

Alphabet House Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY350725
Inspection date	24 July 2008
Inspector	Joanne Baranek
Setting Address	Alphabet Nursery, 86 Newcastle Avenue, WORKSOP, Nottinghamshire, S80 1LA
Telephone number	01909 500074
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Registered person	Alphabet House Day Nurseries (Worksop) Ltd
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?

Alphabet House Day Nursery has been open since 2002. It has change owners and re-registered in 2007. It is one of a small chain of privately owned nurseries in Nottinghamshire and operates from converted offices in Worksop town centre. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 until 18:00 all year round except between Christmas and New Year.

There are currently 101 children from 5 months to 10 years on roll. This includes 28 children who receive funding for nursery education.

The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 20 full-time and part-time staff who work with the children. Well over half of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from the Nottinghamshire local authority and are members of the Private Day Nursery Association.

The day nursery is privately owned and day to day responsibility is delegated to the staff.

The nursery has achieved the Preschool Learning Alliance Accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children remain healthy within a setting that uses comprehensive policies to support their effective practice. Medication records and policies show that parents are required to sign before first aid qualified staff will administer medication to the children within their care enabling the children to receive the correct dosage and remain healthy. The sick child policy states children will not be allowed into the setting if they are unwell and a section within this shows the infectious diseases exclusion periods which provides further information for parents. The staff limit cross-contamination by using paper towels and liquid soap for the children within the bathrooms. The toddlers are encouraged to wash their hands before eating food and after using the toilet. The staff talk about 'the germs that need to be washed away' so the children start to understand the need for washing their hands. The pre-school children are encouraged to access the toilets independently and wash their hands after using the toilet and before they eat food. The staff check the children have done this properly when they return, however, this is not consistently followed through. For example, a child accesses the snack table where there was a bowl of communal fruit ready prepared. The child has not washed his hands appropriately and there is still paint visible on them. This child is not checked by the staff and he then proceeded to contaminate the fruit with the paint and germs remaining on his hands. This impacts on the health of the children accessing this fruit bowl after him.

The nursery cook prepares the food for the children safely as she has attended food hygiene training. She checks the temperature of the fridge on a regular basis ensuring the safe storage of the food for the children. All the staff wash their hands before serving food to ensure cross-contamination is limited and providing good role models for the children. The food provided for the children is healthy and varied, snack, for example, is fruit or bread sticks, and main meals are, for example, pasta dishes and shepherd's pie. Dietary requirements are asked for on admission to ensure the children are receiving the food appropriate for their individual care. The cook and all staff are fully aware of these specific needs and the cook ensures all food is prepared separately to prevent any allergic reactions. The staff provide the children with an option of juice or water at meal times and during the session the children are able to request or access a drink if they are thirsty enabling them to stay hydrated whilst at nursery. Babies in the nursery receive all meals and milk feeds at times specified by their parents to ensure their individual routine is continued.

Children develop their physical skills through a variety of activities inside and out of the setting. They develop their small muscles and accuracy skills through planned and free choice activities during the session such as mark-making and threading beads. The staff provide the children with outdoor play opportunities at least once a day and provide a variety of different activities outside to encourage the children to play and learn in the fresh air. Their large muscles are developed through play with, for example, cars and ride on toys, climbing frames and balance beams. The staff also provide books, musical instruments and creative activities outside for

children to play less actively if they wish to. The children visit the local soft play centre and park on a regular basis where they can climb, slide and run in a safe environment. The children are learning how to lead healthy lives through discussions and activities planned by the staff, such as making fruit kebabs and learning how these fruits will keep them healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are kept safe and secure within the nursery because of the equipment and procedures they have in place. They use socket covers and stair gates and the radiators and tap water are maintained at an appropriate temperature to avoid burns and scalds. However, not all electric sockets are covered which impacts the safety of the children in these areas. The rooms are all well lit by electric lights and large windows allowing in natural light and are of an adequate temperature for the care of the children. However, the cleanliness in areas of the nursery is not consistent, especially within the toddler and pre-school areas, and this impacts on the overall health and safety of the children. A relaxation area is available in all rooms in the form of a book area with cushions and seats. Children are able to relax and rest here if they wish to. If they require a sleep there is a quiet area for them to rest either in cots for the babies or on sleep mats for the older children. They are supported by staff who check on them every 15 minutes to ensure their safety.

