



Early Learners 2

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	124937
Inspection date	21 September 2006
Inspector	Rebecca Elizabeth Khabbazi
Setting Address	Rear of 62 High Street, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1NA
Telephone number	020 8688 2161
E-mail	
Registered person	Headstart Nursery 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 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?

Early Learners 2 is one of three nurseries owned by Headstart Nursery Ltd, and opened in 1995. It operates from two-storey premises close to Croydon town centre. The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday, all year round.

There are currently 52 children under five years old on roll. Of these seven children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff. Of these, 10 members of staff have relevant childcare qualifications and the others are all currently working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

All children in the nursery benefit from daily outdoor sessions in the garden. They enjoy the fresh air and take part in vigorous physical activity, which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Children eagerly run around, climb the slide and take their turn to walk across the beam, using their arms to help them balance. There is some choice in the activities provided, but some of the equipment lacks challenge and variety for older children who are keen to practise new skills.

Staff throughout the nursery follow clear hygiene procedures which help prevent the spread of infection. They use gloves and aprons when they change children's nappies, wipe tables before and after use, and make sure that children all have their own named sheets and blankets when they sleep. The day includes active and quiet times and younger children and babies can sleep according to their individual routines. However, babies are not always able to rest undisturbed because their cots are positioned in an area where other children play.

Children benefit from varied, healthy meals which are freshly prepared and take their individual requirements into account. Children in the preschool help themselves to fruit at snack time, and pour themselves water to drink whenever they are thirsty. This encourages healthy eating habits and ensures children are well-hydrated.

Children are taken care of if they have an accident or become unwell because there is always someone on duty who has a first aid certificate. There are clear systems in place for keeping records of any accidents children have and any medication they need. However, staff do not always record all minor accidents, which is a legal requirement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment and feel a sense of belonging when they know which is their playroom and find the peg with their name on. They begin to learn to keep themselves safe when they are reminded why they mustn't climb on chairs or why they need to pick toys up from the floor. Children's risk of accidental injury is generally well minimised because there are comprehensive risk assessment procedures in place including daily checklists, and information from accident records is also used to help reduce potential hazards. However, the risks to babies who are sleeping in the baby room while other children are playing, have not yet been fully assessed.

Children have access to a wide range of resources and equipment that are suitable for their age and stage of development, although some resources, such as books and role play materials, are more limited in variety. Play materials are checked regularly for damage and staff clean indoor toys on a rota basis to ensure children can play safely. However, some outdoor equipment such as the role play kitchen requires more regular cleaning.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have received child protection training and are familiar with the setting's child protection procedures. This means they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff caring for children under three years old use the Birth to three matters framework to plan activities for children based on their individual needs and stage of development. Children have positive relationships with staff who respond to them warmly and join in with their play. Babies enjoy cuddles and reassurance which helps them settle, they are keen to make hand prints with staff support and spend time independently exploring toys set out on the floor.

Children in the toddler room take part in a variety of activities that keep them well occupied throughout the day. They enjoy playing at the water tray, watching the wheel turn as they pour the water through it, and drawing with big crayons at the table. Children are keen to use creative materials but resources such as free painting are not always organised so that everyone can easily have a turn, and at times the role play area is not set up to inspire children to use their imaginations in their play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff in the preschool room have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the expectations for children's learning. They plan a wide variety of activities and experiences for children that help them make steady progress in all areas of learning. Children's progress is monitored well, staff use observations of children effectively to identify individual next steps and plan activities that build on what children already know and can do.

Most of the time children are confident and settled in the preschool room, they interact positively with staff and most children are able to work together well when they are in smaller groups. Children co-operate well when they make some play dough, for example, taking turns to add flour and watching how it changes when water is mixed in. However, the behaviour of some of the children is persistently disruptive and because this is not yet managed consistently by staff, it impacts on the learning of all of the children in the preschool room, for instance when group times or other activities have to be cut short.

