

Treehouse Nursery Schools Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	128519
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspector	Sue Anslow
Setting Address	35 Woodbine Place, Wanstead, London, E11 2RH
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Registered person	Tree house Nursery School Limited
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 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?

Treehouse Nursery and Out of School Club is privately owned and run by Treehouse Nursery Schools Limited. It opened in 1996 and operates from eight rooms, spread over three buildings in a converted primary school. The nursery is situated in Wanstead in the London Borough of Redbridge. A maximum of 85 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18:30 for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery closes for three days between the Christmas and New Year period. A maximum of 50 children may attend the out of school club at any one time. The club is open each weekday from 08.00 to 09.00 and 15.00 to 18.30 during term time and 08.00 to 18.30 during school holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and the out of school club make full use of the park across the road.

There are currently 115 children aged from three months to under five years on roll in the nursery. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early education. There are currently 74 children aged from four years upwards, on roll in the out of school club. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 31 members of staff. Of these, 26 hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted reasonably well through staff following written policies and procedures regarding the children's well-being. Nappies are changed regularly and hygienically and children are encouraged to wash their hands before meals and after toileting. Changing areas often double up as general storage areas which compromise good health and safety practices and one toilet cubicle does not have a full length door, but a "saloon" style door screen. Accidents and illnesses are managed appropriately and children with infectious conditions are excluded from the nursery to protect others. Health records are kept as required and parents sign their consent for medication to be given and for any emergency medical treatment which may be required. However, they do not countersign the entry in the records to acknowledge the procedure carried out by staff, which compromises good practice. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through regular use of the play ground, weather permitting. Most ages go outside twice a day for brief periods and enjoy practising their climbing, sliding and pedalling skills on the various items of equipment. Indoors the children enjoy ample space to move around freely in their rooms and music and movement sessions are included in the weekly routine. Older children attending the out of school club have a large room designated to physical activities and they often visit the public park opposite the nursery for team games and football.

A varied menu of healthy meals and snacks promotes children's nutritional needs. Food is prepared and cooked on the premises each day and fresh, organic fruit, vegetables and milk is included in the daily menu. Drinks of milk or water are served with all meals and most children are provided with drinks on a regular basis throughout the day. Staff liaise closely with parents about children's dietary requirements or particular feeding routines and all wishes are respected. Young babies are fed individually by staff but older babies are propped on cushions to hold the bottles themselves. Older children sit comfortably at tables for their meals and snacks although staff do not always sit with them to encourage a relaxed atmosphere and quiet conversation. Self help skills are encouraged and children are learning how to serve food and clear away afterwards. The school age children attending the out of school club enjoy a wide ranging menu of freshly prepared hot and cold snacks, at the beginning and end of each day. Drinks are on hand for children to help themselves to throughout each session and they provide their own packed lunches during school holidays.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy ample space to play in the large rooms with high ceilings and lots of windows. A good sized play ground is shared by all children and fenced off from the general parking area. Children's art work and brightly coloured posters around the walls give a feeling of welcome and support. However, the arrangement of furniture and play equipment in some rooms does not enhance the feeling of warmth or excitement. Toys and equipment are kept clean and regularly checked for safety. Most areas are hazard free, although loose papers are put on high shelves and storage boxes in some changing areas are trip hazards. Adequate supplies of toys and play equipment are organised into boxes on low shelving, which allows children to choose what they want to play with, encouraging freedom of choice and independence.

Children are kept safe and secure through good security measures, such as closed circuit television, security gates and locked doors. Staff are familiar with family members who may collect children at different times and procedures are in place for lost or uncollected children. Children are learning to keep themselves safe through reminders to hold each other's hands when making their way out to the play ground or holding on to the banister rail when going up and down the stairs. Appliances are checked annually and emergency evacuation procedures are displayed around the nursery. However, fire drills are not practised often enough to ensure that all staff and children are familiar with the procedure. This compromises children's safety in an emergency. Staff are familiar with child protection issues and are aware of correct procedures, should they have any serious concerns. A written procedure is in place, although it does not contain contact details of the police and social services, as required by the National Standards.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and young toddlers enjoy happy and secure relationships with familiar adults who provide individual care and attention throughout the day. A range of safe and suitable play materials, such as reflective, noisy and sensory toys, enhance and stimulate babies' all round development. Experienced and qualified staff plan and assess the babies' progress, ensuring that all needs are met. Daily plans of activities promote children's enjoyment and learning, and staff observe and record children's progress in all areas. Creative play extends children's experiences as they make hand prints in paint or squish wet spaghetti between their fingers. Hugs and cuddles are always available, as staff sit with the children on the floor to look at books or build the train track. Older toddlers enjoy a range of activities which are changed regularly throughout the day. They are becoming familiar with books and stories and are beginning to identify colours, letters and numbers through daily routines and structured activities. Children's creative and physical development is promoted through outdoor play in the play ground and a variety of structured art and craft activities, appropriate to this age group. They enjoy sponge painting the red wings on the ladybird pictures and sticking coloured paper on to the Easter egg shapes. Outside children are becoming adept at pushing or pedalling the wheeled toys and climbing the steps to the slide. Children aged two to three enjoy their own large room where they can choose what they want to play with from a variety of activities set out for them each day. Their social skills are developing, as they listen to stories and sing songs together, although the large group sometimes takes time to calm down and listen to instructions. A range of natural resources are used, as well as manufactured toys and children are becoming familiar with colours, numbers and shapes through discussions and activities. Staff are on hand to sit with children at the activity tables, encouraging and observing their interest and curiosity. Plans follow the 'Birth to three matters' framework and each child's folder contains examples of their art work and some photographs. However, folders are not kept up to date and some of the saved work is not dated, hindering consistent monitoring and evaluating of the children's development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make progress in their development as they enjoy a range of different activities which are centred around particular themes or topics and which incorporate all six areas of required learning. Children are reasonably well behaved and generally respectful towards each other as they learn to share and take turns at the different activity tables. However, the level of excitement or challenge is sometimes not sufficient to hold the children's interest for long and they become boisterous. Children help themselves to paper towels and tissues and have just started to clear their own plates away