The furniture provides a child friendly environment where they are able to sit at tables comfortably and access books easily from a shelving unit designed with children in mind. All facilities and fixtures are brightly coloured and help to provide a stimulating area in which the children can learn and play in comfort and safety. The babies are cared for with appropriate equipment that meets their needs, such as sterilisers and high chairs. All toys and resources are cleaned on a regular basis limiting infection being spread, and broken or worn out equipment is thrown away. The rooms have bright and educational displays showing the children's work giving them ownership of the nursery and a pride in what they do.

The staff conduct risk assessments on the premises and equipment to identify any hazards and use these to place further equipment or procedures in place to reduce this risk for the children, visitors or staff. Whilst they are out of the nursery the children all wear high visibility vests with the nursery phone number on, in case they become separated from the group, and the staff ensure regular head counts are conducted to check all children are still within the group. The security within the nursery is good as the outer gate is locked at all times and the entrances into the nursery are locked with entry key pads to allow staff to enter, but all visitors and parents have to ring the doorbell. All visitors are escorted into the building once their identification has been checked ensuring all adults unknown to the setting are signed in correctly and staff are aware of any person within the nursery at all times. This all ensures the safety of the children whilst they are in the nursery and enables all adults to be checked before they access the areas the children occupy.

The children are safeguarded whilst in the care of the nursery because of the staff's understanding of child protection and the policies and procedures they use to protect them. The manager is the designated child protection officer and she is adept at supporting the staff in identifying any signs of symptoms of abuse or neglect. The nursery policy states the procedure to follow in the case of any suspicions, relating to the safety of the children, and this is read by the staff on all inductions to ensure they are fully aware of how this will protect the child. The policy also states what procedure the management will follow in the case of an allegation made against a staff member. All staff are able to identify the signs of abuse and have a good

understanding of what they will do in the case of any suspicions, ensuring all children are safeguarded throughout the provision.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The children within this setting are extremely confident and progressing exceptionally well. The staff provide fun educational activities for the children to access freely through the session and the use of child friendly storage throughout the nursery enable children to choose independently and initiate their own learning. The children have built excellent relationships with their peers and the staff who care for them; they take turns in games and care for each other. Staff provide a variety of first hand experiences for the children to learn from such as a trip to the local park to feed the ducks and play on the larger equipment. Within creative sessions the staff provide the children with different mediums and tools in order to support them to create individual art work, for example, the children create their own guinea pig cages for role play to coincide with the care of the nursery pet. The staff provide exciting story times for the children to encourage them to be interested in books. This includes actions and animation to keep the younger children involved, for example, they read 'We are going on a lion hunt' and the staff member reading the story encouraging the children to act out parts of the story and read along with the familiar parts. As the staff visibly enjoy this story this enthuses all the children to be involved.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff plan for the individual child based on their stage and requirements. Detailed plans show how all areas of learning will be covered and the different levels of differentiation that will be used to support or challenge all the children within the group. The assessments the staff conduct on the children provide them with the knowledge of where each child is at and what they need to progress further. This is linked back into the planning in order to help each child to progress towards their early learning goals. However, there is little evidence of how the key worker knows what each child is able to do or what level they are at as the evaluative observations the staff produce are limited. This impacts on the ability for the parents or another staff member to know what level to gauge any activity at for each child. The plans the staff use within the rooms are flexible to enable the activities to be child initiated or led. For example, when the children show an interest in the heavy rain falling, the staff abandon the session and take the children outside with umbrellas and coats to feel the rain and talk about the weather.

Children within this setting are readily accessing activities and show an eagerness to learn new skills. They are adept at learning new knowledge and putting this into practice, for example, they use their skills from their music sessions to play musical instruments in the garden. The staff use rewards such as stamps on their hands or piece of work to show when they have achieved something or behaved well. This supports the children to have high self-esteem and confidence. The children are able to be independent in both their learning and care as they are accessing their resources freely from child-friendly storage and are using the toilet and washing their hands independently.

