



Sandfield Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134033
Inspection date	25 May 2006
Inspector	Jill Milton
Setting Address	Sandfield Road, Headington, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX3 7RH
Telephone number	01865 744200
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Registered person	Child Base Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Sandfield Day Nursery opened in 1993 and is owned by Child Base Limited, a national chain of nurseries. The nursery is located in the grounds of the John Radcliffe hospital. Priority for places is given to employees of the Oxford Radcliffe Hospital Trust, with further places offered to the general public. The nursery operates from a purpose-built unit with access to enclosed outdoor play areas.

The nursery opens on weekdays all year round, during core hours of 08.00 to 18.00,

with the option of an extra half hour of care at either end of the day. There are currently 139 children, between birth and five years on roll and of these 44 are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery also provides out of school care in term time at the end of the day and in the school holidays for children aged between four and 12 years. The nursery supports a small number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 24 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these over half have appropriate qualifications. A further five staff are currently completing training courses. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about how to keep themselves healthy as they wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet. When asked by the staff why they do this they state, 'Because we might get germs'. The staff are vigilant about keeping the nursery clean and this protects children from cross-infection. There are good procedures in place when staff change nappies or serve food to children. Staff prepare well to attend to children's accidents or illness and they pass the necessary information on to parents.

Children eat a range of nutritious, freshly cooked meals at the nursery. They talk to the cook about how much they like vegetables, showing their awareness of healthy eating. The children access fresh drinking water throughout the day and toddlers like to show their independence by pouring water for themselves when they are thirsty. Staff attend to the needs of the babies and work with parents to introduce new foods. There is close consultation with all families to ensure staff are aware of any dietary preferences. When children have specific allergies staff follow careful procedures to safeguard the children's health.

Babies sleep peacefully in comfortable rooms and staff monitor them at five minute intervals to check they are safe. Children throughout the nursery have soft areas in their rooms where they can rest and relax, providing a welcome break from the activities. Children who are becoming mobile have the space and equipment to encourage them to explore indoors and toddlers enjoy negotiating a small set of stairs in their room. The older children enjoy playing a range of activities in the fresh air though opportunities for real energetic play outdoors, like climbing and running, are not always on offer.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean and welcoming nursery. A lot of thought is put into creating attractive rooms where children can rest and play in comfort. Children have good access to equipment on low-level activities and displays. The children use a broad

range of good quality resources with an emphasis on natural materials. Special collections of items, for example a box of padlocks or candles, provide exciting points for conversation and encourage exploration.

The children play safely whilst at nursery since the staff have a number of effective measures in place. The adults ensure children practise how to evacuate the building in an emergency and they conduct regular checks on the premises. The children themselves are becoming safety conscious when they hold onto a hand rail when using the stairs or say to each other 'Now just slow down' in the corridor. The nursery has good systems in place to monitor those entering the premises and they remind parents that only staff should authorise entry to the building.

Staff safeguard the welfare of the children in their care by ensuring they know how to address child protection concerns. Children play safely since there are robust procedures in place at the nursery to check that the adults are suitable to work with young children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

In all rooms of the nursery staff welcome children warmly and help them to settle. The children have a stimulating and exciting time with many age-appropriate activities. The staff caring for children under three years have a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework. Alongside guidance from the parent company they use their knowledge to plan activities that interest the children. Staff assess the children's development regularly, recording their achievements with written observations and photographs. Babies are cared for well and their large room provides plenty of space for crawling and exploring. Staff in all areas interact effectively with the children, making particularly good use of care routines like nappy changing, for sharing little conversations. As the children mature the rooms reflect their growing independence and curiosity. By the time they are coming up to three years the children enjoy painting, pouring their own drinks and investigating sand and water mixtures.

Children attending the after school care have access to a large bright room that is equipped for play. They enjoy a hot meal and drink on arrival from school. The children can choose to play active games like table tennis or if they prefer to be more restful. They use art materials and table-top activities that suit their age range. Relationships with staff are friendly and informal with the good quality care seen in the rest of the nursery carrying through to the after school care.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children aged from three to five years have their own set of rooms that are all equipped with an exciting array of activities. The children make their own decisions about where to play and they are eager to try new experiences. They are developing friendships at nursery and interactions with staff are pleasant. The children behave well and they show good levels of independence, collecting drinks as they need them or helping to set tables

for lunch. A praise board displays photographs of children who have been particularly good at something and this provides positive messages for good behaviour.

Children frequently engage in conversations during the day and staff are good at using questions that encourage them to think for themselves. A garden activity, for example, provides an opportunity to compare objects that grow with those that do not grow. The children are familiar with letter sounds and readily think of words starting with the sound of the week. The children use books for themselves and frequently share stories with adults. For most of the day this works really well, though large group times do not enable children to all make their contribution to the discussion. There are many occasions when children use writing materials for play, making notes in an area set up as a garden centre, for example. Staff do encourage children to write their own names but writing development overall is not well supported and few children progress rapidly in this area.

