



The Park Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY305263
Inspection date	14 December 2005
Inspector	Hilary Preece / Karen Molloy
Setting Address	3 Park Avenue, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 7HR
Telephone number	01923 202056
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Registered person	Bright Horizons Family Solutions 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?

The Park Nursery School and Day Nursery was registered in 2005 under the ownership of Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd. It was first registered in 1998 under different management. It operates from ten main rooms within a large Victorian property and is located close to Watford town centre. It serves the local and wider area. A maximum of 63 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday throughout the year from 08:00 to 18:00. All children share

access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 108 children aged three months to five years on roll. Of these, 33 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 21 staff. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to Level 2 or 3. Two staff are currently working towards an early years qualification through the company's NVQ training scheme. The nursery receives teaching support from the local early years development and childcare partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children lead a healthy lifestyle at nursery. Their growth and physical development is promoted by nutritious meals, regular exercise and rest. They enjoy a varied choice of hot lunches each day and seasonal fresh and dried fruits at snack time. Children make healthy choices between drinking milk or water. Their individual dietary needs are met. These are clearly recorded on children's personal place mats so staff can confirm at a glance what foods they are allowed.

Children take regular exercise, both inside and in the garden. Babies are encouraged to sit up with cushioned support and those that can crawl scramble enthusiastically over soft play cushions. Toddlers repeatedly explore their indoor climbing apparatus to develop confidence in their movements. They climb steps, crawl through tunnels and sit down carefully on the slide. They learn to move around each other and avoid obstacles when toddling about and pushing buggies around the room. Children using the garden benefit from exercising in the fresh air. They can climb apparatus appropriate to their stage of development, use wheeled toys, ball games and run about vigorously because there is plenty of space. Children develop good manipulative skills because they are encouraged to use their hands from an early age. They use a wide range of tools such as chinks, pencil sharpeners and scissors. They confidently spoon raisins on to their plates and carefully pour each other drinks with increasing control. Children are able to sleep and rest whenever they are tired. Babies and toddlers have a set time for sleeping, though individual routines are followed in discussion with parents. Children benefit from quiet times to allow their bodies to rest.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned daily routines. They help themselves to tissues to blow their noses and dispose of these promptly in the bin. They know it is important to brush their teeth after eating and to take their dirty shoes off when inside. These practices are backed up by staff who consistently wear disposable aprons and gloves for nappy changing and when handling food. This ensures high levels of hygiene are sustained and prevents the spread of infection. Children's medical needs are met because sickness policies are

effective, necessary records are maintained and information is shared with parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in secure, well organised premises. An intercom system and CCTV camera on the main door ensures all visitors are vetted before entry. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff take good safety precautions. They use regular risk assessments, which are evaluated by management in order to monitor and maintain high levels of safety.

Children use good quality toys and equipment that are developmentally appropriate, such as very low tables and chairs. This enables children of all ages to safely participate in activities and routines. Children can easily access resources as they are organised thoughtfully at child height. They can move safely between different areas of their rooms because staff are well deployed and closely supervise all areas. Babies are closely monitored when sleeping because staff consistently use a buzzer system to ensure checks are made every ten minutes.

Children play safely outside in the well planned outside area. The rubberised safety surface in the climbing area protects them if they fall. Fenced off areas ensure children can safely take part in a range of physical activities simultaneously. Children learn how to keep themselves safe. They know, for instance, why they must wear sun hats and cream when it is hot and appropriate winter clothing when it is cold.

Children are well protected because staff are secure in their roles and responsibilities. They follow clear procedures for evacuating the children in an emergency and ensure that child protection concerns are dealt with appropriately. Policies, procedures and documents to support children's safety are well maintained and understood by all staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children throughout the provision receive a wealth of positive experiences that promote their emotional, social, physical and intellectual development.

Babies enjoy close contact with the staff and feel secure being cared for by their key worker. They benefit from routines that are consistent with their experiences at home. Practitioners provide many stimulating opportunities that show regard for the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Babies' communication skills are promoted because they are introduced to board books from an early age. They show curiosity when looking at the books with staff. Children's early language is promoted because staff sensitively respond to their chatter about mummy and daddy. Babies busily explore their surroundings using their senses. They curiously explore the feel of soft ribbons, feathers and paint on their hands. They react with pleasure when mastering new skills, such as banging a wooden spoon on saucepans to make a noise.

Children between the ages of one and two begin to play happily together and with supportive adults. They enjoy representing their experiences, by using chunky chinks on paper and experimenting with paint. They are becoming increasingly imaginative in their play. They toddle about with bags on their shoulders and enjoy making pretend tea.

Children between the ages of two and three show developing confidence and interest in their surroundings. They share resources together and exercise choice in their play. For instance, they decide when they are ready to eat a morning snack and are encouraged to help themselves to what they need. They relate well to staff and ask questions to extend their thinking and learning. Children respond enthusiastically to musical tapes and sway rhythmically to the music. They enjoy exploring the sticky texture of corn flour and water mixed together.

