

Beechwood Private Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY272702
Inspection date	08 July 2008
Inspector	Sarah Elizabeth Howell
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Registered person	Treetops Nurseries Limited
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

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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?

Beechwood Private Day Nursery is one of 20 settings owned and managed by Treetops Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2003 and operates from a detached house, using three rooms on the ground floor and one room in an adjacent building in Bromborough, Wirral. There is access to a secure outdoor play area. The nursery operates from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday all year round.

A maximum of 68 children aged from birth to five years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 94 children on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff and one manager who work directly with the children. Of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is currently undertaking a childcare qualification.

The setting receives support from a local authority pedagogue and they are members of the Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is effectively promoted through the nursery's policies, procedures and good working practices. Staff are well informed about children's health needs and strategies are in place to protect and promote these. For example, thorough procedures are in place to ensure that children's individual dietary needs are respected and that children with food allergies are safely catered for. Staff are very vigilant in trying to reduce the incidents of cross infection within the setting, for example, nappy changing procedures are very hygienic and staff set a very good example to children about the importance of hand washing in keeping themselves and others well. In addition children's learning about good personal hygiene routines is bolstered by photographic reminders in the bathrooms and repeated explanation from staff.

Staff generally employ a range of effective practices which ensure that the environment is clean and inviting for children to use. However, the practice of leaving the leftovers from children's meals in the bins within some rooms is a possible hazard as this could attract flies. Staff are careful to observe children's comfort needs and further reduce opportunities for germs to spread, for example, keeping young children's noses clean and discouraging children from sharing toys and cups which have been in their mouths. Parents are kept informed of the settings approach to promoting children's health and have clear guidance about how they can support this by following the exclusion guidelines when their children are unwell.

Children's meals and snacks are balanced and healthy and parents are kept well informed about what their children are eating. Drinks are readily accessible to most children, although, in the baby room these could be more accessible, so that very young children can reach their own cups. Staff encourage children to take regular drinks. Mealtimes are pleasant social occasions with staff sitting with the children encouraging them to eat and supporting them as they become more proficient in feeding themselves. Staff also make good use of these opportunities to encourage children to develop good social skills and manners.

The nursery provides good support for children's physical and emotional development. Staff plan and provide a variety of indoor and outdoor activities to promote children's large motor skills and to provide opportunities for them to practice and refine their dexterity and fine motor development. Children have daily access to outside play, with toddlers and pre-school children normally having the opportunity to play actively outside twice a day in the morning and the afternoon. However, babies generally have more limited opportunities to be outside due to staffing and resource constraints. Staff make good use of the space within their home base room and equipment to promote infants' physical development.

Children have good support for their emotional health and well-being. Staff use the key worker system appropriately to enable children to make secure and comfortable transitions into the setting and between home base rooms. Children's established routines and individual preferences are respected and sleep and rest times are adapted to meet the varying needs of the children within each room. Key workers closely observe children so that they get to know them well and can anticipate and respond effectively to meet children's individual needs. This helps children to feel safe, secure and to have the confidence to explore their environment independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Parents and children are warmly greeted by staff as they arrive each day. New children generally have their key worker available to them at this time to help them settle and provide reassurance for parents. The manager or deputy are usually involved in the process of welcoming in the morning and encourage parents to use this time to chat about any issues they may want to raise. Rooms are well organised for children's play, sleep and rest and staff carry out safety checks as they open up each morning and again as the setting is closing in the evening to ensure that the environment is safe and well maintained.

Children have very easy access to their toys and resources to promote their play. These are generally very well organised in low level easily seen storage around the room. As a result children can easily help themselves to what they want and what they are interested in. This helps to promote their independent learning. Resources in the Happy Hippos room are at times less well organised to engage children's interest and children in this room sometimes appear less interested in what has been set out for them. Staff generally have a good understanding of what children like and what toys and resources will provide appropriate stimulation and support for children's development and they use this knowledge well to develop and extend the provision within their rooms. For example, staff in the baby room have developed a range of treasure baskets for very young children to promote their enjoyment and provide good opportunities for their sensory exploration.

Children's safety is effectively promoted within the nursery. Staff are well informed about the settings safety policies and procedures and new staff are given lots of information about safe working practices as part of their induction. Documentation relating to safety within the setting is generally well maintained and regularly audited by the organisation to ensure that good standards are maintained. Managers respond well to comments from parents to improve the safety arrangements within the premises. Children's learning about safety and managing risk is enhanced through repeated explanation from staff and thorough planned activities for older children. For example, pre-school children role play and practice road safety at very regular intervals to help them to learn how to keep themselves safe when they are outdoors.

Children's welfare and well-being are also effectively promoted through staff's clear understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Good use is made of external and in house training to keep staff up to date with changes in relation to safeguarding procedures. Parents are well informed about the nursery's safeguarding procedures through their handbook and through discussion with the manager when their children enrol.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Good use is generally made of the key worker relationships to enable children to settle comfortably and securely within their home base rooms and to have the confidence to explore their environment and make the most of the activities and resources provided. However, where staffing changes have meant repeated changes to the key worker system, some children appear less well settled and able to join in confidently with activities, for example, in the happy hippos room. Staff make good use of spontaneous and planned observations of children to monitor their development and plan weekly activities which engage children's interest and promote their development and learning.

