



Building Blocks Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	260013
Inspection date	08 February 2006
Inspector	Christine Linda Tomaselli / Katherine Powell
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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?

Building Blocks Kindergarten is a privately run day care setting and opened in October 2000. It operates from purpose built premises in the centre of Bourne, Lincolnshire. The provision serves the local area. A maximum of 107 children aged from birth to 11-years-old may attend the kindergarten at any one time. The provision opens five days a week throughout the year with the exception of bank holidays and offers full or part-time sessions from 7:30 to 18:00 which also includes term time only

care, if requested. Children attend for a variety of sessions including before and after school care. The kindergarten supports children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are currently 135 children aged from 6 weeks to 11-years-old on roll. Of these 29 children receive funding for nursery education.

The kindergarten employs 28 childcare and support staff. At least half of the staff employed to care for the children hold a relevant childcare qualification. Most unqualified staff are also working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating with staff talking to them about washing hands 'to get rid of germs'. Attractive visual signs in most toilet areas encourage the children's learning about personal hygiene. Staff act as good role models, wearing gloves for preparation and serving of food or wiping down surfaces before serving food and after children have eaten to help the children to stay healthy. Children show their understanding about good hygiene when taking part in role-play activities where they eagerly clean tables in the home corner.

Comprehensive policies and procedures to support the being healthy outcome for children are in place, known to all staff and parents and ensure the well-being of all the children attending the kindergarten.

Children's health and growth benefits from the staff's knowledge and understanding of nutritional meals. Meals are prepared in the kindergartens well-equipped kitchen by a qualified cook who plans the daily menus, which are displayed for parents to see. Children's needs regarding any special diets are met very well by the cook and other staff working closely with parents. Children are developing their awareness of the benefits of healthy eating through daily snack and meal times. They enjoy a wide variety of fresh fruit and vegetables and know that these are good for their bodies. Fresh drinks are available at all mealtimes and freely throughout the session.

All children enjoy regular opportunities to engage in physical activities and have access to a wide range of indoor and outdoor play equipment to support their whole body movements. For example, children confidently use the large outdoor equipment to develop their climbing and balancing skills. Children benefit from being able to choose outdoor activities throughout the day which ensures they get lots of fresh air. Children use a wide range of tools and equipment to promote their fine hands skills such as scissors, threading activities and construction toys. Children are aware of the changes which occur to their bodies when they are active, for example feeling hot or thirsty. As a result, children are making good progress in all aspects of physical development and their skills are challenged appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very clean, bright, well maintained and inviting environment that offers excellent security through the use of CCTV camera systems throughout the kindergarten. This along with full supervision helps staff in maintaining the safety of the children while also offering reassurance to parents who can ask to view their child at any time. The premises offer purpose designed areas both inside and outside to support the safe care of young children. Procedures for collection of children, if it is not to be the parent, may include the use of pass words. Children's safety is enhanced by staff's attention to carrying out regular risk assessments with follow-up actions completed promptly when required to ensure the continuing safety of children. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through lots of conversations with caring staff, for example when running in the kindergarten, staff calmly explain what might happen.

Children use a wide range of good quality, developmentally appropriate resources which are cleaned and checked regularly by staff to ensure that they are safe and in good condition. Children are able to access lots of resources for themselves safely from low shelving and storage units at child height, which promotes their independence. Each kindergarten room leads into an individual outside play area that is well-equipped with various fixed wooden play structures which have been erected on safety surfaces to reduce the risk of injury. Children are provided with excellent furniture and equipment that is very safe and suitable for the various ages of children that attend the kindergarten and out of school club.

