



Asquith Nursery - Golders Green

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286593
Inspection date	28 February 2006
Inspector	Deborah Wilkinson / Maggie Thorp
Setting Address	212 Golders Green Road, Golders Green, London, NW11 9AT
Telephone number	020 8458 7388
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Registered person	Asquith Court Nurseries Limited
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Asquith Court Nursery which was registered in January 2005 operates from a self contained premises in Golders Green in the London Borough of Barnet. Local facilities include shops, a park and a library. The nursery is within walking distance of the station and several bus routes run along the main road outside.

The nursery is part of the Asquith Court Group, which owns and manages a large number of pre schools and nurseries.

The group which runs 5 days per week for 51 weeks of the year between the hours of 08.00 to 18.00 is registered to provide care for 54 children aged 3 months to 5 years.

The children are cared for in three age related groups each of which has its own room, equipment and group of staff. Currently 57 children are on roll who attend different sessions and of these 19 receive funded nursery education.

The group supports children with special needs and those who have English as an additional language.

There are fourteen staff working with the children of whom ten have an early years qualification. A suitably qualified manager, a cook and an administrator are also on the staff team.

The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from the Early Years Childcare Partnership and from a care and learning advisor from Asquith Nurseries regional Office.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play and are cared for in a generally clean environment and adequate steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection. However, a few areas children use are cluttered and poorly maintained and these areas are less well cleaned. Children are learning a few ways of keeping themselves healthy. Staff initiate discussion about the health benefits of certain foods at mealtimes and children enjoy washing their own hands at the low sinks in playrooms and bathrooms.

Children generally eat well. Key workers know children's dietary needs and care is taken to avoid children being given food they should not have. Lists are kept in the playrooms and in the kitchen of foods which children may eat. The company provides menus which are checked by a nutritionist to ensure variety and balance and children enjoy fresh nutritious meals and snacks which are prepared daily on the premises.

However, children sometimes find it hard to settle at the table to enjoy the good food provided because meal and snack times are not well organised to encourage children's independence and foster children's interest in eating. For example, staff spend a lot of time away from the table because food is served and cutlery stored away from where children eat. There is insufficient room for babies and staff to sit down to a meal together comfortably and snacks of fruit are not served attractively or in a way that enables children to select for themselves.

Babies are given the appropriate bottle feeds and their routines from home are followed. Children drink as and when they want to and are reminded to drink during

the day not just at meal and snack times.

Older children play vigorously, run, climb, and use the large equipment in the garden twice a day. However opportunities for large physical play indoors is not planned for and children become restless and run around the room.

Although toddlers and mobile babies are very keen to climb throughout the day and try to do so on nursery furniture. Babies do not have this opportunity and toddlers too few opportunities for climbing and lively play indoors. This is insufficient for the needs of this age group.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are not sufficiently safe from hazards indoors as cleaning products are left in children's toilets and effective risk assessment is not evident. Fire safety is adequate, fire fighting equipment is checked and regularly serviced, and emergency evacuations are practiced.

Children are safeguarded from abuse by staff's knowledge and understanding of child abuse signs. However the policy regarding staff recording children arriving with injuries is not always adhered to so any claims of where an injury may have happened cannot be easily established and so children's safety is compromised.

Children have use of sufficient furniture and equipment for most types of play and for rest. However, there are too few tables to enable baby room children and staff to sit down and eat comfortably together. In addition some rest mattresses are quite worn so keeping these clean for children is difficult.

All children have sufficient space and natural light as they play in the three group rooms for different ages. Carpeted and lino flooring areas are well balanced for different types of play. Children can play safely in the garden and there is a safe well lit pathway to and from the building.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and toddlers are generally happy, engaged and learning. They enjoy exploring a wide range of play materials that offer children interesting sensory experiences and these are imaginatively presented overall, and suitable for babies and toddlers' age and stage of development. Adults enhance children's experiences and encourage children's communication skills effectively by the role they play. Both babies and toddlers enjoy looking at books and this is fostered well by staff.

Children's independence and self confidence is fostered by the free access they have to resources. Children help themselves to construction toys and puzzles. However, they are less well engaged in pretend play as these areas are not well equipped or attractively set out.

Staff are beginning to plan specifically for younger children and to link these to the Birth to three matters framework to support children under three as they grow and learn. However, not all children benefit from this planning and staff have yet to develop clear records of children's all round development that can be used as a basis for planning and can be shared with parents.

Nursery Education

The overall teaching and learning is inadequate.

Children are not sufficiently engaged in purposeful play to ensure progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They do not benefit from a well planned environment or programme of activities to support ongoing progress in their learning and all round development.

Children's progress is not monitored and activities are not evaluated constantly so staff cannot identify what the children have learned or what their capabilities are. New planning systems are being introduced however, staff have not been fully trained in the implementation of these and currently do not use observations or any systematic assessments of the children to inform this planning. Staff do not have a sound understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage or how to use this to plan activities. As a result, children have limited opportunities to progress in all six areas of learning.

Children have access to a selection of resources however the poor presentation does not capture or engage their interest or encourage them to care for the equipment.

The children are friendly and articulate they enjoy friendships with one another and initiate some of their own play. However, opportunities to strengthen self help skills and foster their independence effectively are missed by staff, for example children are not encouraged to pour their own drinks or label their own work.

Named trays for work and labelled coat pegs help children recognise their own and others names, however they have few other opportunities to write for a purpose and do not benefit from an environment that fosters children's interest in print. Children begin to listen to stories however, the sound of other activities in the same area is distracting and the poor story telling mean that many lose interest and grow restless.

There are few planned activities to promote children's progress in mathematics. Children are not encouraged to count regularly as part of every day activities. When the fruit is given out at snack time, or when children are getting ready to go outside, staff do not use mathematical language for example, by talking about putting on a pair of boots or whether they are standing behind or in front of another child.

