



## **Asquith Nursery - Balham**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY286661
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 March 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Pamela Bailey
<b>Setting Address</b>	36 Radbourne Road, Balham, London, SW12 0EF
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<b>Registered person</b>	Asquith Court Nurseries Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Asquith Nurseries - Balham is one of a chain of nurseries run by Asquith Nurseries Limited. It opened in 2004 and operates from four rooms in former school premises refurbished to accommodate the nursery. It is situated in a residential area on the borders of the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Wandsworth. A maximum of 63 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day

from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks per year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 63 children under 5 years on roll. Of these 7 children receive funding for nursery education.

The nursery employs 22 staff, of whom 11, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. All other staff are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a range of energetic physical activities that contributes to a healthy life style. Indoor and outdoor activities provides good opportunities for children to use a suitable range of toys and equipment suitable to develop their physical skills. Children are cared for in an environment that enable them to rest and be active according to their needs.

All the children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well organised activities and routines. Older children learn the importance of good personal hygiene and understand why they need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before handling food. Suitable measures are in place to minimise the spread of infection and parents receive appropriate information about the care of children who are ill.

Effective use of documentation is in place to ensure medical information is in line with regulations. The number of staff who hold appropriate training exceeds requirements. This ensures they can give appropriate care if there is an accident. Staff receive specialist training to administer some long term medication. This ensures children receive the correct dose in an appropriate manner.

Children benefit form a healthy diet. They enjoy nutritiously balanced meals that are freshly prepared on the premises. To ensure individual dietary needs are met a list of dietary needs is displayed in the kitchen. Older children have access to water throughout the day and younger children are regularly offered drinks to ensure none remain thirsty. Staff follows babies' individual routines for eating and sleeping. This ensures continuity of care and contributes to their physical wellbeing.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and attractive, well maintained environment. They benefit from playing in a spacious well-organised environment. This allows them to move around safely and freely to independently access available resources from, tables, trays, shelves and boxes at child height. Soft furnishings and wooden

furniture allow babies to crawl and learn to walk in a safe environment. Children have access throughout the day to a wide range of quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. Areas of learning for babies and toddlers are easily identified and well resourced to support learning. Some of the children's art work and activities are on display.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures. For example, safety covers in electrical sockets, appropriate fire fighting equipment, clearly labelled fire exits. Staff are very vigilant and make sure that items with small parts that could cause choking are not accessible to babies. Children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised and any unauthorised persons cannot gain access because the premises are kept secured, access is monitored and effective procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children are in place.

Children's welfare is well promoted and safeguarded. Staff have attended training and have secure understanding of the procedure to be followed if they had a concern. Staff receive clear information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse and have access to comprehensive written information that supports their practice.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children under three explore and experiment through a range of appropriate activities that are suitable to their stage and age of development. There are lots of opportunities for children to enjoy heuristic play on a wide scale. For example, they have access to an excellent range of textured equipment made from natural materials. Staff provide meaningful opportunities for the children to express themselves through art. They participate in a variety of craft activities including cutting and sticking, painting at the easel and finger painting. This means that children are learning through play.

Children are cared for in a stimulating environment and staff are effectively deployed to support the children in their learning. Staff working with the babies build sound relationships with them and help them learn about their environment. Babies observe smiling and cuddling with staff. Children are cared for by staff who communicate with them on their level and are sensitive to their developmental needs.

Children are interested in the activities available and spend time concentrating on self-chosen activities. Staff deliver a good range of stimulating activities on a daily basis. However, staff do not plan activities using the Birth to Three Matters framework as a basis for children's learning. They are in the early stages of observing the children and use the observations to develop long term plans.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children do not make enough progress because staff have insecure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Plans lack details. Not all aspects are covered sufficiently to promote children's learning. For example, medium and short term plans are not linked to the six areas of learning and

it is not clear what children are expected to learn. Staff do not use the stepping stones to clearly identify children's achievements therefore are unable to plan for each child to ensure their learning and developmental needs are met. This means that more able children are not sufficiently challenged and children who are less confident are not supported effectively. The lack of evaluation means staff are unable to recognise where they are successful in promoting learning and where aspects require improvement.

Children are independent. They see to their personal needs such as dressing and undressing, visiting the toilet and washing their hands, deciding when to have a drink or snack. They work well independently and are developing good relationships with adults and other children. For example, children engage in meaningful play with each other and understand the need to take turns and share.

Children's confidence and self-esteem are not built up by staff who are sensitive to their needs and know them well. For example, staff ignore child who expresses her need for support with writing her name.

Children are friendly and show concern for others. Children are actively involved in play and activities and have respect for each other and the resources. For example, children work well together and help to clear up after activities. The organisation of resources and equipment allows children to independently self select and make choices.

Children are keen to communicate with staff and their peers either through signs, gestures or talk. They speak confidently when taking part in discussions and listen intently and contribute to story time. Children handle books appropriately and are beginning to understand that print carries meaning. Although they have little opportunity to begin to notice print in the environment because areas are not labelled. Routine tasks such as the self registration system on arrival helps children to recognise their first name. More able children are able to sound and write initial letter of their name, letter correctly formed. However, activities are not extended enough to build on children's current skills and knowledge during informal and meaningful activities. For example, labelling their work and during activities such as role play to increase their awareness of the different purposes of writing.

