strengths and the areas they need to improve such as implementing staff appraisals. Staff are committed to training and several are currently on training programs to increase their knowledge and confidence in developing children's care and education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting received four recommendations: Plan a range of activities and play opportunities for children aged three and four years; provide a method of recording medication given to children and obtain consent forms signed by parents; review present nappy changing arrangements and ensure that children's and visitor's hours of attendance are recorded.

The setting has made progress in addressing all of the above. Children participate in a wide range of age appropriate activities and play opportunities. A new system has been implemented to ensure that medication administered is recorded, and written parental permission is in place prior to the administering of medication. Parents sign their children in and out and record the times, and the visitors book ensures that any visitors to the setting is recorded. Appropriate nappy changing procedures mean children are comfortable at all times.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action. Concerns were received relating to National Standard 7 - Health, National Standard 11 - Behaviour, National Standard 12 - Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers and National Standard 14 - Documentation; that staff are not adequately managing children's behaviour and are not listening to parents and their concerns; and accidents are not recorded accurately. Ofsted asked the provider to conduct an internal investigation and report back. A response was received giving details of the provider's investigation. Subsequently actions were set under National Standard 12 and National Standard 14. A response to these actions was received providing details of the action taken by the provider to meet the standards. Ofsted took no further action and the provider remained qualified for registration.

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 children's health by reviewing the hand hygiene practices
- ensure staff are consistent in managing children's behaviour (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and all the required documentation is in place and available for inspection

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 staff observations of the children are used to effectively plan the next steps in their learning
- ensure teaching methods are consistent and children are sufficiently challenged at all times

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