after lunch, thus, promoting their self help skills. Staff support children with praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements, which helps to enhance their self confidence and self-esteem. A comfortable space with large cushions invites children to relax and help themselves to the range of books available and a 'writing table' is usually set up with paper and drawing implements. Alphabet letters are displayed around the room and children enjoy finding objects, both in the nursery and at home, beginning with the 'letter of the week'. A table is also set aside for number games and activities, where children can play dominoes, sort and match objects or arrange coloured bricks in sequenced patterns. Baking activities introduce children to weighing and measuring and they join in number rhymes and songs enthusiastically.

Children develop some understanding of the world around them as they talk about the seasons of the year and the day's weather conditions. They enjoy a range of creative activities organised by staff, using materials provided for that particular activity, which are adult led with limited opportunities to choose their own materials. During free play sessions children often invent their own games, for example, pretending the home corner is an aeroplane taking them on holiday or making 'super powered' cars with the construction set and racing around the room. They celebrate different festivals throughout the year. The room leader plans activities for the children throughout the year, incorporating all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children's development and progress is observed and recorded by all staff working with the children. Photographs and examples of art work are kept in the child's folder as a pictorial record for parent's interest and information.

The out of school club caters very well for children aged four years and above. Children enjoy a varied range of activities to suit their moods and interests outside school hours. They benefit from ample space in two large rooms, where they can relax or be active, play together or on their own and choose exactly what they want to do in their own club. Staff are on hand to help, guide, answer questions and sort out minor squabbles. Children are well behaved, happy, cheerful and chatty. They enjoy a varied programme of activities during the holidays, incorporating trips out to local places of interest and lots of team games in the park across the road.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met well by staff who take time to get to know the children and their families. Ample time is allowed for children to settle in at their own pace and home routines are followed as closely as possible. Children learn about nature and the world around them through appropriate activities and resources. They celebrate festivals through their art work, play with dolls and dressing up clothes from various cultures and look at books with pictures of people who look different from themselves. All children are welcomed into the nursery and encouraged to participate in all activities according to their interest and ability.

Children behave reasonably well and are learning about helpfulness and kindness to others. Good strategies for behaviour management are contained in the written policy and mostly followed by staff. However, there is no reference to bullying contained in the policy, which is a requirement under the National Standards. Young children enjoy singing a song whilst tidying up ready for lunch. In this way, the activity becomes fun and children cooperate well with each other, as they crawl under the chairs to look for puzzle pieces. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff work closely with parents to get to know their children's routines, interests and preferences. Information is exchanged daily, both verbally and in writing. Home diaries, progress reports and newsletters keep parents informed of their child's life in the nursery and policies are available to read at any time. An attractive brochure outlines what children learn through their games and activities and information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum are displayed. Parents of children in the preschool room have their own notice board to keep them up to date with current topics, focussed activities and how they can extend their children's learning at home. For example, by finding objects beginning with 'the letter of the week'.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Children are cared for by a mostly qualified staff team who are able to access further courses and workshops to update their knowledge and skills. Sound recruitment procedures are followed and staff are vetted and checked appropriately to ensure children's safety and well-being. Senior managers are able to cover breaks and busy times in the rooms and the nursery also make use of agency staff. There are staff meetings in place but individual appraisals are held spasmodically, which hinders the professional development of staff.

The programme of activities both indoors and outside, provides a balanced range of learning in all areas of development. However, the arrangement of furniture and resources in some rooms does not excite or stimulate the children's imaginations and curiosity. Children's health, safety and well-being is supported by written policies and procedures, although some amendments need to be made to comply with National Standards. Parents are kept well informed of their children's enjoyment and development. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider agreed to amend certain records in line with National Standards and ensure all staff were familiar with the setting's policies and procedures. They also agreed to ensure risk assessments were in place to minimise all hazards outdoors and protect the privacy of children using the bathroom area. Most of these recommendations have been carried out satisfactorily, thus enhancing the children's health, safety and general care.

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 complaint 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):

- ensure parents countersign all entries in medication records
- practise emergency evacuation procedures more often to ensure all children and staff are familiar with the routine
- include contact details for the police and social services in the child protection policy
- insert a statement on bullying in the behaviour management policy.

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 the aims and values as set out in the brochure are reflected in practice and staff understand their roles in developing children's learning
- manage the professional development of staff, both individually and as a team, so that they work well together to improve the organisation of the preschool room
- update children's profiles regularly to ensure consistent monitoring of their progress.

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