



Charters Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130485
Inspection date	01 February 2007
Inspector	Tina Kelly
Setting Address	YMCA Woodlands Centre, Off College Road, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, WD5 0GN
Telephone number	01923 662221
E-mail	laurabluelmel@woodlandsymca.com
Registered person	Watford and District YMCA
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Charters Day Nursery opened in September 1998, it operates from the Woodlands Centre on the outskirts of Abbots Langley. The setting operates from a self contained unit within the Watford and District YMCA which also provide gym and fitness sessions on this site.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 94 children aged from three months to five years. There are currently 91 children on roll. This includes 29 children in receipt of nursery funding.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round excluding bank holidays and a week at Christmas. It operates from 07:30 to 18:30. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports one child who has a disability.

The nursery manager is supported by a deputy and a team of 26 staff members. Of these, 15 hold level three qualifications, six hold qualifications to level two and others are working towards level two. The nursery receives input from a qualified teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is protected as appropriate records and documents are in place and staff are fully aware of their individual needs. Children learn about good personal hygiene through the daily routines. They are reminded to wash their hands after playing in the garden and before snack and meal times. Children's independence is fully supported, staff monitor them closely as they access the cloakrooms. A flexible approach to the daily plans ensures meals are always available for children who sleep through lunch or are busy with other activities. The policy for all staff and children to wear soft, indoor shoes provides the children with a clean and well maintained environment.

Children enjoy home cooked meals that are freshly prepared each day by the nursery cook. Staff are fully informed about food allergies and restrictions, the detail is readily available and also recorded on the children's place mats to ensure they are provided with appropriate meals and snacks in line with their individual needs. Children learn about healthy foods and what is good for them through themes and projects as well as interactive conversations with staff throughout meal and snack times. However, children are not given many opportunities to develop their independence at meal times. The tables are set with placemats, cutlery and drinks. Their meals are served by staff who also clear and put the cups and plates away as the children leave the table to go and play. This means the children have little knowledge of how to set the table, to serve or help in clearing away.

Children are involved in growing fruit and vegetables in the nursery garden, they have a developing understanding of how plants are sown and the growing process. They are able to explain how carrots are grown and how some were fed to the nursery rabbit.

Children make good progress in their physical development. They enjoy a broad range of activities that extend and develop their physical skills, balance and stamina. Children are competent in using the ride on toys. They are developing good balance and co-ordination skills. Staff assist and support children as they negotiate routes around positioned cones on their bikes developing their steering skills and spatial awareness.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained, welcoming and child centred environment. Procedures and check lists are in place to monitor and maintain the hygiene and cleanliness of all rooms.

Children are able to take part in well organised activities, they have soft and comfortable areas to read and to rest. Imaginative play resources and age appropriate tables and chairs ensure all children have their needs fully met.

Children are becoming aware of their own safety as they are reminded of safe practice by staff who explain how accidents may happen if toys and resources are not kept 'tidy'. Children of all ages are encouraged to help to put the activities away. They have a growing understanding of the impact of their games on the space around them and on the other children playing nearby. When taking children out in the community staff reinforce aspects of road safety that have been introduced to them by Hertfordshire County's school safety officer. The 'outings book' records detail to ensure senior management are aware of staff, children and contact numbers to be used in the case of an incident.

Staff are vigilant in their practice and confident in their knowledge of child protection issues. The nursery has an ongoing programme for child protection training at both induction, basic and second level courses. Parents are kept informed of the policies and procedures that safeguard their children in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidelines.

Children's safety is of high priority, they are cared for by suitable adults who have had the required checks with appropriate training and experience to ensure the well-being of the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled within the nursery setting. Staff working with the babies and younger children have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Plans, activities and the children's individual achievements are monitored and recorded in line with the different aspects and components of the framework. This builds on the children's experiences and developing skills.