Children happily use mathematics in their play. They can count and recognise numbers, confidently selecting nine cubes each from a tray. They engage in activities that involve balancing, weighing and sorting. They are progressing well with their knowledge and understanding of the world. A topic about growing provides children with opportunities to learn and share their ideas. Staff encourage them to smell fresh herbs and conversations take place about the recent seed planting. Children are familiar with the use of a computer and they regularly use materials for construction. They use tools and resources that help their development of good hand-to-eye co-ordination.

The children have daily opportunities to express their imagination and ideas. They use a wide range of resources to help them make up their own stories and reflect their understanding of the world around them. Children pretending to be builders use tape measures, tools and hard hats in their play. Children experience other cultures as they play with resources such as puzzles or musical instruments that depict different backgrounds in a positive way. They take part in singing times with great enthusiasm and like it when the speed and volume of the song changes.

Staff have a sound understanding of how to plan and deliver a well-balanced curriculum based on the Foundation Stage. They help children to make good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Children participate in activities that reinforce what they are learning. A role play area, for example, contains a good supply of resources that reflect the current theme. Planning is thorough, covers all six areas of learning and takes into account the indoor and outdoor environments. Staff make regular observations of the children's development and they use it to plan some of the next steps in learning. Children enjoy an active day where learning is fun.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle well at nursery benefiting from caring and attentive staff. They receive comfort during the day and like to cuddle up to the adults for shared stories. An area of each room is well designed to provide children with reminders of home and they

each have a laminated photograph book of their family. This provides good support to children's self-esteem and emotional development. When children visit other rooms the staff welcome them in, offering for example to sing familiar songs. Children are learning to respect others and they play with many resources that show diversity in a positive way. Children see their own photographs on a display entitled 'All people smile in the same language' that celebrates their differences and similarities. Children receive encouragement to engage in activities though when group sizes become very big there is less opportunity for all to feel at ease and participate. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

Children are learning a great deal about how to behave well. They are familiar with positive messages like 'Teeth are not for biting but for brushing and eating'. Staff throughout the nursery offer children praise and they have effective strategies for managing the range of children's behaviour. Children who speak English as an additional language receive good support from the adults. Staff help them to understand what is happening by using pictures of the nursery routine or by shaking a tambourine to signal a change in activity. Children with learning difficulties receive help at nursery. The staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure all are working together to provide the best support to the child.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Families receive comprehensive information about the nursery and excellent use of displays explain how young children play and learn. Staff encourage parents to share in learning at home through ideas written on white boards and with the 'Stop and Play' sessions on offer during the year. Parents and staff communicate regularly and those with very young children receive daily updates of care routines. Developmental records are available to parents so that they can discuss with staff how their child is progressing. Parents demonstrate how highly they value the nursery by sharing enthusiastic and positive comments.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery is well organised, runs efficiently and all areas of regulatory documentation are in place. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Staff make effective use of the policies and procedures to promote children's good health, safety and well-being. Adults work to safeguard the children by ensuring that systems to recruit new staff are robust.

The leadership and management are good. Staff benefit from the sound guidance of the experienced and well qualified manager. There are also good support systems in place from the parent company that include an effective programme for staff development. Guidance is available for staff to use in the rooms of the nursery with reminders on how to promote good practice.

The staff have a positive attitude to improving the quality of the nursery. They reflect on their own practice at a number of levels, from evaluating a single activity to receiving a health and safety audit of the whole setting. The popularity of the nursery, whilst encouraging to staff, results in some rooms having too many children at times.

Good staff ratios are maintained though there are implications on some aspects of care and learning for the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

The nursery was required to address three main issues from the last care and nursery education inspections. These related to information for parents; development of the garden and helping children reach their full potential in learning.

There has been improvement in all areas. Parents receive comprehensive information through displays on notice boards and conversations with staff. They are kept informed of the latest changes in staff and events within the nursery through regular newsletters. The garden area of the nursery is being steadily developed though continues to be a recommendation for improvement. Specific progress has been made in creating different areas for each room so that all age groups can access outdoor play and a new climbing frame has been installed. This goes some way to helping children enjoy healthy life styles. Staff make use of planning sheets to include ideas to extend children who learn more quickly and they note some ideas for the next steps in children's learning when they make a written observation. Developmental records indicate this works well in most areas and a scheme to borrow reading books for home is popular with the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

In April 2005 Ofsted received a complaint relating to Standard 2: Organisation with regard to the staffing ratios in some rooms of the nursery. The provider was asked to conduct an internal investigation and report back to Ofsted within seven days. Ofsted was satisfied that appropriate steps were taken to address concerns. The provider remains qualified for 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):

- develop the outdoor area to provide good quality play opportunities for all ages
- review the organisation of the room for older children to ensure the group size is maintained at a more appropriate level

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):

- help older children to progress with their writing skills

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