

Cornerstone Academy

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY357369
Inspection date	08 July 2008
Inspector	Amanda Gill
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Registered person	Cornerstone Academy Ltd
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 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?

Cornerstone Academy opened in 2007 and operates from a converted house with three main play rooms. It is situated in Rainham, in the London borough of Havering.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07:00 to 19:00. A maximum of 35 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 29 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, seven children receive funding for early education.

The setting employs ten members of staff. All staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery mainly provides for children in the local area and supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted very well through effective procedures and staff's good hygiene practices. For example, staff sanitise all work surfaces and tables before and after each meal and wear disposable aprons and gloves to prepare and serve food. Children benefit from playing in a clean environment, with well-maintained toys and equipment. Children are encouraged to follow good hygiene routines, such as washing their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet. Small steps in the toilet area ensure even the youngest children have independent and safe access to the toilet. A sink in each room provides children with convenient hand washing facilities. This helps reinforce the importance of good hygiene practices. Bright, colourful pictures around each room highlight to the children additional ways they can keep themselves healthy.

The premises are very clean. Effective procedures help to prevent cross-infection and sustain good levels of hygiene throughout the setting. This includes staff wiping surfaces with antibacterial spray and wearing disposable gloves during nappy changing. Most staff have attended up-to-date first aid training and parental permission is obtained to enable the setting to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. The manager has ensured that each room has its own first aid box and, therefore, staff are able to act in the best interest of all children in the event of an illness or accident. Children are protected as all accidents, including injuries that have occurred away from the setting, are recorded in detail.

Staff have an excellent understanding of food hygiene. Tables are suitably wiped and disinfected before and after snack times, with spillages and food which has fallen on the floor promptly cleaned away. Children at the nursery are provided with a wide range of snacks and meals that include fresh fruit, breadsticks, carrot sticks, sandwiches with a choice of fillings, crackers, pita bread, casserole, pasta, jollof rice and vegetables, beef stew, curry and cottage pie. Staff pour children a cup of juice or water during food times and babies are given beakers of water. Children enjoy meeting their friends at mealtimes which provide a sociable place for them to eat and chat. The children's dietary needs are clearly displayed within the kitchen area and on the notice board in each room to ensure all staff are aware of any allergies or dietary requirements. All children have designed their own place mats for mealtimes. Each mat has the child's name and handprints so that they can find their seat, and includes allergy information as an added reinforcement for staff.

All children have daily access to physical play, which provides opportunities for them to develop their physical skills and to exercise both indoors and outdoors in the fresh air. The children use a good range of toys, equipment and tools that provides appropriate challenge. They ride trikes, play music and movement games, sing action songs and have access to bats, balls and a large climbing frame with a slide. The children are learning new skills, developing a positive attitude towards physical exercise and a growing awareness of how it can help them to stay healthy. Children thoroughly enjoy dancing and moving to music at the setting and taking part in singing and dancing to familiar songs and rhymes, such as 'Heads and Shoulders' and 'Wind the Bobbin up'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery runs from a converted house. Children have access to three main play rooms within the building and a large converted double garage area in the garden. The rooms are divided according to the ages of the children. There are two toilet blocks and a utility nappy changing area. The walls are adorned with the children's artwork and posters and photos around the setting reflect their own and other cultures and contribute to a sense of belonging.

Very good use is made of the inside space to provide children with a wide range of activities. Children enjoy their play in a safe and well-organised environment where staff are vigilant and use highly effective daily risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. The outdoor area is fully enclosed and staff check all areas for safety before children play. Children access resources with enthusiasm. The thoughtful use of space ensures that children do not impinge on one another's play space and they confidently use all of the area available.

Indoor toys and equipment are clean and in good condition because staff check them. The fire evacuation procedure is displayed and fire detection equipment is accessible around the building. Fire drills are carried out regularly. However, the fire log lacks detail. It does not include the number of staff and children involved in the evacuation or detail any problems and how they were resolved, for example, sleeping children.

The manager and four members of staff are responsible for child protection issues within the setting. Most of the staff team have attended safeguarding training and have a good knowledge of procedures to follow. A well written policy is in place which includes the procedure to follow if an allegation were to be made about a member of staff. Children are well-protected from harm because staff are vigilant and have a very good understanding of their role with regards to child protection. They are able to put appropriate procedures into practice. The recording of all staff, children and visitors to the setting, policies for the collection and non-collection of children and arrangements for recording pre-existing injuries contribute to ensuring children are safeguarded from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive at the nursery happily and settle in their rooms very well, as they are cared for by highly motivated and enthusiastic staff. All children are very aware of the daily routine and are making good progress in their development. Children enjoy the activities, they are keen and interested to learn and explore. At outdoor playtime, the children are given opportunities to freely explore their environment whether they choose to run and climb or help with building a house from construction blocks. There are also more structured activities, such as threading, baking and modelling, that further enhance the setting. Adult-led activities, such as story telling and circle time, provide a good balance to the children's play. Staff take time to play with individual children and join in enthusiastically with activities, extending children's knowledge and helping them to enjoy expressing themselves creatively.

Children's developmental progress is tracked by the key person system that is in place and by using the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. This, combined with the knowledge of each individual child's developmental stage, helps staff to plan and deliver activities which help children to learn and develop in line with their age and ability. Planning is flexible, but, during the inspection, one activity lacked sufficient challenge for some

children and staff were not able to maintain their interest. All children are able to self select toys and resources during free play time, for example, toys are displayed on shelving at appropriate heights within each room. Children are very comfortable within their environment and receive an appropriate level of support from the staff. Children make friends with their peers and develop good relationships with the staff. All children play happily and older children initiate conversations and involve other children and adults in their play.

