



Harmony House Childhood Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100224
Inspection date	20 January 2006
Inspector	Caroline Preston
Setting Address	Baden Powell Close, Goresbrook Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 6XN
Telephone number	020 8526 8201
E-mail	enquiries@harmonyhouse.ac
Registered person	Margaret Gallagher
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Crèche

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?

Harmony House Childhood Centre registered in 1993. It provides Full Day Care, Sessional and Crèche facilities and operates from four playrooms. The setting is a self contained unit attached to a multi-used project providing support and training to local residents and families. It is set within a residential area of Dagenham

It is registered for 79 children from 3 months to 5 years. There are currently 48 children on roll and this includes 28 funded children.

It is open from 8.00am-18.00pm, Monday-Friday. Full Day Care is provided for 48 weeks of the year. Sessional Care is provided from 9.30am-12.00 and 13.00pm-15.30pm and Crèche facilities are available from 10.00am-12.00 and 13.00pm-15.00pm. These are provided term time only. There are 12 staff in total of which 11 have early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The environment is clean and tidy and children receive good support to develop effective hygiene practices. Staff know and understand how to protect children from infection. For example, staff use gloves to serve and prepare food or when changing nappies and each child is provided with their own linen at sleep times. Parents give prior written consent to administer medication. This ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. Children enjoy varied and nutritious meals which meet special dietary requirements and ensure children remain in health.

Children develop their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in activities such as action rhymes and use equipment including slides and climbing frames. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to support children's development so they gain strength and co-ordination. Staff monitor food intake and nappy changes to ensure babies remain healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, attractive environment where their work is displayed and resources are well organised. Children are safe as staff are vigilant with regard to security and supervision. Children are cared for using appropriate equipment, such as correctly sized chairs, cots and sleep mats. Soft furnishings allow babies to crawl without hurting themselves on sharp corners. They enjoy playing with toys which are of good quality and sufficient in quantity. Staff regularly check these to ensure they are clean and safe. Staff are aware of child protection policies and understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Staff receive clear information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse. This supports children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, play happily together and are beginning to develop positive relationships with one another. This contributes to their sense of belonging. Children benefit from their warm interaction with staff. They have formed good relationships with them which helps develop their confidence and self-esteem. Young children

enjoy using their senses to explore sand, water and natural materials and a range of well-planned activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff use some effective questioning techniques to stimulate thought and challenge children, for example 'Can you tell me what the weather is like today?'. Staff encourage children to make choices by including them in the weekly planning and asking them to choose resources for the different areas of play. Children then have access to a range of child and adult led activities and experiences across most areas of learning. However, information gained from these assessments is not used in planning activities which impacts on children's individual progress.

Children show interest and enjoyment in most of the activities provided. In particular, they enjoy making puzzles, playing with the water and play dough activities. They happily move from one activity to another and explore through play. Children co-operate well with staff. They help to put away play resources at the end of sessions and show pride in their work, for example when they have made a pattern with play dough. They use speech well in their role play and are confident to speak up during registration. Children attempt writing during activities and most can write their names. They are learning to link sounds to letters, enjoy stories and can handle books correctly.

Children confidently count and identify numbers when counting bears. They are able to build and construct with a variety of materials. A sound awareness of other cultures and beliefs is present and promoted through play resources and celebration of festivals. Children use information and technology, such as tills and programmable toys. They use resources well to support their role play and enjoy singing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals and staff ensure that specific needs are identified and met. Children are offered a variety of activities that help promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures. Systems are in place to welcome children with special needs and this ensures they are supported well. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are planned and met.

Children are developing their sharing skills. Through the skilful intervention of staff they recognise the needs of those around them. For example, when in dispute over a favoured toy, staff ensure them that there are enough to share. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others. They learn to share toys, to help each other and not to speak when others are talking. Staff promote good behaviour through using lots of praise and encouragement. This positive approach contributes to fostering children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Children benefit from the good relationships between the staff and their parents.

Parents receive information about the setting so they know about activities and events and they have regular daily opportunities to speak to staff.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory and parents feel welcomed. However, they do not receive sufficient information about their child's progress or Foundation Stage. As a result, this does not ensure parents understand that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning. Parents have few opportunities to contribute to their child's assessment record or to share what they know their child can do at home. As a result, children do not benefit from the sharing of information that would enhance their learning and build on their existing knowledge and skills.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by qualified and experienced staff who have sound knowledge and understanding of child development. They understand and consistently follow the setting's acceptable policies and procedures for child development. Space and resources are organised effectively to enable children to be active or quiet. All documentation required for the safe and effective management of the group is in place. However, there are no clear systems in place to monitor the ongoing suitability of staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Staff work well as a team. They are deployed effectively which ensures children are involved and feel secure. Staff development is encouraged and there are plans in place for staff to attend ongoing training. Systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and its impact on children's individual progress are being developed to ensure it is more effective.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to ensure children's safety regarding regular risk assessments, deployment of staff, organisation of space, completion of accident records, a named person for behaviour management and a policy for special needs.

Risk assessments are undertaken daily, both indoors and out. The deployment of staff ensures safety of children at all times and accident records are completed and signed by parents. The management of children's behaviour has improved and there is a written policy for special needs. These improvements help to ensure children's safety and welfare is well promoted.

The previous nursery education inspection recommended that staff improve their knowledge of the early learning goals and include all areas of the curriculum in planning. Staff now use the curriculum guidance to plan activities and have improved their understanding. These improvements ensure effective learning takes place.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted has received two complaints since the last inspection in July 2004 and May 2005 both relating to National Standard 11: Behaviour. Both complaints related to the use of discipline by staff. On the first occasion the provider was asked to submit a report to Ofsted which was received in September 2004. The provider remains qualified for registration. Ofsted visited in May 2005 and evidence was found that the National Standards had been breached. The provider took action, with immediate effect, to ensure that children's wellbeing was promoted by all staff in the setting. The provider remains qualified for registration

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 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):

- develop systems to ensure continuous suitability of staff.

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):

- make sure information about the Foundation Stage curriculum is made available to parents to help them understand the importance of play in their children's learning and improve systems for parents to share what they know about their child and to contribute to their child's assessment.
- improve systems for curriculum planning to include how activities can be adapted and extended to meet children's needs and ensure that children's individual assessments are used to inform future planning to support effectively the learning needs of each child.

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:

