

Sharon Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	147614
Inspection date	14 March 2008
Inspector	Deirdra Keating / Sarah Johnson
Setting Address	Finchley Synagogue, Kinloss Gardens, Finchley, London, N3 3DU
Telephone number	020 8346 2039
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Registered person	Sharon Playgroup
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 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?

Sharon Kindergarten opened in 1971. It operates from two rooms in the Finchley Synagogue, London. A maximum of 42 children may attend the kindergarten at any one time. The kindergarten is open each weekday during term time only. Sessions are from 09:00 to 15:00 Monday to Thursday and 09:00 to 12:00 on Fridays. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions. The kindergarten currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The kindergarten employs eight members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is currently working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted because the staff follow very healthy and hygienic procedures throughout the daily routine. The children show a good understanding of the importance of personal hygiene practices as they automatically wash their hands after using the toilet and are reminded by staff before they sit down to eat snacks. Although the children use liquid soap, the risk of cross-infection is not sufficiently minimised as children wash their hands using a single bowl of water after messy activities and share towels when drying their hands. Children receive effective care if they are ill or have an accident because good documentation and consents with regard to sickness, medication and accidents are in place. Children benefit as two staff have completed paediatric first aid training and a good stock of first aid supplies is maintained. Accidents records are detailed and consistently signed by parents when collecting their children, ensuring children's welfare is maintained.

Children's health is enhanced by the effective food handling procedures followed by staff, one of whom has completed training in food hygiene. Children's health is protected as staff wash their hands before preparing food and ensure surfaces used for food preparation and serving are sanitised thoroughly with antibacterial spray. Children benefit from a nutritional range of snacks which are prepared freshly each day. For example, children sit down at the table to enjoy an array of colourful fruit and vegetables, which they help to peel and chop. The children independently access drinks of water from the dispenser or accessible jug throughout the session, ensuring they do not become dehydrated. Children's dietary needs are prioritised and respected as the staff gather detailed information about individual dietary requirements before children attend the setting. For example, children who have an allergy to eggs are fully included in a bread making activity as they are provided with egg-free dough. Additionally, children with specific allergies are supported as staff have sourced training to learn how to administer specific medication.

All children have daily opportunities to play in the enclosed outdoor area as outdoor play is an integral part of the daily routine. Children enjoy opportunities to develop their spatial awareness as they move safely around each other whilst dribbling and kicking footballs. They enjoy taking in the fresh air as they use ride-on toys and balance well as they walk across low beams.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming environment that is safe and effectively maintained. The setting operates from a large room which provides good space for children to move around and access activities freely. There is also a smaller room where younger children can play safely. The layout of the large room is well designed with comfortable carpeted areas and soft seating areas for children to relax and read books quietly. Children can sit comfortably as there are sufficient numbers of appropriately sized tables and chairs for table-top activities. Several displays of the children's creative work make for a bright and colourful environment. The entrance corridor is put to good use as the walls are decorated with information for parents and low pegs for children to hang their belongings when they arrive. Children are well-supervised as they access the clean toilets, which are separate to the main playrooms. Children are fully engaged when playing with the wide range of quality toys and resources. These are stored in

low-level plastic boxes and storage units which are labelled to promote children's ability to self-select.

Staff provide a safe environment for children as they carry out daily risk assessments and generally take steps to minimise risks. However, children's safety is potentially compromised as risks have not been fully minimised with regard to an unsafe open window, storage of hot drinks and children's access to the kitchen area. Good procedures are implemented to ensure children play safely in secure premises. For example, staff ensure the identity of any visitors is verified at the main door and recorded in the visitor book. Children develop understanding of how to keep themselves safe as staff initiate discussions with children to raise their awareness. For instance, they remind children of the dangers of running in the corridor. Children are protected by a well thought through procedure to follow in the event of a fire. Children's awareness of fire safety is well promoted as they practise spontaneous fire drills on a regular basis and speak to members of the fire service when they visit the setting.

Children are safeguarded as the manager has attended safeguarding children training and disseminated her knowledge amongst the staff team. There are clear safeguarding procedures in place which reflect the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. As a result, staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children and children are protected if there is a concern about their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a relaxed atmosphere with staff who genuinely enjoy spending time with them. Consequently, children arrive happily as staff sing them a song to welcome them in one by one. They are confident in their dealings with staff and form good relationships with each other. Staff are caring towards the children and take time to listen to them, helping them to develop a strong sense of security as they are reassured that there is always someone familiar nearby. Staff are attentive to children's needs, however, the deployment of staff does not always provide enough support for the younger children. The organisation of activities and routines of the session encourages children to initiate their own play and follow their own interests, as they freely choose to spend their time engaged in activities that interest them. For example, children dive into the wide range of dressing up clothes which they wear to support their role play. Children are encouraged to respect their surroundings by taking on responsibilities for everyday tasks, such as wiping tables, tidying resources and helping to prepare food for snack.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide good opportunities for interesting and well-planned activities using their knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Plans are loosely based around traditional Jewish festivals but are carefully tailored to children's individual needs and incorporate new concepts extremely well. The key worker system works well with staff making specific observations from which plans are developed for the following week. These incorporate children's current developmental needs and interests well. Key worker staff collect observations and collate them into profiles which reflect each area of learning and show aspects of children's work. Staff have created an environment that has been creatively set out to provide a colourful and rich learning environment. The session is well paced with a good balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities. Staff are directly involved in the learning and work well with children, encouraging and enhancing their experiences. Staff are intuitive to children's

developmental needs and maximise on all learning opportunities. They ask open-ended questions and make good use of opportunities, for example, when choosing children for a traditional Jewish Shabbat party they encourage children to link letters to sounds as they call out their names. Children's behaviour is good throughout the session maintaining a good learning environment.

