

Brock House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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Baby unit

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

Brock House Nursery School is privately owned and was established in 1992. It operates from a large three-storey building in the centre of St Albans, Hertfordshire. It is within walking distance to the city centre and railway station. Access to the pre-school is via steps to the front door and there is an area for outside play. The baby unit has a separate entrance and is located on the lower ground floor of the building.

The nursery school is open every day from 7:30am to 6:45pm for 51 weeks of the year. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 63 children in the early years age range may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 85 children on roll. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery school provides funded early education for two, three and four-year-old children. The group supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery school employs 19 staff. Of these, 16 hold appropriate early years qualifications with six at Level 2 and eight at Level 3 or above. Two further members of staff have degree status qualifications in Early Years. The nursery school works with the local authority to achieve ongoing improvement.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The provider and staff have adequately addressed previous actions to improve the nursery school. Policies and procedures are in place, however, on occasions, procedures are not consistently managed to ensure that every child's welfare and safety is fully promoted. The management team show a keen commitment to improve and are taking positive steps such as continual action plans to develop the provision. Staff know children well and recognise the uniqueness of each individual so that an inclusive practice is appropriately offered. Partnerships with parents are secure and the setting has established links with other agencies to implement sound strategies to meet children's specific needs.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure all practitioners designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children have appropriate understanding and information to enable them to liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate (Safeguarding and welfare)

10/06/2011

- ensure reasonable steps are taken to ensure that hazards to children are kept to a minimum; this refers to radiators and pipes by the baby's reception area and overgrown plants such as brambles and nettles in areas that children may come into contact with (Suitable premises, environment and equipment).

06/06/2011

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further develop play and learning experiences based on the children's ongoing interests, achievements and developmental needs so that children's individual learning needs are identified and catered for more effectively
- continue to lead a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development such as ensuring all resources are suitable for their purpose which will improve the quality of provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding regulations and duties are mostly met and arrangements and policies for protecting children are broadly in line with requirements. These include procedures to follow in the event of any concerns about children or an allegation against a member of staff. The majority of staff and senior members of staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are aware of appropriate policy and procedures in line with Local Safeguarding Children's board guidance and procedures. However, information does not always consistently filter down to all designated practitioners taking responsibility for safeguarding children. Consequently, some are less clear of how to liaise appropriately with appropriate agencies should they need to act independently. This is a breach of a specific legal requirement.

Actions raised during the last inspection have been appropriately met and are continually monitored through in-house action plans. All staff contribute to these through the regular staff meetings so that ideas for continual improvement can be shared. Since the last inspection staff have worked hard to raise some standards such as the organisation of the layout of furnishings and resources. For example, pre-school children have more defined areas for their learning and play and a welcoming room with low-level resources has been created for babies. Resources are now more accessible to all children, however, systems to always fully ensure these are purposeful and of adequate quality are occasionally not fully effective. Meal times have also been re-organised so that these are more sociable occasions and children's individual needs such as independence or assistance when eating can be effectively met. In addition, the recruitment of extra bank staff means that the requirements for adult to child ratios are met at all times. Overall, steps are taken to help children keep themselves safe, including systems to ensure the suitability of staff, the completion of daily and annual risk assessments and the effective supervision of children when using the stairs. However, although radiators

are checked prior to children attending, on the day of inspection one unprotected radiator and associated pipes posed a potential risk to children and families. When a fabric cover is fitted this does not provide adequate protection, therefore, reasonable steps to ensure this is not a problem to children are not fully effective. The outdoor area is also checked daily prior to children attending and is secure when children play outside. Most hazards are minimised, however, not enough priority is given to managing or eliminating some hazards outside. Consequently, children are not always able to learn to take risk without being at risk, for example, when using the digging area where brambles and nettles are growing. Not taking the reasonable steps to ensure risks are minimised is a breach of a specific legal requirement.

Systems are in place to adequately obtain information on children's backgrounds and individual welfare needs. Guidance or support is sought as necessary from external agencies or services such as the area special educational needs coordinator. This means that children obtain the support they need. Staff work closely with all parents who speak well of the nursery school. Children's cultural and family backgrounds are valued and some positive steps are taken to share home languages during children's play. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning through daily discussions and the sharing of daily activity records. Children's learning journals are available at any time and regular open-sessions mean that parents are able to discuss their children's progress.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Since the last inspection, hygiene and healthy eating awareness by staff and children have adequately improved. For example, children now have plates for their nutritious snacks of apples and grapes. These are cut into manageable sized pieces to ensure the children's safety. A cleaning rota by staff ensures the base rooms are always suitable for children and nappies are now changed according to children's individual needs. The re-organisation of meal times has had a positive impact on children's welfare and learning. For example, these are now sociable occasions where older children can develop independence skills such as being able to serve their own main meals. This contributes to the development of children's confidence and positive interaction from staff members help children learn about healthy living. Younger children's emerging self-feeding skills are appropriately supported and staff work closely with parents to meet individual preferences and dietary needs. Children are able to sleep and rest according to their individual needs and sleeping children are regularly checked to ensure they continue to be comfortable and safe. Children are developing sound relationships with adults and their peers. For example, they happily play independently or cooperatively with their friends. The key worker system helps children develop a secure sense of belonging and children readily approach adults for stories and for help in the completion of some tasks such as jigsaws. They learn important social skills such as sharing and taking turns while playing games together both indoors and outdoors. For example, they take turns using slides, sea-saws and popular imaginative resources such as dressing-up clothes.

Since the last inspection resources are more accessible to children and some are clearly labelled with pictures so that young children are able to see what is available for them. In addition, some rooms now have a low-level display of photographs indicating possible play opportunities. This means that children are able to make some decisions on the activities they choose to engage in. However, a few toys, such as a stethoscope, are not working condition, which potentially limits children's interest and their possible learning and challenge. Planning is flexible and is based on observations and assessments. It is linked to all the areas of learning and next steps in children's learning is identified and used to inform planning. Children's initial interests are well known and used in the settling-in process. However, ongoing interests and preferences in learning styles are not yet fully effective in planning for children's learning and development.

Children are broadly content, settled and freely explore their environment. They confidently select resources such as jigsaws, card games, construction and dolls. Babies enjoy exploring the newly created playroom which is bright and welcoming for their needs. Younger children enjoy making 'tea for their babies' and are appropriately supported by staff members, however, clothes for the dolls are not always near at hand to extend children's learning. Children particularly enjoy listening to stories and older children confidently share books with their friends. Some of these resources include dual language books which raise awareness of different scripts and help to support children who have English as an additional language. Mark making is available in all rooms and sensory play such as exploring with sand and soil develops children's hand control and their coordination. Outdoors children enjoy practising their physical skills such as balancing on beams and using hoops. A sensory garden has been developed and plans are in place to involve the children in the planting and growing of vegetables and herbs.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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