



Asquith Nursery - The Centre (MK)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY304895
Inspection date	18 January 2006
Inspector	Sarah Fletcher
Setting Address	1 Eelbrook Avenue, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK13 8RD
Telephone number	01908 679 151
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Registered person	Asquith Court Nurseries Limited
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?

Asquith Nursery - The Centre (MK) is one of many nurseries run by Asquith Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2005 and operates from several rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated in a residential area, close to Milton Keynes. A maximum of 126 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 enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 91 children aged from 3 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these 29 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local residential area. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 staff, including a cook and an administrator. Of these staff, 15, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. They understand simple good health and hygiene practices, such as cleaning their own teeth after meals and washing hands after using the toilet or messy play. Children learn about healthy living by eating healthy food and snacks and understand the need for adjusting their clothing when becoming too hot or cold. Staff are aware of young children's health and potential illnesses, talking to parents with any concerns. Effective nappy changing routines take place to prevent the spread of infection and to follow parent's wishes, with notices for children's specific creams on display.

Children are nourished, eating healthy and nutritious meals designed with the cook and a children's dietician. They have their health and dietary needs met because the staff work well with parents, with dietary requirements and allergies very carefully followed. Clear notices for preparation and serving are followed and displayed in the kitchen and dining areas as reminders for all staff. Children enjoy physical play and activity regularly. For example, older children divide into small groups or pairs, with bats and various size balls. Some children were able to throw and catch quite well and some were able to hit the small ball across the garden with a bat. Children enjoy their time outside, running around playing tag, riding tricycles and scooters, or jumping into a large puddle in their Wellington boots. Children rest and sleep according to their needs, with their individual routines displayed in sleep areas to maintain continuity of care for children and follow parent's wishes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment, suitable for purpose, risk assessed, and with well-implemented documentation. Premises are safe, secure and provide adequate facilities and space for children to move around freely. Children access and use suitable and safe equipment in each area, which is age and stage appropriate. All furniture is child sized, including plates and cutlery for meals. Babies rooms are inviting, with soft furnishings, carpets, blinds and twinkling ceiling lights. All areas are safely

maintained, with staff alert to possible dangers. Risk assessments are on display for common areas, such as spillages and tripping hazards, with detailed advice and guidance.

Effective security systems are in place to protect children from unvetted persons. Parents and children are welcomed on arrival and visitors are requested to sign in and out. Named adults only are permitted for collection of individual children, with details recorded on their personal files. Children are protected because the staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Most staff have a basic child protection awareness and know that the manager is the current child protection officer. They know the signs to look out for, the importance of recording whatever concerns they have, to use appropriate paperwork and talk to their room leader, who will then take concerns through to the child protection officer.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies settle well into their rooms, using a gradual procedure before they stay full time, so that babies can get used to their surroundings and parents can adjust to leaving their babies in the nursery with qualified staff. As a result, babies are content and settling well, with parents able to leave their child with a trusted adult. Children develop confidence and self-esteem through playing with different media, such as play dough, sand and water. Young children discover the different properties, while older children develop other skills, such as rolling and cutting play dough, building moulds and shapes with wet sand, and learning about volume in different containers with water. All ages of children and babies have many opportunities to learn through play and to develop their experiences and interests.

Children show interest in what they do, staying at activities for long periods of discovery, such as at the dry sand, where older children are learning about properties of dry sand and how it behaves like water. They ask questions about their learning to widen their experiences and interests and use initiative when dressing themselves independently to go outside. Children make positive relationships with each other and adults caring for them. Small groups of friends are beginning to develop with older children and some 2 to 3 year olds.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are confident learners, exploring activities and resources freely. In most areas, children are making steady progress through the stepping-stones and developing well. Staff understand the Foundation stage planning and are beginning to implement the new system. They are finding ways to assess children's observations and to assess their achievements, although an effective system is not yet in place. Observations take place randomly, with evaluations only on adult initiated activities. These observations are recorded to assess children's development to share with parents at open evenings twice a year through a 'report' format, but not evaluated or next steps made to carry forward into planning.

Children are developing their social skills and independence while helping others. They collect name cards, give out cutlery and help staff to give out meals to each child. Children are developing confidence and self-esteem talking to others about what they are doing. They are making relationships with other children and adults, approaching visitors easily and questioning what they are doing. Children take pride in their self-care, and personal hygiene, dressing and undressing themselves and using the bathroom when needed. Children are able to find their own namecard at meal times. They have further opportunities to learn to recognise their names using wooden and magnetic letters, with some older children collecting the letters and identifying letter sounds as they assemble their name. Comfortable book areas allow children opportunities to enjoy stories and handle books. Children have good opportunities to make marks in role-play areas, using paper and pencils to write orders in the café. Children trace over letters of namecards to develop their pencil control and their letter shape recognition.