Children have good opportunities to develop their attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning. They work well in different sized groups taking turns and sharing fairly. Children come together as a large group as part of a traditional celebration party, they wait patiently and show a good understanding of the agreed group rules. Practitioners plan and provide some activities that help children learn about other cultures and religions alongside the traditional Jewish celebrations and festivals that the children clearly enjoy celebrating. Children are making good progress across the aspects of communication, speaking, listening and writing. Books are an important part of kindergarten life, children make books, recording and illustrating activities that they have enjoyed. Staff share these with parents, reinforcing the value and importance of books. Children's speaking skills are supported well and encouraged, they speak confidently at circle time as they discuss their news. Large group stories are shared with the children who are encouraged to link stories with recent activities, they recall from memory and develop their language skills as they clarify previous events.

Children are learning about connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. Natural and tactile resources provide meaningful examples of comparisons in shape and size. Children compare pieces of prepared wood and use mathematical language to describe the shapes. A good range of construction materials encourages children to develop their problem solving skills. Children's creativity is supported well, many craft activities are planned for and children have free access to the easels where they can paint using their own preferred style and method.

Children have a good range of opportunities to investigate different materials and learn about the world we live in. They make dough adding ingredients and observing the changes as the dough rises and heat is applied. Children cook regularly, this provides real experiences where they can enjoy using real ingredients which are part of their traditional celebrations. A good range of messy play opportunities are provided; these include sand, water and shaving foam which the children enjoy using with different tools and equipment. A varied range of physical activities are offered to encourage children to develop their skills when using apparatus and equipment. Interesting and varied weekly activities are provided by the kindergarten and planned into the curriculum by proactive staff. These include 'stretch and grow classes', yoga and musical movement. Children also develop good dexterous skills by using scissors and manipulating dough and clay.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern by staff who ensure that all children are included and have their individual needs met. The process for settling new children is sensitive to children's individual needs and ensures that they quickly develop a strong sense of belonging at the setting. For example, staff take time to get to know them during their initial sessions and encourage them to bring familiar items from home. Children who have English as an additional language are supported by staff who are bilingual and talk to them in Hebrew. Children gain a well developed respect for themselves and others as they learn about their local community and the wider world. For example, their cultures and beliefs are embraced at the setting through

a range of celebration parties, cooking and craft activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children and their families, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive good levels of support from the setting, enabling them to thrive and make good progress. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator works well with parents and other outside professionals to ensure that individual education plans are developed to offer children appropriate goals. Staff are sensitive to children's individual needs as they make reasonable adjustments to the physical environment to maximise the inclusion of all children.

Children's behaviour is very good and children show high levels of independence, confidence and self-esteem as practitioners continually praise and value their achievements. A positive ethos is created at the setting as staff are good role models and take time to calmly explain the importance of being kind to one another and sharing resources.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The staff work closely with parents to ensure children can be cared for fully in line with their wishes. Staff are approachable and readily available at the beginning and end of sessions to exchange information with parents, ensuring children experience good continuity in the care they receive. Parents are provided with useful information such as a well-designed prospectus outlining the key policies and procedures. A good range of documentation including a written complaints policy is easily accessible to parents in the entrance corridor. Additionally, regular newsletters are issued highlighting the main topics that older children will be exploring in their learning. However, children's development is not fully supported as their parents are not made aware that records are kept in relation their children's development and they are not actively invited to contribute to these.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who have had all required checks and are appropriately qualified. Children are generally settled and secure as ratios are adequately maintained. However, staff are not deployed effectively to fully support children in both the rooms. Most documents are in place to support the smooth running of the kindergarten, however, these are not all available at the time of inspection. Arrival and collection times are recorded correctly and safely managed by staff. The manager has a sound understanding of the National Standards and her responsibility to comply with these and the conditions of the registration.

The leadership and management is good. The group is led by a strong and dedicated manager who leads an extremely close team of long serving staff, providing good continuity of care. Staff work closely with the voluntary committee to form a united team. Regular staff meetings ensure that all staff contribute towards the curriculum planning. Staff work closely with an early years advisory teacher to ensure that teaching methods are effective and inclusive. They are forward thinking and have embraced changes and new concepts well. The staff strive to improve outcomes for children by adapting and monitoring the nursery education accordingly. Strengths and weaknesses have been highlighted to ensure that the setting continues to improve. Consequently, children make very good progress toward the early learning goals.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to improve procedures for appointing staff and to put an effective key person system in place. These recommendations have been addressed to ensure children's safety is not compromised and their continuity of care is promoted. For example, appropriate checks are carried out to check new staff and each child is allocated a key person who fosters strong links with parents and ensures information about children's needs and development is exchanged verbally. They were also asked to provide parents with a clear and interesting record of what children have achieved, provide more opportunities for children to hear and say the initial sounds in words and to learn the names and sounds of letters. Parents and carers are more involved in children's learning with shared initiatives and activities, although the sharing of written records is still being developed. Children are provided with good opportunities to link letters to sounds and planning clearly details children's current interests providing next step activities.

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 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 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):

- deploy staff effectively over the two rooms to ensure that children are fully supported and their individual needs are met
- ensure that all documentation is available for inspection
- ensure that hazards to children on the premises are minimised with regard to use of windows, storage of hot drinks and access to the kitchen area
- review hand washing procedures to ensure children are fully protected from the risk of spread of infection.

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 that children's written records are proactively shared with parents and carers.

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