

UCL Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY345528
Inspection date	12 June 2008
Inspector	Chris Banks
Setting Address	UCL Day Nursery, 50-51 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0PQ
Telephone number	02076 797461
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Registered person	University College London
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?

University College London Day Nursery, for children aged between three months and five years, was registered in 2007. Located in basement premises, close to the University in WC1, it primarily serves students and employees.

The setting is open 49 weeks of the year and operates weekdays between 08.45 and 17.30. Full and part time places are available.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 38 children at any one time. There are currently 45 children on roll. Of these, 10 are receiving a nursery education grant.

A team of 11 staff work with the children, all of whom hold a recognised qualification in early years childcare. The nursery receives support from Local Authority advisory teachers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in very clean, bright and welcoming surroundings. They are well protected from the risk of infection because staff follow clear written procedures and also carry out effective hygiene practice. This now includes full implementation of the 'no shoes policy' in the baby area.

Nappy changing arrangements are well managed. Older children are familiar and comfortable with hygiene routines, such as, hand washing and receive sensitive support during toilet training. Risks to children from infectious illness are minimised because parents are clearly informed about the circumstances under which children cannot be cared for. Staff act in their best interests if children are ill and closely follow written guidance about exclusion periods. In this way, children do not return to nursery until they are completely well. If a child becomes unwell at the nursery, they are warmly comforted and closely monitored. There are eight members of staff who hold valid first aid certificates, which means the nursery is now better prepared in the event of any emergency.

Children enjoy nutritious meals and snacks because staff promote healthy eating. Menus are well planned in advance and in consultation with staff and parents. Older children experience a variety of foods, which includes fresh vegetables, fish, pulses, pasta and vegetarian alternatives. Clear records are kept of any special requirements. The welfare of children with poor appetites is closely monitored and where appropriate, daily food diaries are kept and shared with parents. As part of play activities, children are encouraged to explore how food contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Access to drinking water is now easier for children. Older children are adept at using the newly installed water cooler and babies are kept well hydrated throughout the day.

Outdoor play forms an integral part of children's planned routines. Babies under two years have exclusive use of the outside area at specific times of the day and enjoy practising their crawling and walking skills. Older children show good spatial awareness as they enjoy riding trikes and participating in lively staff-led games. There is, however, nowhere for them to climb or practise their balancing skills.

During indoor play, older children practise their fine motor skills in a range of ways. They enjoy activities which involve cutting, manipulating tools and using brushes and pencils. They are also learning to use programmable equipment and a few are already quite skilled in loading computer discs and directing the computer mouse. They are also becoming confident in using cutlery at mealtimes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in secure surroundings and improved safety practice helps ensure potential risks to children are minimised. Routine safety procedures, such as, regular fire drills and the introduction of a daily health and safety checklist, also better protects children. Arrangements for their safe arrival and departure are improved with a more systematic approach to recording children's attendance. In the unlikely event a child becomes lost or is uncollected, there is now a clear procedure for staff to follow.

The overall safety of children is positively protected because staff are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They are familiar with the process for monitoring, recording and reporting concerns and have clear written procedures to follow. These now include the role of Ofsted and the steps to take if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

All children are able to move around in safety and comfort because space is well organised. The separately designated area for babies is cosy and comfortable and the reorganised main playroom is working well. All children are well supervised and sleeping children closely monitored.

Children enjoy playing with a good range of safe, clean and well maintained toys and equipment, appropriate to their ages and stages of development. The well organised space means they are able to freely help themselves from low level storage and mobile units.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children attending the nursery benefit from the warm and welcoming atmosphere created by staff. Close relationships with children are evident and most staff know children very well. Children also benefit from the more formal key worker system now applied across the setting. This enables them to participate in small group activities and have their progress monitored in a more systematic way. All children enjoy a variety of creative and sensory activities. This includes experimenting with the properties of shaving foam, jelly, cornflour and play dough. They enjoy extended periods of free play and in the main are well supported by staff, most of whom who use good communication skills with children. Older children are able to self-select resources with ease and make independent choices about what they want to play with.

Babies enjoy companionable times with staff and receive lots of warm individual attention. They are also well settled with their allocated worker. They are animated during informal circle times and enthusiastically mimic the actions and body language of staff. Most toys and equipment are easily accessible and include a good selection of natural materials to stimulate their senses. Good quality picture books are also appreciated during quiet one-to-one times. Some detailed observations and overall good planning helps babies progress in readiness for a gradual introduction to the toddler and pre school area.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children engage in enjoyable, worthwhile activities and are making steady progress towards reaching their early learning goals before they go to school. This is because most staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan well for their overall learning and development. Children's progress is closely monitored and clearly documented observation records help ensure they are appropriately assessed by their key worker on a regular basis. The quality of records in a couple of cases require some improvement and staff are being supported in this area.

Children play happily and comfortably alongside their peers and are learning to cooperate well together. They are also beginning to consider how their behaviour affects others, as they lower their voices when younger children are sleeping. They understand the concept of sharing and are patient when it comes to taking turns and show acts of kindness towards one another. Their communication skills are developing well because they are encouraged individually and in small

groups to express themselves openly. Some good questioning techniques challenge children's thinking and lots of praise and encouragement helps build their confidence and self-esteem.