Children's progress is monitored by a system of observations and assessments. These are shared every three months with parents so they can see how their children are progressing. However, assessments are not always carried out consistently across the age groups because staff are not clear how to use the observations to track progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum which they use alongside their own 'World at Their Fingertips' programme. They plan stimulating activities and use spontaneous opportunities based on children's interests to extend their learning. They ensure that all children are fully included and provide helpful support for those that need it. For example, staff are trained to use Makaton sign language to help children overcome communication difficulties. All staff interact well with the children. They prompt the children to ask questions and to use their initiative.

Children show positive attitudes to learning, they behave well and are busily engaged at all times. They take responsibility for their environment by taking turns to feed the fish and are eager to tidy up after themselves. Their well planned routines and easy access to resources provide many opportunities for them to explore, investigate and practice new skills and knowledge. They are active in planning their own play. For example, children effectively use a 'choice board' to decide which activity or area of play they wish to take part in. They negotiate and discuss their choice with others which enhances their thinking and communication skills. They are beginning to recognise letters and their sounds and can read their names. Older children confidently write their names. Children have imaginative opportunities to explore and investigate the natural world. They examine plants and insects in their natural habitats in the appealing nature trail garden. They consolidate this learning by using a wide range of equipment in the science area, such as magnifying glasses, view finders, reference books and a globe. They also grow vegetables, examine their similarities and differences, and discover how they change when made into soup.

Children work well together. For example, they play co-operatively in the role play area, pretending to be train drivers and passengers. They share experiences by

helping each other to form letters correctly on the white board and admiring each other's art work. Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play and use a good range of maths resources which support their learning. Their understanding is further reinforced through practical opportunities to count and calculate as part of their daily routines, such as when lining up and laying the tables for lunch.

The nursery class uses a generally effective system of assessment to ensure that children's starting points are recorded and their achievements recorded. Regular observation and assessment of children is used to inform future planning. However, plans do not identify how activities can be adapted for the more or less able three and four year olds, so it is not evident if all children receive appropriate challenge or support.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play an equal part in the setting. Children gain a sense of belonging through having individual coat pegs, placemats and drawers. Older children can display their pictures on their own self-selection display board, thus giving them ownership of their environment. They feel secure in their small groups and relate positively to their key workers who know all about their family backgrounds and routines. Children have opportunities to learn about their own backgrounds and to share their native language and culture with other children. They use appropriate resources and enjoy meeting visitors to the nursery to share their faiths and cultures. Children participate in fund-raising for national charities. For example, some children creatively decorated a pair of jeans with paint and glitter as part of 'Jeans for Genes' day. This brings meaning to their understanding of diversity, the wider world and the needs of others. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children are calm, settled and behave well from the start because staff apply consistent boundaries for behaviour. Children are reminded gently to share and be kind to each other. They receive frequent praise from staff who act as positive role models. This ensures children are self-confident and develop high self-esteem. Children in the nursery class behave considerately to each other. They are helpful, co-operative and show concern for each other's feelings. For example, they help each other to hang up their paintings to dry and are sensitively aware of how others feel if they 'get out' during a game of musical bumps. Children have many opportunities to become independent and confident. They serve their own snacks confidently, requiring minimal support from staff, and clear away afterwards.

A strong partnership with parents ensures children's well-being is promoted. Staff also work well with other professionals to support children, including those with special needs. Babies feel secure and adapt to the setting because the settling in procedure is flexible and takes account of their needs. Parents' views are sought at regular intervals to ensure that children are cared for appropriately. Staff share information about the children with their parents on a regular basis. They use informative daily diaries for babies and younger children to share information about

routines. Parents receive more formal feedback about their children's progress and achievements every three months. Parents are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the setting by becoming actively involved in their children's care and learning. They are invited to attend interactive information evenings on the Foundation Stage curriculum. These allow them to take part in the same activities as their children and gain insight into how they can support their child's development. Interesting notice boards and newsletters keep them well informed about general issues.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is promoted by effective organisation and strong leadership and management. There is a thorough recruitment and vetting procedure in place which ensures staff are suitable. Most of the staff are qualified in early years and have been employed at the setting for some time. This ensures children receive continuity of care. The company has comprehensive policies and procedures that are effectively implemented by the setting. All legally required documentation that contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and regularly reviewed.

Children feel comfortable in the well arranged rooms. The thoughtful organisation of space and resources, both inside and out, allows children to become independent and initiate their own play. Appropriate ratios of adults to children are maintained and the staff are all well deployed. This ensures children are supervised effectively and supported during their play.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The nursery manager regularly spends time in all areas of the nursery so that she is fully informed of what is taking place. New staff undergo a thorough induction programme, and receive support from a mentor, to ensure they are fully conversant with nursery policies. The manager has identified the staff appraisal system as an area for development so that individual training needs can be identified and addressed. Staff meet regularly to discuss planning and broader nursery issues. They receive good support from the Bright Horizons company management. There are regular opportunities for them to attend in-house training sessions that enhance their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and their own 'World at the Their Fingertips' programme. This enables children to make good progress in all areas of their development. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable. This is the first inspection since registration under new ownership in 2005.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. 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

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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 that observations of children's achievements are consistent, dated and used to effectively monitor children's progress

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):

- ensure that activity plans identify how the more and less able children will be targeted so all children have equal chances to achieve.

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