Babies enjoy exploring their well organised play space. Toys and equipment are attractively set out to encourage children to move around and explore at their own pace. Young children love the cosy book area with the mirrored wall alongside and delight in making their way across the room to look at themselves in the mirror and share the books with staff. Staff provide good support for young children's physical development through the provision of equipment and one to one support where it is needed. Infants wanting to test their strength and balance enjoy pulling themselves up on the sofa, using the walkers and holding staff's hands as they try out their fledgling walking skills. Staff are experienced in helping young children learn to communicate and use a range of fun, age appropriate techniques to encourage communication and language development.

Toddlers in the Little Monkeys and Happy Hippos rooms enjoy a wide range of creative play experiences both indoors and outside which provide good support for their fine motor skills and the development of hand eye coordination. Staff make good use of these activities to encourage children's language development, using varied descriptive words to extend children's thinking about their sensory experiences. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to Three Framework' both to inform the planning of age appropriate activities for children and in children's profiles to link observations to indicators of progress. Children generally appear happily engaged in their play which provides effective support for their learning and development.

Children thoroughly enjoy playing in the outside play areas. These areas are being constantly reviewed and developed to extend the provision for children's enjoyment and to make them more effective in promoting children's physical development as well as providing good support for their learning in general. Children love taking resources from indoors outside and using them on a larger scale, including those for mark making and exploration of the world around them. Babies have more limited access to the outdoors to promote their physical development and their awareness of the world around them and normally only access the covered area just beyond their room. Staff are looking at ways of improving this, for example, using double buggies to be able to take very young children outside safely to explore the world around them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are captivated and inspired by an extensive range of stimulating, relevant activities related to their needs. They access a broad range of high quality resources, which supports children across all areas of learning. Staff consistently make very good use of their time and resources to support children's learning. Teaching highly motivates the children who are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences.

The setting has developed a system to track both the delivery and receipt of the curriculum. Assessments of children's achievements are good and linked to the stepping stones, resulting in children who make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning, given their capability and starting points. From the start, staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. A flexible approach to planning and a very good balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace.

Staff are perceptive of children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and develop their language skills. Staff complete observations of children's individual achievements on a daily basis. However, this information

is not transferred to their profiles on a regular basis. Key workers are aware of individual children's abilities and the next steps in their learning.

Children experience a language rich environment where they develop very good speaking and listening skills. Children enjoy listening to stories together and they participate in the story time with interest. Children freely access the book area independently. In addition, they very successfully recognise letters of the alphabet and volunteer to share their knowledge with their friends when looking at the alphabet posters. Pads and pencils are freely used in role play helping children understand that words and print have meaning.

Children demonstrate a thorough understanding of number and shape recognition. When using the computer they listen to instruction and confidently use the mouse to select items of their choice. Children confidently count the number of people present each day and recognise numbers through a range of purposeful songs, stories and activities. They easily describe and point out various shapes around the room.

Children have lots of good opportunities to experience and enjoy music and singing. They enjoy meeting people from the community as they go on walks to post letters or visit the local shops. They celebrate many varied festivals throughout the year. These experiences help children understand diversity and differences.

Children are inquisitive, fascinated by how things work, such as using the digital camera, computer and programmable toys. They show skill and concentration as they make various pictures and items in art and craft activities and display them in 'all our own work area'. Children's sense of discovery is exceptionally well supported and their physical skills developed through using the outdoor and indoor activities. They have opportunities to use their small physical skills as they use scissors, construction kits, the computer mouse and paint brushes. They enjoy and have fun in the outdoors as they play with the parachute, balance on stepping stones and use wheeled toys. However, they have limited opportunities to use climbing apparatus to enable them to develop their large physical skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff place emphasis on working closely with parents to be well informed about children's individual needs, dispositions and abilities. They use this information well to adapt children's care arrangements and to promote children's development and learning. All children have access to all the activities provided and staff avoid stereotyping children's play through encouraging children to make their own choices and by planning and organising activities in such a way that they appeal to both boys and girls. For example, by providing construction equipment in the role play area to encourage boys as well as girls to participate in imaginative play.

The setting provides an inclusive service. Children whose first language is not English and others who have difficulties with communication are enabled and encouraged to participate through the use of symbols and signs in addition to spoken language. As a result all children are able to make good progress with their listening and speaking skills and their increasing ability to communicate effectively increases children's confidence in all aspects of their play and learning. Staff work closely with parents and with other education and health care professionals to overcome barriers to children's learning and to enable children to make appropriate progress.