Staff are, however, imaginative in setting up the room and developing ways to engage children's interest, for instance when they create a 'forest' so that children can experience the 'Bear Hunt' story for themselves. Children are keen to communicate and use their emerging skills to write a letter or share a story. They confidently count the legs on a spider and show their understanding of under, over and through as they move through the 'Bear Hunt' forest. Children enjoy activities planned by staff such as making masks, carefully using scissors to cut out shapes and sticking the pieces together with string and tape. They use crayons and pens to draw but have more limited free access to creative resources such as paint and materials for junk modelling.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in a setting where diversity is valued. All children are welcomed and appropriate information is gathered before they start to make sure they are cared for according to their individual needs. There are systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, such as a named worker who has attended relevant training. Children take part in activities that help them develop a positive view of the wider community, for instance celebrations for Chinese New Year that include food tasting and learning to write in Chinese. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children in the preschool grow in independence, for example when they make their own sandwiches for tea, or use big spoons to serve their own lunch. Staff throughout the nursery are calm in their approach to behaviour management and remind children of expectations, for instance that they need to share and take turns. Staff give clear messages to children about what is right and wrong and are consistent in identifying unacceptable behaviour. However, staff have not yet established consistent strategies for responding to unacceptable behaviour in the preschool room, and at times this disrupts learning for other children.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents throughout the nursery are given clear information about the setting. Staff are friendly and approachable and parents receive a combination of verbal and written feedback about their child, which ensures children experience consistent care. Parents of preschool children have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress and agree their next steps, which ensures they are involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are cared for by suitably qualified and vetted staff. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and mostly work well together as a team, and there is good support for staff to develop their skills through training.

Most areas of the nursery are well-organised, there is space for children to play in all rooms and they have easy access to activities. However, the organisation of the baby room does not take into account the needs of sleeping children.

There are comprehensive policies and procedures in place, and thorough induction processes and regular staff meetings and appraisals generally ensure that staff are aware of these and implement them effectively in practice. However, there are weaknesses in staff's understanding of the legal requirement to record all accidents that children have on the premises, even where no obvious injury occurs.

The leadership and management of the nursery education provision is good. The manager and area manager of the nursery show a strong commitment to continually develop and improve the service and this is demonstrated in the improvements made to the provision since the last

inspection. The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education and an action plan is already in place to begin to address relevant issues.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery were set actions to ensure that written procedures for appointing and vetting staff were fully implemented; that staffing levels and qualifications requirements were met; and that conditions of registration regarding numbers of children cared for were adhered to. In addition it was recommended that an up to date record of adults looking after the children was readily accessible on the premises. The nursery has now addressed all of these issues and at the time of this inspection there were sufficient, suitably qualified and appropriately vetted staff in place, the nursery's conditions of registration were met and a list of staff was available. This helps promote children's safety and wellbeing.

At the last care inspection it was also recommended that the nursery ensure that nappy changing, potty training, hand washing and laundry facilities complied with current Environmental Health recommendations. The nursery has since been visited by an Environmental Health Officer and there are no outstanding recommendations regarding these areas. In addition it was recommended that the nursery make sure that toys and equipment are clean, well maintained and safe. Most toys and resources were clean and in suitable condition at the time of this inspection, with the exception of some outdoor play equipment.

At the last inspection of the nursery education provision, the nursery were asked to ensure staff were provided with clear guidance, training and support to enable effective curriculum planning and monitoring of children's progress. Since the inspection, staff have worked closely with early years advisors and the management team to improve the quality of the preschool curriculum and this has resulted in significant improvements to systems for planning, making observations of children, and the monitoring of their progress. The nursery were also asked to implement a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of the teaching, and various strategies are now in place that more effectively assess and review teaching and learning in the preschool. This has also contributed to improvements in the nursery education provided.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. A concern was raised related to Standard 6 - Safety, regarding children's accidents. Ofsted investigated by making an unannounced visit. An action was set for the nursery to conduct a review of safety precautions in the toddler room. The nursery responded by completing a full risk assessment of the room in question and providing a written report of steps they had taken to address the issues arising. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration. A record of all complaints since October 2005 has been made in the nursery's complaints log.

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):

- make sure that staff keep records of all accidents that children have, including those where no obvious injury is sustained
- conduct a risk assessment of the sleeping arrangements in the baby room and take steps to ensure babies can rest safely and undisturbed by other children playing in the room
- increase resources in relation to the variety of books and role play equipment available, improve children's access to creative materials and make sure outdoor equipment provides challenge for older children and is kept clean (also applies to Nursery Education)

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):

- provide support and guidance for preschool staff in developing effective strategies for dealing with children's behaviour and ensuring that the learning of the group is not disrupted

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk