



The Beeches Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254428
Inspection date	10 January 2007
Inspector	Elaine Poulton
Setting Address	Beechdale Community Centre, Stephenson Square, Beechdale, Walsall, West Midlands, WS2 7DX
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Registered person	Karen Southall and Geraldine McWatt
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Beeches Day Nursery opened in 2000. It operates from a separate nursery unit within The Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre, Beechdale, Walsall. The day nursery serves the local area. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open five days a week all year round. The opening times are from 07:30 until 18:00. Children have access to an outside play area.

There are currently 34 children under five years on roll. Of these, 12 receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs nine staff to work directly with the children. All nine staff including the managers hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher / mentor from the local authority. Beeches Day Nursery is part of the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative and has achieved status as an Investor in People.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well nourished and benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy a varied menu of freshly prepared meals and all snacks comply with any special dietary requirement to ensure they remain healthy. Children have good appetites and often ask for second helpings at lunch time. Staff are very attentive to the needs of younger children and babies to ensure their individual meal-time routines are met. Drinks such as milk and juice are offered to children regularly throughout the day along with a choice of fresh fruit or cake or flapjacks which the children enjoy. Older children know they can ask for a drink when they are thirsty or serve themselves from the water dispenser. Staff work in partnership with parents and share information to ensure children's dietary needs are well promoted.

Well thought through policies and extensive hygiene procedures throughout the nursery ensure that children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment. The provision is warm and well ventilated. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through some well-planned routines, such as nappy change, using tissues, and hand washing before eating food and also after taking part in a messy play activity. This helps prevent cross-contamination and therefore keeps children healthy.

There are good procedures for managing accidents and informing parents, giving prescribed medication and caring for children who may become ill during the session. There are good procedures in place for sick children which help prevent the spread of infection and which help to keep children healthy. Staff are effective in ensuring that children's individual first aid needs are met, should there be an accident and that children are well cared for in the setting.

All children benefit from outdoor play in the fresh air and active play helps them to develop their physical skills well. They enjoy and join in with a range of age appropriate physical play experiences. Younger children are active according to individual needs and are also able to take rest and nap when needed. Older children go on planned walks to explore the local community. This means that children are developing a positive attitude to exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety of the children is a high priority in this nursery. Children are kept safe through policies that are understood by staff, for example risk assessments are completed on the activities, together with regular safety checks for indoor and outdoor resources and equipment. There are effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children. Security

is good with staff being vigilant with external exits ensuring that visitors are greeted but do not gain access to the setting or present a risk to the children.

Children play safely with a range of toys and games that promote their development well. There is a good range of equipment and resources to choose from that are in good condition, are well-maintained and conform to appropriate safety standards. Children can access toys and games themselves easily and safely from a wide selection available. Equipment such as tables, chairs and furniture are all at suitable child height to ensure that children of all ages can use them safely.

Children are learning about keeping themselves and others safe through a range of appropriately planned activities and discussions. Some children know they are to wear elbow pads and helmets when they go on their bikes. They are helped to practise emergency escapes and are beginning to understand why they need to exit the building quickly and safely when the alarm is raised.

Children are protected from harm because staff are knowledgeable about child protection issues. Staff have a good awareness of whom to contact and the procedures to follow should an incident occur in the setting. The child protection policy is clear about roles and responsibilities and what happens should there be an allegation made against a member of staff. All child protection policies and procedures are shared with parents to promote children's well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure and happy in the nurseries welcoming and caring environment and they have positive relationships with staff. Consequently the care, learning opportunities and play experiences for children in this setting are good.

Although some staff have sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework it has not been implemented to offer a full range of experiences. This means that whilst activities are enjoyable and well organised they do not always link fully to the appropriate age and stage of development of each individual child.

Babies and very young children have good opportunities to experience a wide range of stimulating sensory play activities. For example, staff prepare a range of brightly coloured pasta shapes for the babies to hold, squeeze, explore and experience. Care routines such as nappy change, are well planned and organised. All children gather at lunch time to eat their meal together, except for very young babies who are held by a member of the baby room staff to be bottle fed.

Children benefit from being part of a small key worker group which helps staff to know the individual children well. Children are helped towards independence and are supported, encouraged and praised consistently. As a result they behave well and are beginning to learn how to share toys and take a turn within a group situation.

Older children sit well together in their small group and listen and respond to staff telling a short story. They join in with a variety of songs and rhymes which help them learn to count numbers. They enjoy painting and physical play activities indoors and outdoors. Some play alongside others involved in the same imaginative play theme for long periods of time. Staff introduce items to extend children's play. For example, two children are offered a resource-box full of fruit, food and provisions to put in their shopping baskets. Children then began to sort the food, find the red grapes and swap the cake for a slice of melon.

Children help to set the table at snack and meal times, and manage a range of small tasks well. For example, they are learning to pour out their own drinks and are encouraged to tidy away resources after use. They are helped to think through situations and solve problems, such as what two colours when mixed together make a third colour. Staff are close by to offer support and guidance, which in turn helps children to build trust and develop a sense of belonging.

They investigate their environment and access resources freely. They are well supported and introduced to a good variety of stimulating sensory play activities that help them develop use of all of their senses. For example, they pinch and squeeze clay, enjoy rustling through shredded paper and feeling the texture of dry pulses and seeds.

Nursery Funded Education.

The quality of teaching and learning in respect of children in receipt of funding for early years education is satisfactory. There is a sufficiently well organised staff team who have developed their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage suitably well to judge the impact of activities on the children. Staff plan and provide a satisfactory range of activities under each of the six areas of learning. Some learning intentions are recorded and link to the stepping stones and some aspects are covered sufficiently through use of focused activities and routines. Not all plans contain sufficient detail or differentiation. Although staff do plan some exciting and imaginative activities to ensure children have adequate opportunities to achieve and to make steady progress toward the early learning goals.

Staff use suitably effective methods to maintain children's interest and spend the majority of their time working directly with them. They organise a range of stimulating activities and use varying approaches to engage children. They are interested in their free play as they select and carry out activities. They are building good relationships with staff and peers and many children approach an activity positively asking to take part.

The current system used to assess children's individual learning is not fully effective and individual children's early learning profiles have been re-introduced. Observations are mainly carried out as children play and are recorded in more detail after the activity takes place.

A range of children's behaviour is appropriately managed and this results in a calm and caring environment for children to learn in. Children are encouraged to learn to take responsibility for their actions and consider needs of others through planned discussions and themed activities. They are consistently rewarded with words of praise for good behaviour and enjoy receiving 'stickers' for their achievements.

Children are lively and friendly and respond positively to staff. Children's independence skills are growing and they can make their own way to the toilet, wash their hands and pour out their own drinks. They are growing in confidence and keen to help out.

They are learning to 'speak up' in small groups and most listen intently to stories. Some children independently select books for pleasure and turn the pages over carefully. They are beginning to recognise their own name cards and place them on the 'registration tree'. They access the writing drawer independently and use a range of resources, such as shaving foam, paint and sand to make lines and patterns and practise their mark-making skills.

Children are beginning to understand and use numbers in every day situations. They are developing problem solving skills when completing jigsaws. They demonstrate that they are gaining a satisfactory awareness of mathematical concepts, for example through adding and taking away through singing number rhymes. They use numbers and shapes in a familiar context when sorting and sequencing. For example, when visiting the local shops to buy fruit or fresh flowers. Some children can identify and match numerals. This means that they are beginning to use number language spontaneously during their play.

Children develop a sense of time and place through discussion and activities. They explore, investigate and find out about features in the natural environment. They collect leaves from the local park to make displays. They invite 'visitors' such as the local Vicar to their nursery, to talk about their experiences and this helps to develop an understanding of other people's culture and beliefs. Children have satisfactory opportunities to use a range of Information Communication Technology, such as battery operated toys and a computer.

