

Footprints Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY343597
Inspection date	07 July 2008
Inspector	Elizabeth Juon
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Registered person	Footprints Daycare Nursery
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Footprints Day Nursery opened in 2007 and operates from a newly converted single storey building, situated in a residential area in Ashford, Middlesex. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 23 children under five years on roll. Of these eight children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. Of these three of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and three staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to develop a good understanding of healthy practices through consistent routines. Children wash their hands after messy play and touching the hamster and after using the toilet. Hygienic use of paper towels to dry hands helps to prevent the spread of infection. Staff maintain suitable hygiene routines such as wearing gloves and aprons when changing nappies and serving food, to ensure children are safe from cross contamination. The staff maintain a clean environment for the children by regularly cleaning toys and resources. All the required documentation is in place such as accident and medication reports and there is an efficient system in place for administering medication to children to safeguard children's welfare. Several staff are first aid trained to ensure children receive appropriate care should they become unwell or have an accident.

Children regularly enjoy a range of activities that contribute to their health and develop their physical skills. Children demonstrate a good sense of space and move confidently around the setting. Children's fine motor skills are developing well; they are gaining competence when using small equipment such as scissors, glue sticks and paintbrushes.

The younger children under two years old have ample space to practise their new skills of crawling, standing and walking in a safe and secure environment. Children are praised heartily and given encouragement to achieve their new skills. The babies have suitable age appropriate toys which encourage their development.

Children are able to rest and sleep according to their needs. The bedding is clean for each child and staff monitor sleeping children closely to ensure their comfort and safety.

Warm, trusting relationships are developing to ensure young babies feel secure. However, the key person who is receptive to children's individual needs is not always the one to feed the children lunch to further develop new found skills. Staff monitor food intake and nappy changes to ensure babies remain healthy. Babies receive regular drinks to ensure they do not become thirsty or dehydrated. Older children brush their teeth after lunch to promote good habits for the future.

The nursery provides food freshly cooked on the premises. Children enjoy a variety of healthy, nutritious snacks and meals. Systems are in place to record individual children's dietary needs to ensure these are known by staff. Menus are planned and displayed for parents. At present senior staff are taking turns to cook and this takes qualified staff away from the care of the children for this period of time. Staff sit at the tables at mealtime and although it is a social time there is no specific routine to help children gain social skills or learn as part of this daily activity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a new, spacious, well-organised environment where risks are minimised. This allows them to move around and play safely inside. The toys, resources and furnishings are new, bright and clean. There is a varied selection of accessible toys and resources for children to use in each base room set out to be appealing and offer choice, for example, the comfortable book corner or the cosy tent in the baby room.

The premises are secure and there are good procedures in place to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access. The large garden is an asset, although still a project for further improvement; there are ample toys to promote children's physical development and an area where children dig and plant seeds. Staff supervise children in the garden; however, they do not effectively check the outside area before children go out and hazards remain, such as water gathering in the sand pit cover and a wet climbing-frame. Children benefit from a suitable range of safety measures which include, socket covers, radiator pipe lagging, fire safety precautions such as a fire blanket in the kitchen and a frequently practised emergency evacuation drill to help children and staff become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. However, at present the fire blanket is not fitted to the wall, and written fire procedures do not inform staff of the exit or meeting place, should there be an evacuation.

Children are well protected by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection. Their awareness is maintained and updated through discussion and appropriate current, written guidelines which staff read to be fully aware of the steps to take if they have any concerns about children in their care. This promotes the importance of safeguarding children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children receive kind attention from the staff who are keen and interested in the children. Children benefit from being cared for in individual rooms ensuring they have access to age-appropriate toys. At present all the children come together at lunch time and have the opportunity to play with their siblings and mix with older children. Babies and young children gain much from being together. They learn to communicate and develop good relationships. Children under three explore and experiment through a range of well-planned activities that are appropriate for their stage of development. They enjoy textures as they explore natural materials, such as, sand and a treasure basket, also showing delight in the colourful manufactured items and musical toys. Children relate well to staff and to each other. Children confidently approach staff for support, comfort and cuddles indicating good trusting relationships are being built. Staff ensure they are aware of the children's needs and the nursery routines reflect those of home with regard to eating and sleeping.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Key staff have a suitable knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and refer to the stepping stones in their planning. Written plans are linked to the six areas of learning and indicate what the group of children are expected to learn from activities. Staff have begun to make links between their plans and the regular observations and assessments they make of children's progress to aid planning. However, the learning intentions of some activities are too vague and do not provide enough challenge for some children. Staff are sensitive to the children's needs but their questioning technique is not effective to extend children's thinking and imagination. Staff provide a good range of resources to support the activities indoors and cover all areas of learning. While staff provide children with regular opportunities to enjoy the fresh air in the garden and use some resources to promote children's physical development, the Early Year's curriculum is not fully reflected in the outdoor learning environment.

The children play well together, cooperate and instigate play, for example, using their imagination at a 'birthday party'. Children behave well and are polite, saying 'please may I have

more apple', at snack time. Children persevere with their tasks and demonstrate a sense of achievement, for example completing puzzles or using the computer.