Children are becoming increasingly confident in their own abilities and some show pride in their achievements. They mostly label their own work and sometimes ask for it to be displayed in the main playroom. In their key groups, children are beginning to link sounds and letters as they explore how their first names are constructed. Older children are also able to recognise their name on individual place settings at lunchtime. Story times are greatly enjoyed by children. They listen attentively as the more experienced staff bring stories to life. Afterwards, they talk about 'Daisy', who does not like peas and enthusiastically respond when asked about their own favourite and least favourite foods. Children also show interest in looking at books independently and are often seen to sit quietly in the comfortable book area. During circle times, children enthusiastically join in action songs and older children are often asked by staff to take the lead in directing different actions.

Children's ability to problem solve is developing well. Older children concentrate for sustained periods and capably complete quite complex puzzles. The language of maths is incorporated well into every day activities and older children competently count beyond 10. Improved labelling around the nursery is helping children recognise numerals and during water play there is much discussion amongst children about depth, volume and the effects of mixing sand and water together.

Older children are now provided with some more challenging activities such as learning computer skills. Some are becoming adept at interpreting educational software programmes and have quickly learned about other functions of the computer, such as, how to print. In contrast, activities which encourage children to explore and learn about the natural world require further developing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happily settled because the key worker system works well and the settling-in process is gradual and family friendly. Their individual needs are well met because staff take the time to get to know each child and understand their behaviour patterns. Comprehensive information is gathered and recorded which, on entry, includes the current state of each child's health.

All children play well alongside each other in a cooperative and companionable atmosphere. Younger children are gradually learning to socialise and are encouraged to treat their friends kindly. Some firm friendships have been established between a small group of older boys who are strongly supportive of each other. Staff treat children with respect and behave in a caring and considerate way towards them. If they become distressed for any reason they are warmly comforted.

A good range of anti-discriminatory toys and equipment help children acknowledge difference and learn more about the world around them. They learn about the traditions of others by celebrating different cultural festivals, such as, Chinese New year and by sometimes experiencing different food at meal times. Staff also learn a few words of each child's home language, which helps make them feel welcome and valued. Appropriate systems are in place to help ensure there is early intervention if there are concerns about a child's development or welfare. This overall approach helps foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

All parents receive a warm welcome from staff and are kept suitably informed about their child's overall progress. Staff effectively liaise with parents and share information if there are any concerns, for example, about a child's energy levels or appetite. The quality of written observations for children over two years old are variable and do not always give parents a clear picture of how children are progressing.

Partnership with parents of children receiving nursery education is satisfactory. As part of the parents information leaflet, details about the curriculum are outlined and parents are kept informed of their child's progress through written observations and profile books. Further work is needed, however, to ensure there is a system to share information on a more regular basis. Individual plans relating to the curriculum also need to be more prominently displayed.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the setting are good. Children are cared for in a welcoming environment by the suitably qualified staff team, who have worked hard to address issues raised at the previous inspection. Staff are well deployed and ratios meet requirements. All permanent and agency staff are checked for their suitability to work with children and documentary proof of this is now kept on site and made available for inspection.

Record keeping systems have been strengthened and there is also now an effective signing in and out system for staff. Some policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated. A procedure for staff to follow in the unlikely event a child is lost or uncollected has also been developed. The complaints procedure now meets Ofsted requirements, but is not yet incorporated into the parents information leaflet.

Most staff demonstrate a good understanding of the different frameworks used to promote children's learning and development. They are also preparing well for regulatory changes and demonstrate an openness to learning about new ways of working. A review of the way children are grouped has been undertaken and the new key working system is so far working well.

Space is sufficient for the number of children registered to be cared for and is well prepared in advance of children's arrival. Lunchtime is a much more sociable occasion for everyone, as all staff now sit and eat with the children. Sleep and rest arrangements are cosy, clean and comfortable.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, several actions and recommendations were set which required the provider to improve both nursery education and care practice. The nursery has made good progress in addressing these and as a consequence, changes are having a positive impact.

In line with requirements, ratios are suitably maintained resulting in better consistency of care for children under two years. Procedures for checking staff suitability and qualifications have also been strengthened, with supporting documentation now being kept on site. The requirements to improve the system for recording staff attendance has been addressed.

Some policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated. A procedure for staff to follow in the unlikely event a child is lost or uncollected has been developed. This means children are

now better protected. The complaints procedure also now meets Ofsted requirements, but has yet to be incorporated into the parents information leaflet.

Nursery Education

Good overall progress has been made in improving the standard of nursery education. There are better opportunities for children to develop their language and literacy skills, with more emphasis on children learning to link sounds and letters. The language of maths is used as part of everyday activities with children and there is better labelling around the setting. Older, more able children are encouraged to take the lead in some activities and 'key times' provide them with more challenging activities, such as, practising their computer skills using a good range of educational software. In line with recommendations, there is an improved system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum.

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 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.

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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 the correct format of the complaints procedure appears in the parents information leaflet
- further develop systems for keeping parents informed about children's progress

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):

- further extend physical outdoor play opportunities for children
- further develop systems for keeping parents informed about children's progress
- further develop the curriculum to ensure it provides children with opportunities to explore the natural world

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