Children are learning how to behave well and develop the skills they need to get along with each other and make the most of the opportunities available to them in nursery. They are learning to share, take turns and respect the needs of other alongside their own. They are encouraged to respect and value those who are different from themselves and learn about diversity through fiction and non-fiction books, displays and planned activities, such as food tasting and art and craft projects. They are developing a sound understanding of 'right and wrong' behaviour and clearly understand why certain kinds of behaviour are not acceptable. As a result children's positive behaviour appropriately supports their enjoyment and learning. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. The nursery provides lots of information for parents both about how their children's development and learning is supported in the setting and about the policies and procedures which under-pin staff practices. Parents are invited to planned social events where they enjoy taking part in activities alongside their children and where they talk informally with staff. Staff provide daily opportunities to talk about children's experiences and progress and encourage parents to look at their children's developmental profiles which are very accessible within each room.

Parents whose children receive funded nursery education are provided with both written and verbal information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the areas of learning and displays within the pre-school room effectively link children's activities with the areas of learning and the stepping stones. Staff report good support from parents and carers as they discuss their child's achievements and progress. Those parents and carers spoken to were very positive and supportive of the provision and what it offers their children. This effective communication between parents, carers and staff helps to promote children's learning and progress towards the early learning goals along with their overall development and well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Children's learning and development is enhanced by the quality of organisation and the very good leadership and management of the setting. The manager's and pre-school leader's clear sighted educational vision is founded in an in-depth understanding of the needs of young children and of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The commitment and overall ethos of the setting promotes an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

Thorough recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work with young children. Ongoing suitability is closely monitored through daily observation of staff as they work with children, checking of children's profiles and planning to ensure that these are appropriately maintained and support for staff development through access to staff meetings, appraisals and a wide variety of in house and external training. Good induction procedures ensure that new staff are well informed about the nursery's policies, procedures and safe working practices.

The organisation of the nursery environment is effective. The setting has recently undergone some significant changes in the design and layout of rooms and play spaces and managers and staff are closely monitoring the impact of these changes to ensure that they effectively meet children's needs. Children enjoy the open plan nature of the rooms as it enables them to move around and explore more freely and the reorganisation of resources and storage means that

children can more readily see what there is to play with and make their own choices. The outside play area is well organised and used to promote children's enjoyment.

Staff deployment is generally effective in keeping children safe and promoting their welfare and their learning and development. Staff rotas are planned weekly to ensure that the correct adult to child ratios are maintained and the nursery has recruited a number of relief staff since their last inspection to provide cover for staff breaks, sickness and holidays. The key worker system is generally used effectively to ensure consistency and continuity of care for children. However, where this system is not used as effectively and staff change regularly, then children have less consistent care and continuity in the support for their learning and this is unsettling for them.

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are generally well maintained. Records about individual children's development are shared with parents and managers, staff are looking at ways of encouraging parents to play an active role in contributing their own observations to these records. However, although a system for recording children's daily attendance is maintained within the setting it is not a sufficiently robust system and there are times when it does not accurately keep all staff informed of how many children they are responsible for at any one time. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection four actions were raised in relation to the provision of care for children and three recommendations for improving the provision of nursery education were also raised. Two of the actions related to staffing; the provision of contingency arrangements to cover staff absences, breaks and sickness and the day to day deployment to ensure the welfare, safety and development of children. Both these aspects of children's care have been appropriately improved. A number of relief staff have been employed who can provide cover for staff absences at short notice. The key worker system has been reviewed to improve consistency for parents and children, and 'floating' staff are used to support room based staff and work where they are most needed each day.

Two further actions related to staff knowledge of the setting's practice and procedures in relation to Health and Safety and Safeguarding children. Staff's knowledge and understanding of these procedures and practices have been significantly improved through the use of induction, staff training and through observation and review by the setting's manager. As a result the provision to promote children's health and keep them safe is much improved.

Three recommendations were made in relation to improving the provision for funded nursery education. The setting was asked to develop the information provided for parents about the six areas of learning and to involve parents in contributing their observations to children's developmental profiles. The nursery now provides a wide variety of information for parents about the areas of learning, verbally through displays linking children's activities to the different areas and through the information shared with parents through children's profiles to which they are also able to contribute.

A recommendation was also made about providing equipment to enable older children to develop their balancing and climbing skills. Although children now have access to equipment which helps them to practice their balancing skills, they do not as yet have access to age

appropriate climbing opportunities. The nursery manager explains that the acquisition of this equipment is planned for the near future.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standards 1: Suitable Person, 2: Organisation and 7: Health. The concerns related to the quality and effectiveness of induction training for new staff and students and whether this enables them to respond appropriately in the event of an emergency evacuation. In addition, the use of staff who had not completed appropriate clearances, in changing young children's nappies, and ratios, and hygiene practices in the baby room not being appropriate to keep children safe and provide for their individual needs.

An Ofsted Inspector visited the nursery on 2 April 2008 to discuss the concerns. As a result of the visit three actions were raised. The provider responded and explained how each action had been met. Ofsted is satisfied with the response to the actions raised and the provider remains 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.

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):

- improve the deployment of staff in the baby and Happy Hippos rooms to ensure continuity and consistency of children's care
- review the system for recording children's attendance to ensure that the number of children present on the premises at any one time is accurately reflected

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):

- develop the system for transferring individual children's progress and observations to their profiles on a regular basis to ensure that their development and learning needs are promoted
- provide opportunities for the older and more able children to use their large physical skills in relation to climbing.

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