Regular active play helps children develop their physical skills suitably. They pedal wheeled toys and use larger pieces of climbing equipment competently. Children carefully use one-handed tools such as paintbrushes and scissors, with growing dexterity and control. They move freely inside and outside and have a good sense of the space around them.

They are able to express themselves imaginatively and explore using all of their senses. They are excited to talk about what is hidden under the heap of shredded paper and that it looks like snow. They name some colours competently. They use their imagination well and enjoy dressing up and role play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities and use this knowledge to introduce activities about different cultures and beliefs to the children. Children have good opportunities to self-select from a wide range of toys and games and choose from a varied selection of resources that are set out each session by staff. They can also help themselves to a range of jigsaws, dressing up clothes, writing materials and play resources that are within easy reach. This helps them to gain a sense of being valued and respected as individuals and develops their confidence and self-esteem. There is a suitable range of resources to raise children's awareness of diversity and these are supplemented with the use of the mobile library and accessing additional resources from the local authority early year's unit.

A well presented policy is in place regarding children who have learning difficulties or disabilities which details how the service will be provided to children. Staff support children with special needs effectively and work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that they are included in the life of the nursery and can access all activities and all areas of the provision. Information about children's individual needs are shared between staff and parents and this means children are supported well in the setting.

Children are praised consistently when they are behaving well and consequently this promotes and reinforces good behaviour. Younger children are beginning to learn how to take a turn with toys. Older children share popular resources such as imaginative dressing up clothes in the role play area. They are encouraged to carry out small tasks, such as helping to tidy away toys and resources before snack time. Children are learning how to share resources in a small group situation and are beginning to build good relationships with staff and peers.

All of the above approaches foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the nursery.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early years is satisfactory. Whilst parents receive sufficient information about their children's activities and daily routines, the current system to ensure that parents are kept informed about their child's progress towards the early learning goals is not fully effective.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery employs experienced, qualified and vetted staff to ensure that children are cared for and are well protected. Staffing ratios are well maintained resulting in children's care, learning and play being supported appropriately. The staff team help children to settle in well and develop good relationships with one another. There is always a member of staff on site with first aid training to care for children's health needs.

A good range of policies and procedures which support good practice are in place and staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities to care for children. They ensure that children's good health, safety, enjoyment and ability to make a positive contribution is well promoted.

Staff spend most of their time working directly with and supporting children's care, learning and play experiences in the setting. Children experience a good variety and balance of imaginative play activities that support their development. This in turn creates a positive learning environment.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Management is supportive, experienced and has a suitable knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Individual appraisal systems are in place to support staff to identify appropriate training. Most strengths and weaknesses in the early years curriculum are monitored and evaluated and direction is offered to staff to ensure a consistent approach to children's learning.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting had a point for consideration from the last Nursery Funded inspection, to develop children's learning potential at meal times.

The setting has addressed this point for consideration successfully in a number of ways. Children help to wipe over the table before food is served. They help set the tables with the correct number of knives, forks and spoons. They give out plates and drinking beakers to the other children on the table. They pour out their own drinks or help themselves from the water cooler. They choose their own snacks and serve themselves to their own food at lunch time, often returning for second helpings. Children talk about the food they are eating, how it makes them healthy and strong and how much they are enjoying it. Children's learning potential at meal time is developed satisfactorily.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

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 satisfactory.

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):

- continue to improve outcomes for children under three years of age by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'

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):

- ensure short term plans contain clear and sufficient detail of learning intentions and differentiation to meet children's individual abilities.
- develop further the observation and assessment system to help plan the next steps for children's individual learning.

- develop further the information parents receive on their child's educational provision, individual progress and achievements.
- develop further the system to monitor, support and evaluate children's learning.

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