Children have opportunities to count objects, use number puzzles, use weighing scales and recognise numbers around the room. They learn number order through songs and rhymes, counting forwards and backwards from one to five. Children show an interest in shape, space and measure. They draw round basic shapes, and recognise similarities to shapes in the environment. Children are using language of size and position, such as big and little, under and over. Children have few opportunities for simple calculation in activities or during everyday play, as staff miss opportunities to give children groups of objects to recognise the same number or to compare, or use resources to show an interest in number problems.

Children are developing their understanding of our wider world through a range of experiences and activities, with staff planning more for the coming year. Children access a range of materials and small tools for construction and receive opportunities to talk about their own lives. Children access computers and are developing mouse control. They access tills, telephones and life-like household appliances to learn about operating simple technology. Children show an interest in lives of others and talk about events. They are developing a sense of place, talking about how they get to nursery and where their house is. Children are able to describe their feelings about a forthcoming baby in their family, showing excitement and anticipation. Children access a good range of resources for expressing and communicating their ideas, such as free painting, chalks, play dough and a well-stocked role-play area with dressing up and small world toys easily accessible. They enjoy tasting new foods, listening to animal and household sounds and learning to clap out rhythms using the syllables of their names. Children recognise colours and explore texture and space through activities. They access junk modelling regularly and learn about recycling boxes and packaging. Children respond enthusiastically to new experiences and are confident in communicating their thoughts and feelings. They enjoy listening to music, group singing and moving to music for exercise.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are becoming aware of our wider society through some resources with

positive images, such as a small range of books, some posters and puzzles, and some small world toys. However, as the range is limited, children's opportunities to become aware of other cultures and abilities are reduced. Children are treated equally and receive appropriate support in all rooms with caring staff who know individual children well. They feel a sense of belonging in the family atmosphere, trusting adults and bringing toys and comforters from home when needed. Children with English as an additional language are making good progress within the nursery and newer children are settling well.

Children understand responsible behaviour and behave generally well. They know and understand the rules and routines of the nursery from an early age. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others, learning to share and take turns. They work harmoniously with others, playing together or alongside each other in role play or at activities such as at the water tray or in the dry sand pit. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive information on a daily basis about their child's care and activities to ensure continuity between home and the nursery. Parents are spoken to at collection time, with details of their child's day, their meals, play and activities, together with information about sleep patterns and nappy changes for babies and young children. Parents receive good quality information from notice boards that are in each area of the nursery with appropriate information, including Birth to three and Foundation stage information and leaflets on starting school for older children. Parents are happy with the care their children receive and the information they are given. They are invited to open evenings to discuss their own child's progress and development and can see their children's records on request.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff have a high regard for the well-being of all children. They know the children well, giving good levels of individual support, care and concern. Staff have appropriate childcare qualifications and experience, working together in teams across the nursery. Children show they are content within the child friendly environment and play happily in the staff's care, which contributes to them feeling confident to initiate their own play. Their development through play benefits from the staff's good organisation of the toys, resources and equipment.

Comprehensive policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. However, a designated person is not yet in place for behaviour management and fire evacuations are not practised regularly, particularly as new staff have recently been employed. Good induction procedures ensure all staff have a good knowledge of company policies and procedures. Recruitment and vetting checks ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with good knowledge and understanding of child development. However, staff deployment is not always effective and staff are left alone with groups of children indoors and outside.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new manager and deputy are now in place, working with a stable staff team to monitor the education programme to meet the needs of the children. The company are in the process of introducing development, planning and assessment systems to ensure all children make progress towards the early learning goals. However, observations and evaluations of a child's activity or ability are not regularly recorded and used to plan for individual children's progress; individual children's folders for assessment and progress of nursery education are not available to share with parents. Management are aware of staff training requirements to improve and develop practice and will ensure all staff are suitably trained in the near future. The company regularly review the comprehensive policies and procedures, which ensures effective care of children's health and security of their welfare.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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.

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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 staff deployment is effective at all times; regular fire evacuation practices are held after new staff are employed; and a designated person for behaviour management is in place and known to staff

- improve resources to promote children's awareness of the wider world

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):

- fully implement the planning and assessment system and create individual children's folders for assessment and progress of nursery education to share with parents
- evaluate children's observations and provide next steps for individual children's learning to carry forward into planning; and provide more opportunities for children to learn simple calculation

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