Children are beginning to be confident speakers. They comfortably initiate discussions with adults. During registration time children are encouraged to say 'good morning Miss X' and good morning to each other. All staff and children are addressed as Miss or Mr and their first names enabling all children to feel included within the setting. Staff take time to play with individual children, sharing books, dressing up, painting or making noises with toys and instruments, helping children to develop in confidence and ensuring that they feel valued and included.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are happy, confident and settled. Children are developing appropriate levels of concentration and are able to sit quietly and listen when required.

All staff have undertaken Foundation Stage training and this reflects in practice as activities provided effectively cover all areas of learning. They make daily observations of individual children throughout the day and use these observations to assess each child's progress and development along the stepping stones. Staff contribute to planning meetings where they discuss each individual child's progress and plan suitable activities to help children move towards the early learning goals.

Staff use individual profiles to track children's developmental progress, including assessment entry profiles, helping staff to effectively track children's progress across the stepping stones. Children take part in a range of activities. Most activities are well planned and show flexibility. The combination of free flow play, child-initiated activities and adult-led activities, such as circle time and role play enable children to work and play purposefully together and respond positively to staff requests, such as tidying up.

Children receive lots of opportunities to build up a repertoire of songs that they sing with vigour and enjoyment, both spontaneously and during planned sessions. In addition, children are able to recall songs with clues provided by staff during group time, such as counting ten green bottles and hand twinkles for 'Twinkle twinkle little star'. There is a wide range of books in each room. Children clearly enjoy listening to stories, know how to hold the books correctly and that an author is the person who writes the book.

Children are developing their number and problem-solving skills as they construct towers with Lego bricks and play with number programmes on the computer. Children use mathematical language confidently. For example, when playing a guessing game they were able to name shapes such as triangle, circle, and star. They have good opportunities to recognise and explore numbers in the environment and enjoy playing with the telephones, keyboards and bricks.

The use of interesting themes ensures that children remain interested, are involved in all aspects of their education and play activities stem from these. For example, a number of activities stem from the current theme 'Stars and Stripes'. The current wall display of the American flag shows that children have opportunities to stick, glue, paint and cut. This shows children are able to develop their hand/eye coordination and small muscle movements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel greatly valued because they are treated with lots of respect. Resources depicting positive images and promoting equality of opportunity are available, for example, books, posters that "welcome" children in different languages, dolls, play foods and puzzles. Children show good attitudes towards one another and are confident and self-assured. They play well together, learning to share and take turns. They negotiate turn taking with confidence. They show genuine concern for one another and benefit enormously from the example set to them by the staff team. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully integrated within the setting. Comprehensive observations, educational plans and strong links with other professionals ensure that the staff team have a complete understanding of each child's needs and a highly efficient support structure to effectively assist each child to progress to the next steps in their learning.

Children develop a secure sense of belonging and confidently take on responsibilities within the setting, such as helping to tidy up and giving out plates and cups at snack and mealtimes. Behaviour is good and children show high levels of independence, confidence and self-esteem as staff continually praise and value their achievements. The children are aware of their boundaries because staff remind them of the house rules on a regular basis. Staff are consistent in their management of behaviour and help the children to negotiate turn taking and sharing.

Parents complete very comprehensive forms on entry that record each child's developmental history, and detail the children's health, eating habits, toilet/nappy habits, sleeping patterns, social relationships, daily routine and family history. This helps the staff have a full understanding of the children and their individual personalities. Children and their parents are able to visit and spend time at the nursery for a settling in period, helping them feel secure and confident. Parents appreciate this and describe their children as extremely happy and contented at the setting. Staff are welcoming and friendly. This approach and a comprehensive handbook, that informs parents of the setting's policies and procedures and the curriculum they follow, help to promote continuity between the home and the nursery.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. They have access to their children's files and are welcomed into the nursery at any time as they have an open door policy. Parents and carers benefit from a two-way sharing of information between them and staff at the setting, through regular key person meetings and open days where they discuss each child's progress and their next steps for development. Staff listen to parents' concerns and, where appropriate, adapt their policies and procedures accordingly. Parents receive feedback forms every eight weeks so that they have the opportunity to make suggestions for improvements they would like to see. A comments and suggestions book is also available in the hallway for parents and staff to make any 'on the spot' comments. These help the manager to look at the service provided and strive to continually improve. A fully comprehensive complaints policy is in place and contains details of the regulatory body should parents wish to make a complaint.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by staff who have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau and who have

undergone a thorough and robust recruitment and induction programme. This ensures that all staff working in the nursery are suitable and have relevant training and experience. The registration certificate is displayed and the attendance register confirms that the provider complies with the conditions of registration. All necessary policies are in place and available to parents.

The use of available space within the nursery is successfully and imaginatively organised, with clear areas for storage, play, food preparation, changing, eating and sleeping. These areas are well managed by staff to allow children to play, eat and rest safely and securely.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. The manager and staff show a strong commitment to children's achievements and development which is reflected in the children's enthusiasm for, and involvement in, their learning.

The manager involves staff in the planning at regular team meetings. The manager ensures appropriate levels of supervision are maintained at all times through good deployment of staff. Small group sizes ensure that ratios are met at all times. The manager, deputy managers and staff are all professional, enthusiastic and highly motivated in their approach to providing all the children with positive early years play and learning experiences. Effective procedures are in place for the recruitment, employment and training of staff to make sure that the adults in the setting are suitable to work with children.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable: this is the first inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration, 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

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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):

- consider recording the details of all fire drills in a log, including the number of staff and children involved in the evacuation and any problems and how they were resolved, for example, sleeping children.

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 take all opportunities to promote children's learning through effective resources, purposeful interaction and sufficient challenge.

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