

Brock House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY234600
Inspection date 05/02/2010
Inspector Sheila Harrison

Setting address 6 Lemsford Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3PB

Telephone number 01727 830469 Admin 01727867500 Nursery

Email

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Brock House Nursery School is privately owned and was established in 1992. The nursery is based in a large three storey, detached house in the centre of St Albans, within walking distance to the city centre and railway station. Access to the pre-school is via steps to the front door.

Children are allocated to rooms according to their age and stage of development. The older children use several rooms situated on the ground and first floor. The baby unit has a separate entrance and is located on the lower ground floor of the building. There is an area for outside play. Funding is available for the early education of three and four year olds. The setting supports children with English as an additional language.

Brock House is open every day from 7:30am to 6:45pm for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery employs 16 staff. Of these 14 hold an appropriate early years qualifications and three staff have degrees in early years care and education. Senior staff are furthering their qualification to degree status.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 63 children in the early year's age range may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 85 children on roll.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Staffing, health and safety procedures are not fully effective to ensure children's welfare. Staff are knowledgeable and eager to improve. However, the setting's systems for evaluating the provision are restricted and some previously recognised areas for improvement have not been not fully addressed limiting the setting's capacity to maintain improvements.

Children are making suitable progress in their learning and development. They are mostly happy and are generally settled. The partnership with child care, education and health professionals and other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) adequately narrows the achievement gap. Useful partnerships with the parents acknowledge the uniqueness of each child.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection with regard to the meal time routines and the hand washing procedures (safeguarding) 03/03/2010
- take necessary steps to meet the requirements for adult:child ratios at all times, as set out in Appendix 2 of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Suitable people) 03/03/2010
- improve the risk assessment and constantly reappraise the environment and activities that children are exposed to making necessary adjustments to secure their safety at all times with particular regard to hall and stairs from the baby unit (Suitable premises, environment and equipment-also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register) 03/03/2010
- develop and implement rigorous systems to evaluate provision and ensure that staff are able to help all children have an enjoyable and challenging experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs. With particular regard to group organised play times, noise levels and nappy changing routines. (Organisation) 03/03/2010

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve arrangements for clear and consistent boundaries and be reasonable with expectations, with particular regard to ensuring children can express their wishes at mealtimes and have their individual dietary needs and preferences met
- develop further the indoor environment ensuring that resources are easily accessible to children, with particular regard to helping children to explore and learn independently.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are not fully effective. On occasions, during the first part of the day between 8:30am and 9:30 am, contingency plans for staff absence are ineffective and therefore there are an insufficient number of staff on duty compared with the number of children present. This is a breach of a specific requirement and means that staffing arrangements do not ensure the safety or comfort of the children. This results in some children being unsettled and the noise levels are high. The floor covering in the hall and stairs in the baby unit are in a poor state of repair and, although new flooring is on order, the risk assessment does not detail the precautions taken to keep staff and children safe from trips and falls in the meantime. The health and safety policy does not detail the procedures for reporting and dealing with hazards and faulty equipment in a timely manner. Suitable procedures are in place for identifying any child at risk of harm and liaising with the appropriate child agencies. Staff are well informed of the appropriate measures to be taken as they all attend safeguarding training

shortly after joining the nursery. There are robust recruitment and induction systems to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Staff are always in the presence of another member of staff until their Criminal Records Bureau check is returned.

There is inconsistent monitoring of the provision which has led to particular routines failing to meet the children's needs. On some occasions there are too many children grouped in one room when noise levels are high making it difficult for them to concentrate. After lunch there are not enough toys to sufficiently interest the children leading to some unwanted behaviour. The nappy changing routine where all the babies are together is unsettling. This means that the environment and conditions for which the provider has responsibility do not contribute enough to children's learning and development. Some recommendations from the previous inspection still have to be satisfactorily addressed. However, managers have some clear plans to improve some aspects of the setting. Staff are well qualified and several members of staff are increasing their knowledge and understanding through undertaking degrees in early years care and education. The setting is working towards achieving a quality assurance award. Room supervisors are motivated to seek further improvement. They focus efforts on valuable aspects such as the development of a sensory play room for the young children, and ensuring sand and water play is freely available for the older children.

Records are kept for the efficient management of the setting and help staff adequately identify children's need for additional assistance. Where appropriate, they work with other professionals to ensure children get the support they need. Staff value the children's cultural and family background. They encourage parents to contribute to everyone's knowledge and understanding by sharing celebrations and home languages.

There is a regular exchange of information with parents and carers, providing them with adequate information on how well their children are achieving, their well-being and development. There are accessible channels for parents and carers to communicate with the setting. Parents comment that their children settle well and are happy to attend.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are not helped to understand the importance of adopting healthy habits and hygiene practices. Snacks are eaten directly from the table and the staff's practice of hand washing or using the anti-bacterial gel after wiping the children's noses is inconsistently applied. This compromises children's ability to keep themselves safe and healthy. Staff do not sufficiently support the development of children's independence skills, particularly for their personal care and at snack times. Children are provided with nutritious and freshly prepared meals and snacks. However, occasionally children preferences are not appropriately respected and the expectations are sometimes unreasonable and therefore their dietary needs are not always met. Children have some chances to adopt responsible practices as they are encouraged to walk and not run inside. Older children

competently climb the stairs and know to hold the hand rail or an adult's hand. However, the weakness in the management procedures gives the children a false sense of security.

Children and babies are beginning to form positive relationships through the key worker system. They are mostly secure and settled in the setting, displaying confidence and a strong sense of belonging. However, at busy times of the day older children struggle to cooperate with each other leading to negative behaviour and their play having little purpose. Babies remain unsettled and children take a long time to settle at sleep time. However, staff sensitively supported a child that had forgotten her favourite comforter.

Staff's growing knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements and guidance means they are helping children learn appropriately both in and out of doors, other than a large group times. Regular observations are made of the children's achievements and these are used in the planning of the adult directed activities. Staff ensure the equipment on offer covers all the areas of learning. Babies explore and use their senses when a large floor tray is introduced containing rice crispies. Children are extending their language and actively involved in their learning as their ideas for a library cafe is taken by the staff to develop a challenging role play area. This includes chances for children to use writing for a purpose. However, some toys and equipment are not easily accessed and when children have competently completed a puzzle, more difficult puzzles are not easily to hand limiting opportunities for them to progress. Children explore the properties of paint, helping mix the powder and water and experiment with brushes and their hands.

They are beginning to gain an understanding about diversity through activities and experiences they participate in. They enjoy inviting their fathers to a 'Father's day' tea. Children get pleasure and learn about similarities and differences when bringing in photographs of them when they were babies and of their extended families.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	4
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	4
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	4
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	4
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	4

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability of premises and equipment) 03/03/2010

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability of premises and equipment) 03/03/2010