Children recognise different shapes and colours and many children are confident in counting. None the less, children are not learning to use numbers in everyday situations. Their understanding of numbers is not reinforced as they take part in routine tasks such as laying the table at lunch time. For example, number of cups for number of children, make comparisons with two groups of objects such as more or less in each group or combine two groups of objects. Children have limited opportunities to develop their mathematical language and learn about size during practical activities such as during water play because staff have limited understanding of what they want children to learn from the activity.

The outdoor area is used well to stimulate children's interest in the natural world and care for living things. For example, outdoors they plant and water bulbs. Indoors the children take turns to feed the fish. Although children have access to some resources that reflect diversity, they have limited opportunities to further develop their

awareness and understanding of differences through planned activities or topics. Children explore and notice changes that occur during practical activities such as mixing cornflour with water and adding food colouring. They have limited access to information technology and show very little interest in the cash register and telephone presented to them during role play in the home corner.

Children take part in daily outdoor physical activities where they are set challenges and staff are on hand to give support and encourage new skills such as balancing on planks. They confidently use the climbing frame and more able children ride wheeled toys skilfully around obstacles. Children know and enjoy familiar songs and rhymes. However, opportunities to explore different sounds and rhythms is limited when playing musical instruments. They enjoy imaginative play in the home corner such as baking and having a picnic.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff provide suitable opportunities for the children to feel good about themselves and have sufficient time to maximise they play. They have access to resources which promotes diversity, however, children are not involved in a range of planned activities or topics where they learn about other cultures and the wider world around them. The nursery has effective arrangements to care for children with special educational needs although none currently attend. For example, close liaison with parents and outside agencies, ensuring resources and environment are adapted to meet individual needs.

Children and are generally well behaved, very polite and respond positively to staff's gentle reminder of good behaviour. They begin to understand right from wrong through consistent boundaries and praise. However, staff do not always explain reasons for requiring certain behaviours. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Information on the Birth to three matters framework, Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and how children learn ensures parents understand that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning. Systems are in place for parents to read and sign a series of documents to ensure appropriate care and care diaries provide good opportunities for parents to chart their children's progress. Staff share information about the child's day such as activities and achievements. However, not all parents are able to contribute to the next steps in their child's learning. This limits children's progress in the nursery and parents' ability to fully contribute to the setting.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a well organised environment. The premises layout enables children to play outside several times during the session. Children receive good

support to help them feel secure and ensure their care needs are met. Induction training ensures staff understand the policies and procedures so they can contribute to the safety and welfare of children. There are satisfactory contingency arrangements in place to cover absences. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and most documentation required for the safe and effective management of the nursery is accurately maintained, although staff do not always keep an accurate record of children's attendance within their room.

Effective recruitment procedures ensures that staff are appropriately vetted and regularly monitored by management. The person in charge has an appropriate childcare qualification and regularly updates her knowledge by attending relevant childcare courses. Staff are actively encouraged to undertake ongoing training. Some staff are currently working towards a recognised childcare qualification and many have attended training on the Birth to three matters framework.

Leadership and management is inadequate. Management has successfully identified areas of improvement in the setting. These include staff training for the Foundation Stage, systematic recording of children's achievements across the nursery, opportunities for parents to become involved with their child's learning and improving planning to move children on in their learning. However, they have not yet achieved their aims. Those who work with children in receipt of funding for nursery education have insufficient knowledge of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage to enable them to help all children achieve well. New recording systems for planning are not systematic and staff are not clear how to use them. Although there are systems in place for recording observations, the children's learning is not assessed against the stepping stones and early learning goals. Staff have very little useful information about children's achievements and are unaware of how well they promote positive outcomes for children and which areas require improvement. The lack of staff training on the Foundation Stage, relevant records pertaining to children's progress and the monitoring of the teaching and learning means gaps in children's learning continues unnoticed and not all parents are able to contribute. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to develop and implement a consistent policy for children's learning across the setting and monitor its impact, improve staff's understanding of how to promote babies development and learning and provide opportunities for three and four year olds to make comparisons in numbers and develop an understanding of addition and subtraction.

The nursery has made some improvements. Most staff have had training on the Birth to three matters framework and this has been implemented into the nursery. Children under three are confident in their relationships with staff. Children's learning and development is supported and promoted through a range of sensory activities and resources. The organisation has introduced a corporate planning system across the nursery, however, the planning does not provide a clear link to the Birth to three matters framework and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. Therefore, staff do not have a guide or a basis on which to plan activities in order to

move children on in their next steps in learning. Staff lack an understanding of how routine tasks and practical activities contribute to and promote children's early understanding of calculation in a meaningful way. As a result children are not sufficiently challenged and opportunities to promote children's learning in areas of mathematics is limited.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report.

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**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

### **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):

- improve planning and the use of observations to provide a clearer link with the Birth to three matters framework
- provide a range of activities to develop children's understanding of diversity
- provide opportunities for all parents to contribute to the next steps in their children's learning
- keep an accurate record of children's attendance.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- introduce a rigorous system to monitor the quality of teaching so that areas for improvement are identified and quickly addressed



- increase staffs knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage to improve the quality of teaching and children's learning
- improve the use of assessment, planning and record systems to provide a clearer link with the stepping stones and early learning goals in order to identify children's achievements and move them on in their next steps in learning

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)