The children are learning to recognise their name in print and the nursery supports this with name tags on their drawers and coat pegs. They are starting to link sounds to letters through the use of letter of the week and follow up activities. These include practising to write and form the letters correctly and then drawing something that starts with this letter. This encourages

the children to start to link the letters to sounds successfully. Children are accessing books freely in a comfortable, well-organised book area and separate library room and have a good understanding about story content and how to retell their favourite story with confidence. The staff support this through group story times and sitting one to one with children reading books.

Staff encourage the children to use their counting skills in a variety of ways, for example, reorganising numbers into order by placing numbers on a clock face. This is then extended for the more able children to introduce time and they use the clock hands to show their favourite time of the day such as dinner time. However, the children are not learning simple calculation skills and this is a weakness shown throughout all the children's achievement files. The children use weighing and measuring skills in simple cookery and creative activities, for example, the children make play dough using weighing scales and measuring spoons. However, the staff do not concentrate on the measuring side of this activity or introduce new vocabulary and this is another weakness shown throughout the children's files.

The children are learning about a variety of aspects whilst at the setting, including learning about living things such as growing plants and discovering they need water, light and soil to be healthy and grow. They plant their own bulbs and seeds and support their growth using this knowledge. These plants are then transferred into the nursery garden where the children look for butterflies and other insects to extend their knowledge further. Programmable toys and a computer provides the children with the technology they need to start to learn simple information technology skills, for example, the children use a simple remote control device with directional buttons to move a crane arm and pick up objects.

Children are learning a variety of physical skills when they access activities outside in the garden, in the local park and soft play centre. These include balancing, climbing, jumping and throwing and catching skills. Inside the nursery the children learn how to play team games using resources such as a parachute and a ball. The children work as a team to keep the parachute moving and the ball jumping up and down. The children have a good sense of personal space and whilst running and playing they infrequently bump into each other. Their small muscles are developed through activities available both inside and outside the nursery, which include mark-making, construction play and completing puzzles and jigsaws. They are able to access a variety of activities throughout the day that will help them to develop physically.

The children are learning to be creative through music because the staff invite a music teacher into the setting. This supports them to learn how to play instruments, sing various songs from memory and dance along to rhythm. Staff encourage the children to express themselves through imaginative play in a designated role play area that changes on a regular basis to provide them with different prompts for their play. They are able to act out different situations and relate socially to their peers through this play. During all sessions in the pre-school room the children are able to access malleable play, for example, water, sand and cornflour gloop. The staff encourage the children to talk about the different textures and bring other areas of learning such as foam letters in the water tray. This supports the children to consolidate their learning through play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children and families are included into the setting as they value diversity and welcome all enthusiastically. The equal opportunities policy supports this practice and states that each child will be valued as an individual. The children are able to see excellent positive images in all areas

of the nursery showing a variety of children from around the world enabling them to see on a daily basis the varied lives people live. These images include children and adults with differing disabilities which support the children to have a superb understanding of the diverse world in which they live. The children access books on a daily basis that show different religions, cultures and places around the world, as these include fiction and factual books it helps them to learn about the differences and similarities around the world. This is then followed up with exciting activities and topics, for example, learning about Chinese New Year or Hanukkah.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed into the setting and supported as the manager of the nursery has vast experience working with families and children who have additional needs. She is trained as a special needs coordinator and has also received training within specialised areas to provide support for each individual child. The special needs policy supports this excellent practice and sets out the procedure the staff will follow when referring a child for further assessment or support. The staff work closely with the parents in order to gain knowledge about each child they care for and this helps them to support all children fully whilst they are within the care of the setting. Children who attend other provisions as well as the nursery are supported further as the manager builds extensive relationships with all. This includes sharing information with the school the children attend during the day in order to support the child's development and care needs.

Children are learning to manage their own behaviour through the excellent methods the staff use to discourage unacceptable behaviour and praise children when they start to learn right from wrong. The staff use age appropriate consistent methods throughout the nursery, for example, using distraction methods for the babies whilst teaching the toddler-age children the difference between deliberate and accidental incidents. The three and four year old children are encouraged to manage their own behaviour successfully as the staff explain to them why they cannot do certain things and the consequences for these actions. For example, when the children run along the corridor the staff tell them to walk as they may hurt themselves. Children in this age group are talking to their peers about how to behave, encouraging their friends to share and play with each other nicely.