Children do not learn about their local environment for example, through regular trips and they have few chances to use programmable toys. They observe the natural world when they play outside however opportunities to learn about living creatures and plants are not planned for and the few resources within the classroom fail to capture their interest.

Children have regular opportunities to use paint although the way in which this is organised and the limited space on the table hampers their creativity. They are adept at using scissors but do not have a variety of materials on which to try out their skills. There is little provision for role play and the resources that are available are poorly presented.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children are generally happy and secure in their relationships with their key workers. Babies are mostly relaxed in the care of staff, they bring books to staff who are seated on the floor and climb on to their laps. Toddlers' key workers know their key children's developmental stages and interests. They ensure their comfort items from home are at hand thus increasing children's security and sense of belonging. Each baby's routine is followed for sleep and babies' different needs are accommodated well.

However, sometimes ways are not employed to further develop children's security and lessen the frustrations they experience. On occasions tired babies and toddlers have to wait for quite a while for their needs to be met when hungry or tired and care times are not organised well to enable them to be with their preferred person. One staff changes all the nappies rather than key workers. The pre-school children have less secure relationships with staff and this affects their ability to focus on activities and to co-operate with staff and each other.

Younger children play well together and are able to co-operate with each other with sensitive support from staff. The approach to managing older children's behaviour is less consistent and these children have had many staff changes. Consequentially, older children find it hard to co-operate with staff and get cross with each other on many occasions.

Children have some encouragement to value their own and others cultures and abilities. Staff know children's different cultures and backgrounds. They support children who speak English as an additional language by discussing home language words children say at nursery with parents. Staff use the languages they speak to support same language children. However, children do not have a rich environment of posters, books and play resources that reflect positive images of cultures, gender roles, and disability. When any children with special needs attend they are included and helped to develop and join in. Local authority advice is drawn on for further support for children with special needs and their parents.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not being fostered adequately because of the lack of a stimulating curriculum and weak behaviour management.

The partnership with parents of nursery education funded children is inadequate.

Children benefit from some aspects of the partnership staff have developed with parents. New children and parents are able to stay together over the first days to

enable parents to see what happens at the nursery and to settle their children. A log is kept of younger children's food intake, bottles given, toileting and an observation of each child's play which is shown to parents. However, the level of the communication between some parents and management is poor. Parents' confidence in the quality of what is provided for the pre-school children is low. Concerns some parents expressed are that children's learning and behaviour has deteriorated and their complaints are not responded to appropriately. Parents of children who receive nursery education receive limited information about the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and as a result, children's individual needs and specific learning priorities are not shared and parents are not actively encouraged to become involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

There are significant weaknesses in the organisation of the nursery. Children are cared for by staff who have been thoroughly vetted for their suitability and appropriate records are kept, however children are not benefiting from the frequent staff changes. Changes to the way the rooms are organised, activities planned and children's progress monitored have been made without sufficient staff training and support being put in place. This is adversely affecting the quality of the activities offered, the continuity of care children receive and any trusting relationships children and parents are able to develop with staff.

A frequent turn over of staff has led to children being unable to always enjoy the security provided by the company's comprehensive policies and procedures. Children are protected from harm as staff have a sufficient understanding of the policies and procedures that the group uses in emergency situations. However, policies and procedures in relation to equal opportunities, partnership with parents, complaints, staff supervision, behaviour management and child protection are not being effectively implemented.

The leadership and management of the nursery is inadequate. The systems to monitor and evaluate staff practice are not effective and lack of guidance means that activities particularly in the pre-school room do not meet the children's individual needs. Systems to record children's achievements are inconsistent and clear assessments detailing how their needs are met and their progress is monitored are not securely in place.

The provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of previous complaint an action was raised to improve the cleanliness of the nursery and monitor this. Some improvements have been made but poor maintenance in some areas of the nursery prevent these being kept really clean and they fail to provide children with a hygienic environment for play.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted has received three complaints since the nursery was registered in January 2005.

The first relates to National Standard 2 Organisation, National Standard 3 Care, learning and play, National Standard 7 Health, National Standard 8 Food and drink and National Standard 12 Working in partnerships with parents.

Concerns were raised on 20/05/2005 about the feeding, nappy changing and care provided for babies.

Ofsted required the registered person to investigate and report the outcome of the investigation and the measures implemented to ensure that practice improved. The setting reviewed health and safety procedures and implemented monitoring systems for nappy changing and bottle feeds. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The second relates to National Standard 4: Physical environment, National standard 6: Safety and National standard 7: Health. A complaint was received about the cleanliness, hygiene and safety of the premises. An inspector carried out an unannounced visit to the premises on 24/11/2005. As a result of the visit, one action was set under Standard 4: Physical environment. The provider responded appropriately. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The third relates to National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents. Concerns were raised on 21/12/2005 about the level of information given to a parent after an accident at the setting. Ofsted asked the registered person to conduct an investigation and report back. The registered person did so and identified weaknesses in the organisation, changes were implemented to meet the National Standards. A written response was received on 24/01/2006. 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- put in place effective management systems to improve the provision for children and maintain a more consistent, well trained staff team
- keep an up to date record of all complaints relating to the national standards and any action taken
- improve the partnership with parents to ensure they are well informed about changes that effect their children and to ensure their concerns are responded to appropriately
- prevent children from having access to hazardous substances, use accident records to assess risks to children and take action to minimise these

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to use this effectively
- improve communication with parents and enable them to be better informed and involved with their children's learning
- use observations and assessments to identify children's individual learning needs and to help them progress through the stepping stones
- introduce a rigorous system to monitor the quality of teaching so that areas for improvement are identified and quickly addressed

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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