Children learn to understand about emergency evacuation procedures through regular fire drills which are carried out competently by the staff. These practices are planned for different times to ensure all staff, students and children have the opportunity to take part and learn what they'd need to do in the event of an emergency. Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a very good understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the local Area Child Protection Committee. The proprietor and manager are fully trained in child protection with all other staff having covered this on other childcare training. Parents have access to the child protection policy which is very clear and informative.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy warm and positive relationships with staff who praise and encourage their efforts and achievements. This promotes children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are happy and secure in this setting and feel valued because staff listen to their views and thoughts with interest. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs and plan a balanced range of meaningful activities across the kindergarten and in the out of school club, that stimulate children's interest and promote all areas of development. For example, they go for walks to learn about their local area and for picnics in the woods. Children are keen to play with each other, in

a team or as an individual. For example, sitting with a friend to find the faces of other friends on their notice board and beginning to recognise their names.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a solid understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn. As a result, children take part in a range of stimulating and relevant activities that help them make good progress towards all the early learning goals. Regular observations and on-going assessment enable staff to identify the next steps in children's learning and ensure children are sufficiently challenged. All areas of the curriculum are carefully woven into planned topics and the balance between adult led and child initiated activities ensures children have enough time to consolidate their learning in their own way and at their own pace. Children have free access to a wide variety of play resources both indoors and outdoors which engage their interest and help to extend their experiences.

Children quickly become absorbed in activities and approach staff confidently for help. They pay close attention to stories and listen to instructions well, such as when staff advise them about what activities they might choose. Many persevere for a considerable time on activities like board games and junk modelling. They show pride in their achievements, such as showing their finished work to others. They enjoy talking about themselves and their families, especially looking forward to special events such as their birthdays, a new baby and starting school. All children spend time mark making and older and more able children form letters and write their own names. They count accurately to at least ten and some children are able to match groups of objects to number symbols when working on the computer. They are developing their awareness of addition and subtraction through practical activities and number rhymes and use a wide range of vocabulary to describe size, shape and position. Children observe change through activities, such as cooking and growing plants and seeds. They watch with fascination as their pet hamster moves around his cage and enjoy describing textures using their senses. For example, children have had the opportunity to observe and touch a wide variety of animals, such as snakes and millipedes. They enjoy a range of creative play opportunities that encourage them to use their imaginations in role play, art and craft and they experiment freely with musical instruments. Children regularly use a wide variety of tools and equipment which enables them to develop good small hand skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children play alongside each other and join in group activities such as snack time and story times, building good relationships. The babies are equally involved in lots of activities that encourage the social skills and begin to prepare them for learning and understanding differences in people. For example, when playing in the ball pool they confidently sit while watching others begin to move around the balls when encouraged by the staff. Staff know the children very well. They will seek support from other sources and parents to enable them to successfully meet individual children's needs such as cultural, religious or special physical or learning need.

Children behave very well and show an understanding of what is expected of them as they watch and learn from the staff as good role models. Children attending the out of school club, walk well to and from the local school and take turns with popular resources such as the computer. All babies and children's efforts and achievements are praised and some of their work is displayed which makes children feel valued and promotes their self-esteem and sense of belonging. There is a comprehensive behaviour policy which clearly reflects the different ages of children attending the setting. This policy includes a statement about bullying. However, the recording of incidents does not always ensure parents are fully informed.

Relationships with parents is extremely good, with parents offering positive comments about the care received by the kindergarten. Parents receive a very attractive welcome pack which supports an initial leaflet, both give full information about the setting. Recently an impressive internet web site has been established to enable parents to gain information from this method. The required information and recording to keep parents informed about matters associated with their children is in place, although some minor improvements are required.

All children are warmly welcomed at the kindergarten and every effort is made to ensure that children of all abilities can be included. Close work with parents ensures that children's individual needs are met and they feel valued. Children learn to appreciate the wider world and respect their own and differing cultures through activities such as celebrating Diwali and Hanukkah, tasting foods from around the world, playing with toys which reflect positive images of diversity and enjoying the Christmas season. They gain a solid understanding of their local community through going on walks, visiting the library and shops, and by receiving visitors such as a police officer and local health visitor. Children maintain high standards of behaviour through staff acting as good role models and using positive methods to reinforce good behaviour. As a result children's spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good and contributes positively to the well-being of children in receipt of nursery education at the setting. Children benefit from their parents being actively involved in their learning. For example, parents come in to talk to children about their work, they contribute artefacts linked to topic work and are provided with good information about planned activities through regular newsletters. Staff suggest activities which parents can do at home with their child to further develop their learning and skills and some information is available to inform parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Although staff regularly share assessment records with parents to keep them informed about children's progress and development, they do not gather information when a child starts at the setting regarding what children already know and can do. As a result, staff are not able to effectively build on children's previous knowledge and skills or clearly show the progress a child has made when they transfer to school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a team of staff who are suitably vetted, trained fully in caring for and educating children or have experience. An excellent recruitment policy ensures that new staff continue to be suitable, qualified in child care and are offered a very good induction. Staff are required to sign to confirm they have read and accept all the policies and procedures. Staff have a very high regard for children's well-being and the proprietor and manager have a wealth of qualifications and experience suitable to working with children. There is an excellent commitment to reviewing and renewing all staff's knowledge with internal and external training.

