



The Alphabet House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY281129
Inspection date	20 December 2005
Inspector	Shawleene Campbell
Setting Address	Canberra Road, London, E6 2RW
Telephone number	020 8552 0078
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Registered person	The Alphabet House Nursery School
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 satisfactory. 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?

Alphabet House (Canberra Road) is one of five nurseries that is privately owned and is part of a Children Centre. It opened in March 2004. It operates from three rooms in a purpose built building shared with Early Start Vicarage. It is situated in a residential area of East Ham, Newham. A maximum of 47 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 30 children aged from 3 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these 6 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery provides care for children who live within the local community and neighbouring boroughs, as some of their parents travel in to work within the community. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff and a qualified teacher. Seven staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a clean environment. There are routines in place to allow children to wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet. However, this practice is not consistently encouraged and the lack of explanation means that children do not understand the reason or the importance of good personal hygiene. There are arrangements in place to minimise the spread of infection for babies and young children when changing nappies, such as wearing disposable gloves and aprons. However, inconsistent practices mean that the risk of cross infection to children is possible because not all staff wipe down changing mats after each use.

Parents give prior written consent to administer medication that ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. Two staff hold current first aid certificate and are able to give appropriate care if there is an accident. However, significant incidents are not recorded. Children benefit from daily exercise and enjoy opportunities to participate in activities developing their co-ordination skills, for example riding bikes and there are opportunities for children to play on fixed outdoor equipment.

Children are developing an understanding that foods are good for them. Mealtimes are used as a social occasion. However, children's independent skills are not encouraged to self serve, make choices and prepare snacks. Throughout the day drinking water is readily accessible. Staff gather all relevant information regarding children's dietary needs. This ensures children's specific dietary requirements are catered for.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from moving and playing in a spacious well organised environment. This allows them to move around safely. There are good systems in place for the safe arrival and collection of children. Staff take responsibility to sign children in and out. The deployment of staff is very good and guarantees children are well supervised at all times. There are robust outing procedures in place. Staff carry out risk assessments of all outings, which maximises children's safety.

Children use a wide range of good quality resources appropriate for their age and stage of development. Children are able to make informed choices regarding their play. Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises safely and quickly. There are regular risk assessments both indoor and out that enable staff to identify and address any potential dangers. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure children are protected at all times. There are good systems in place to ensure children only leave the nursery with known and approved adults, for example a password. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and their role in protecting children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have good relationships with staff. They play harmoniously together and are making firm relationships. Babies use sounds and gestures to communicate to staff. Babies display extreme enjoyment as they play and explore with age appropriate activities and malleable resources, such as sponge, comb and cloth. Children independently choose from a range of activities that are easily accessible and provide sufficient challenge.

Children enjoy singing nursery rhymes with musical instruments, for example 'Twinkle Twinkle Little' Star and 'Down in the Jungle'. This helps develop children's imagination. Children are encouraged to access the messy play area independently and staff act upon their requests to make an island out of various craft materials.

Staff have a good understanding of the Birth to Three Matters Framework. Children's observations, progress reports and plans clearly reflect this, and observations identify next steps for children. Staff make good use of Birth to three matters by providing good learning experiences for babies and young children, such as opportunities for children to explore their senses, reading to children, providing real life experiences and opportunities for children to develop physical skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are well motivated and enjoy new challenges. They concentrate well at self chosen activities, for example the corn flour and playing with the computer. Children are developing good relationships with their peers and adults, and are developing their skills in turn taking and sharing. Children enjoy group time sessions, but this is not effectively managed to sustain all children's interest. Overall children are generally well behaved. However staff's approach to managing children's behaviour is not consistent, and at times they demonstrate difficulties in managing children's behaviour.

Children are encouraged to make informed choices regarding their play. There is a good balance of adult directed and child initiated activities, for example focused activities. Children are confident speakers in group situations. At mealtime they talk to their peers about what they like to eat, for example chips, pot of jam, rice and bread.

There are good opportunities for children to mark make and write with a purpose. Children look at books independently and are beginning to understand print carries meaning. Older children are beginning to attempt writing their name on their artwork and more able children can recognise their name.

Children are able to count up to 15 and beyond. They choose number activities during free play to match and identify numbers, such as a large number floor puzzle. Staff use circle time as an occasion to introduce children to basic additions. However through practical activities there are missed opportunities to introduce children to simple subtractions. Children are gaining an understanding of shape measure, shape and size as they play with different resources in the sand, water tray and scales. Children are developing their mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems, for example playing with puzzles and sorting coloured bears on to coloured plates.

Children are able to recognise a variety of colours. They compare and make connections of colour cards to the clothes they are wearing, for example "I've got blue shoes". Children use a range of resources to explore their senses through messy play activities, such as shaving foam and feet painting. They describe the feet painting activity as "wiggly jelly" and the shaving foam as being "cold" and "warm". Children use a range of resources to build and construct. They learn about their own culture and beliefs and those of other people by celebrating various festivals and visiting places of interest organised by the local sure start.

There are good opportunities for children to act out real life experiences, such as the home corner, dressing up and ironing. They play imaginary games of imitating a tiger and doctor. Children enjoy playing musical instruments and frequently engage in music, dance and story telling sessions. This allows children to express themselves through a range of mediums.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a generally good understanding of the foundation stage. Children's observations are carried out on a regular basis and clearly identify what children can do. Staff are able to talk about next steps for children in great detail. However, this is not always recorded in children's progress reports.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the world and the wider community through planned topics, such as Eid and Diwali. Staff know children well and cater for their individual needs. However, this is not consistently carried out at sleep or rest times for those children who do not wish to sleep at these times. A good range of resources develop children's understanding of diversity. Children engage in story telling sessions spoken in Gujarati and English for multi cultural week. Constant praise and encouragement helps children develop a positive self esteem.

A good partnership with parents contributes considerably to children's well-being while at the nursery. Staff complete daily dairies for parents giving them information

about the child's daily activities, foods intake and sleep. This ensures children individual care and attention.

Partnership with parents is good. At point of registration parents receive an attractive prospectus that outlines what and how children will learn. This ensures parents understand that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning. Parents are encouraged to see children's progress reports at any time and discuss children's progress with staff. This enables parents to contribute to their child's learning. Activity plans are clearly displayed for parents to see. Parents' evening is held once a year and it gives parents the opportunity to know how their children are making progress towards the early learning goals. Children's spiritual, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from qualified and experienced staff members who are very caring. Management actively encourage staff to undertake relevant training. This helps support children within the setting. Staff are effectively deployed within the setting to ensure children are supervised at all times. All documentation required for the safe and effective management of the group is in place. This contributes to the welfare of the children.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager frequently works in the group room allowing her to assess the quality of the nursery education. Management are committed to developing good practice and the nursery has enlisted the support of the early years teacher and have subsequently developed their systems for planning, observations and record keeping. However systems for recording children's next steps require further development. Nevertheless staff are committed to attend training to ensure the quality of nursery education meet the needs of all children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report 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.

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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):

- improve the procedures for nappy changing to ensure hygiene standards are maintained at all times
- improve the arrangements at mealtime to promote children's understanding of personal hygiene care and to encourage their independent skills
- improve arrangements for meeting children's individual needs at sleep/ rest time
- develop staff's skills in behaviour management
- make sure accurate records are kept of all significant events

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):

- develop staff's understanding for recording children's individual learning needs and planning for their next steps

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