The children are beginning to link sounds and letters as they sound out letters phonetically and recognise the letter. However, staff expectation of children's ability to recognise 'letters' made from construction pieces is inappropriate and causes confusion to children when attempting to decide if the shape is r or p. There are mark making opportunities with paints and crayons. Children practise copying and writing letters in their work books at home. However, there are few opportunities to write spontaneously in a role play situation or help themselves to available writing pads and pens. Children can recognise their name in print on their coat pegs and name labels. There is labelling around the room to promote children's recognition of words in print. The alphabet and number friezes are too high or incomplete to be useful to children if attempting to write. The children show an interest in books and listen well at story time. Children hold puppet props for the Goldilocks story but there is no encouragement from staff to participate.

Children count well and some recognise written numerals to at least 30. However, there are few opportunities for children to practise simple sums and calculations in every day situations, such as, mealtime. Children are able to competently recognise different colours and shapes and are beginning to understand weight and capacity in water play and cooking sessions. The children can use their imagination and creativity in art and craft activities although glue is not readily available to encourage spontaneity. Their art work is displayed and valued by staff which raises children's self esteem. Children describe their own work as super-duper.

The children are gaining an understanding of the wider world through resources and planned activities, for example, Chinese New Year and Easter. Resources are available to encourage children to experiment with technology in everyday situations however, these are out of easy reach and not available for daily role play. The computer offers other learning opportunities in the games available for the children as well as improving children's dexterity and mouse control. Conversations between staff and children, and photographs of previous activities, effectively encourage children to discuss past and present events in their lives such as holidays or the recent visit from the police service. Children have helped to plant vegetables in the garden and watch with interest as the plants now grow. They have responsibility to care for the nursery hamster and are beginning to understand how to care for living things. Children have daily opportunities for outdoor play and honing their skills using larger equipment, for example, on the climbing frame, slide and tricycles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed by staff who value their individuality. There is a key person system to help ensure each child is well known by the staff to meet their individual needs at most times during the day. The overall friendly atmosphere fosters inclusion of staff and children from a range of different backgrounds and cultures. Children talk happily about their home life and things that are important to them. A good range of activities and resources develop children's understanding of diversity.

The qualified staff are confident they will recognise if children do not appear to be reaching their developmental milestones. There is a nominated person in the nursery with additional training, knowledge and skills to coordinate support for children with additional needs when it is needed. There is a written inclusion policy to ensure all children are welcome in the nursery.

Children behave well, they are given lots of praise and encouragement and learn to share and take turns to play cooperatively with their friends. Children enjoy respectful relationships with adults and each other. They are beginning to develop confidence and self-esteem. Staff encourage all children to participate in the activities provided. This ensures children have equal opportunity to maximise their enjoyment and keep occupied. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The parents spoken to at the inspection are very pleased with the standard of care their children receive and say staff are amiable and approachable to discuss their child's care. Parents are provided with written information about the setting and the staff understand the benefit of developing a strong partnership with parents to enhance children's care and learning. Children happily talk about their family. Children benefit from effective information sharing with parents through newsletters, daily chats, record sheets, detailed notice-boards and a website. Parents are given information on the regulator Ofsted and how to make a complaint should they need to. The partnership with parents and carers for nursery education is satisfactory. Planning is displayed in the rooms. There are several initiatives to help parents be aware and involved, to extend children's learning at home, such as, workbooks, library books, show and tell items, teddy bear and the hamster going home with different children each week. The observation records completed by each child's key worker are available for parents to read at any time. There are two open evenings each year for parents to discuss their child's progress reports.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children and staff are settling well into the routines of this new nursery. The manager has put together comprehensive policies and procedures which form a sound basis for good working practices in the nursery. Of the six staff working with the children, three hold appropriate qualifications of level 3 and higher. Other staff have experience of caring for children and are expecting to achieve their qualifications in the near future. Staff are able to access short courses to update their knowledge and skills to benefit the children. The rooms are organised into areas for the children, to encourage, for example, imagination in role-play. The base rooms are cheerful with visual stimuli and organised to provide ample space for children to move around freely. The overall adult to child ratios are maintained but regard is not always taken to ensure staff are deployed effectively at all times, to ensure the qualified staff are working directly with the children. There are suitable contingency plans in place to cover for absences to ensure children always have enough supervision. An accurate record of children's attendance is kept. However, there is no indication on the register of all the staff in each room during the day.

All the required documentation is in place to support children's welfare.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The manager oversees the curriculum planning to ensure the activities are relevant. The staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are fully involved in the planning and assessment process to keep children's progress records up to date. A varied range of activities are on offer to ensure children develop in all areas, however, they sometimes lack sufficient differentiation and challenge to enhance learning for less or more able children. The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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.

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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 a daily safety check is carried out to safeguard children outside; improve the detail on the fire evacuation procedures and fit the fire blanket according to manufacturer's instruction
- review and improve the organisation of routines to deploy qualified staff and the key person, in a meaningful way to ensure children's needs are met; record staff attendance on room registers

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):

- improve the routine for lunchtime to enable children to acquire new skills and have opportunity to complete simple sums and calculation in everyday situations; ensure children can easily access mark making materials and simple technology daily
- develop the focused activity planning sheets to clearly record differentiation for individual children's learning and highlighting the adult role and questions to make children think

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