Staff work with the parents closely to provide continuous care and education from home to the nursery. During the first session at the nursery the staff encourage them to fill out simple sheets and talk about their child's routine, likes, dislikes and what they are able to do already, for example, walk or crawl. This supports the staff to have an excellent understanding of what each child is like before they start their sessions fully and therefore are able to care for them appropriately. The staff then share the children's achievements and care through the use of home link books and daily diary sheets, enabling the parents to continue care and education at home. Parents are encouraged to attend exciting sessions in the nursery, such as baby massage and music sessions. These are open to all parents from the community and helps the nursery to build strong relationships with the local area.

The partnership with parents is good. They are encouraged to be involved within their child's learning through the provision of home link books that are sent home on a regular basis. These books inform the parents of what the children have achieved, activities they have done and sets out targets to work towards next. These targets are individual to the child and support their progress towards their early learning goals. The parents are encouraged to add to this book with any activities or achievements the children have done at home and this is then used to inform the children's files and future targets. The parents are invited along to parental consultations where they are able to discuss their child's progress. Staff ask for parental feedback about the practice they provide and parents are able to fill out questionnaires or discuss with

the manager any suggestions they have to improve the care or education their children receive. This feedback is then considered by the management and put into practice, and changes are then fed back to all parents ensuring they are fully aware.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The staff teach children about Hanukkah, Chinese New Year and different national celebrations. This is then supported by the varied resources, activities and a multicultural menu that is delivered within the nursery. The children have caring attitudes, they share toys and look after each other whilst playing. They are encouraged to talk about right and wrong and are beginning to recognise the difference between accidental and deliberate actions because the staff talk through their actions and discuss unacceptable behaviour. They are encouraged to engage in conversation during social events such as snack time, circle time and whilst playing. Children broaden their experiences within the setting as the staff plan a variety of different activities around cultural beliefs and different countries and how different people live. They support the children to know the surrounding community and plan walks locally to make them familiar with their area.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is led well by a manager who is qualified and suitable to hold the role, having a National Vocational Qualification level three. Recruitment is done professionally by the manager and the owner to ascertain the most appropriate person for the position. Once a new staff member commences their employment the manager ensures a police background check is initiated and takes the member of staff through an induction enabling them to have a good understanding of the policies and procedures the nursery follows. Until all checks have been returned as suitable and the staff member is deemed competent, they are not left alone with children and have a mentor at all times. This safeguards the children and ensures suitable people are caring for them.

Staff deployment is good within the nursery enabling children to receive the support they need to progress with their care and education. The key worker system in place further supports this by ensuring children have consistent carers and parents have a member of staff they can talk to about their children's needs. Although the nursery cares for children over eight years old this does not impact on the care of the younger children as they are cared for in a separate area ensuring both age group's needs are met. Appropriate adult to child ratios are met at all times and the staff ensure all children are signed in and out of the building on individual room registers. The staff and all visitors also sign in and out of the building so the management have clear records for emergency evacuations and to show who is in contact with the children at all times.

Records are kept effectively enabling the children to remain safe and secure within the care of the nursery. All policies and procedures are regularly updated to ensure they are in line with all current legislation, for example, the nursery is currently updating to be in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage for September. Confidentiality is maintained as the nursery locks all personal records and details away in a filing cabinet or lockable boxes and if a parent needs to talk in confidence to a staff member there are facilities to enable the conversation to stay private.

The leadership and management is good. The nursery have aims and values which they put into practice throughout the provision. They aim to provide continually high standards in a secure, home from home caring environment. The staff all exhibit caring and attentive manners and

enable this aim to be met. The manager and the owners have a good understanding of what happens within the different rooms of the nursery and the manager operates a hands on approach supporting the staff to improve their practice. Staff development is managed through annual appraisals where the staff are encouraged to reflect on their own practice and identify any areas in which they need further training or support. Internal training is used to support all staff and external courses are accessed to provide specialised and essential development. The nursery has high expectations of all its staff and children and supports both to exceed their potential. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is not applicable as 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 to 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):

- ensure cross-contamination is limited, with particular reference to snack time in the pre-school room
- ensure the health and safety of the children throughout the nursery, with particular reference to uncovered electric sockets and the cleanliness of all areas.

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):

- provide further opportunities for the children to start to learn how to calculate and measure
- continue to develop the child's assessment process to include further identification of when and how knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes have been achieved.

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