Good organisation and planning of the session ensures all children have a variety of learning and social opportunities to take part in both indoor and outside. Activities both on and off the premises contribute to the children exploring and developing their knowledge in many areas. Organisation for the taking and collection of children attending school is given high priority by the staff who plan well for their times in the out of school club. Most necessary documentation and recording is in place and contributes to the welfare of the children. Excellent policies are in place which underpin practice in the group. These are readily accessible to parents and are regularly updated to reflect appropriate changes.

Leadership and management of nursery education are good. Staff work well together as a team to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and ensure children achieve well. Staff in the pre-school room are well supported by the owner and manager and all staff contribute to evaluating the provision and identifying areas for improvement. Effective systems are in place to monitor the provision, such as staff appraisal, accessing support from a teacher advisor and holding regular staff meetings. Good planning and assessment systems have been implemented ensuring all aspects of the curriculum are sufficiently covered.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to devise a system for planning and implementing a suitable range of activities for children and ensure that good hygiene practices were in place in the 'Toddler room'. To ensure that procedures for behaviour management were understood and implemented by all staff, that arrangements were in place to share child protection procedures with parents and to ensure attendance registers were accurate.

Staff have now put into place suitable planning of activities for the ages of the children in the 'Toddler room' which includes planning to support the learning of children from birth to 3-years-old. Appropriate steps have been taken to provide the necessary resources and staff awareness to support hygiene practices within the 'Toddler room'. A code of conduct and practice guidelines has been devised with staff having been trained on procedures for behaviour management. A welcome pack is available to all parents and contains information on child protection procedures. Changes to the recording of attendance have been made to include parents registering their child's arrival and departure with additional records of attendance being recorded on a whiteboard in each kindergarten room.

At the last nursery education inspection five key issues were raised. These related to the planning of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the assessment of children's progress along the stepping stones, staff's awareness of how to promote mathematical development through everyday activities, activities to challenge children's physical abilities, the use of the outdoor play area to promote other areas of learning and the grouping of children at story or circle time to ensure individual needs were met.

Staff have taken positive action to address all of the issues raised which has improved teaching and learning overall. Planning systems have been improved and clearly show how all areas of learning are covered and what the learning intentions are for adult led activities. Staff have sought support from a teacher advisor and a new assessment system has now been implemented. Records clearly show children's progress along the stepping stones in each area of learning and staff use this information to plan the next stages in children's learning. Children's mathematical skills are effectively promoted by staff during play and practical activities. Staff question children effectively to extend their learning and encourage children to solve mathematical problems. Staff thoroughly plan physical activities both indoors and outdoors to challenge children's skills and ensure they make good progress. Children have free access to a wide range of large and small equipment to practice and develop their whole body movements and small hand skills. Staff make good use of the outdoor play area to support children's learning in other areas, for example children have access to a water tray to experiment with floating and sinking and have opportunities to plant bulbs and seeds and observe the changes as they grow. Children now split into smaller groups for story and circle time. This enables staff to meet the differing needs of children in each group more effectively.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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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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 written parental permission is requested, at the time of placement, to the seeking of any emergency medical advice or treatment and that parents sign the record book to acknowledgment the entry for the giving of any medication
- ensure there is a system to record incidents and inform parents on the day.

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 systems for gathering information from parents to identify clear starting points for children's learning and development (also applies to care)
- improve information provided for parents regarding the Foundation Stage.

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