Young children enjoy exploring the items in the 'treasure basket'. The principles of heuristic play give the children opportunities to handle different materials, natural resources and every day objects. Staff who have attended training for 'baby sign language' communicate with the young children in a sensitive but clear manner, they can ask if a child would like more and the children can respond with the sign for 'thank you'. This enables non verbal babies and children to interact and respond in a positive manner to simple requests and for staff to acknowledge their needs. Babies are curious and friendly, they are confident when they approach visitors. Children are encouraged to look at photographs on the 'family board' and to identify their families. They do this with great delight. They have a growing understanding of self awareness.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have a positive attitude to learning, they are keen to take part in new experiences and to practise their developing skills. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation stage. The staff team is supported by a qualified teacher to plan, adapt and present a comprehensive curriculum based on the stepping stones and early

learning goals. Planning shows the children are provided with a broad range of activities and experiences that are suited to their different needs. Assessments are thorough and the information is used for future planning to ensure children have a solid foundation to their learning. Staff are good role models, they work alongside the children to extend their language and comprehension. Children learn in various styles, they may have one to one support for more complex activities. They learn to share resources in small groups and learn to negotiate and to take turns in larger group activities.

Children are developing good listening skills, they can take complex instructions from staff as they adapt familiar stories and re-enact them around the climbing frame in the garden. Children line up, they volunteer to take the place of familiar characters from tales such as the 'Three little pigs' and 'Jack and the beanstalk'. The children are directed to their places, they join in the story, shout out the familiar lines and become engrossed in watching for wolves and giants. Staff fully support the children's growing imagination as they chase and climb with the children to get to a 'safe home'.

The children show great delight when they were asked to recall their experiences and share them with the other children later in the afternoon when they sat down for story time. Mark making materials are readily available however the children's name labels are not used to their full potential. Children do not self register, they are not asked to find their names at group time or to identify their place at the table for activities. Their early letter recognition skills are not being fully developed.

Children are becoming aware of counting and the use of numbers through the planned activities. However they have little opportunity to extend their understanding of numbers in every day activities. They were not asked to count the children at snack time, to calculate how many pieces of fruit were needed or to predict how many pieces of apple could be cut from the one fruit to extend their understanding of division and mathematical concepts. Children have a range of opportunities to use information technology with the use of computers and representative toys in the imaginative play settings. Their knowledge and understanding of how these items impact on their lives is well developed.

Children are learning about the wider world through well presented themes and topics. Children are becoming aware of different cultures and family settings through books, stories and television characters. They are confident to talk about their home lives, they share detail of siblings and new babies. Children are taken out in their local community to explore the parkland outside the nursery. They walk out to see horses in nearby fields and take part in harvest festival at the village church. Children are introduced to people who help them such as the police and fire service officers. Their experiences are extended through activities linked to imaginative play and creative projects such as making hats and pictures of emergency service vehicles.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery, they thrive in the well supported and challenging environment. They are making good progress in all areas of learning and personal development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have developed strong relationships with their carers. Their individual needs are well met as staff ensure all children are treated with equal respect and their backgrounds valued. Children have a growing understanding of taking care of others. They are fully involved in the care and feeding of the nursery rabbit and hamster. Through the animals they have their understanding of hygiene and healthy eating reinforced as they know they must wash their hands and provide the animals with appropriate fresh air, exercise and healthy food.

Children enjoy looking at photographs which are displayed around the nursery. They are developing a sense of belonging and self recognition. Children are developing good social skills, they sit together at snack and meal times, they show good manners as they chat and talk with the staff. Staff are calm and sensitive, they explain to the children what is expected of them and take time to make sure children understand when they need to wait or to share. Comprehensive records are in place to monitor children's achievements, the nursery has a designated special educational needs co-ordinator (Senco). Strategies are in place to ensure children receive appropriate support with regards to language, special educational needs and physical disabilities.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents are kept informed about the children's activities, information is shared on a regular basis. Staff encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning. The Foundations Stage guidance is readily available in the preschool room alongside records of achievements and the weekly and daily plans.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's well-being is monitored and maintained with appropriate records in place to comply with regulation. Documents are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain relevant. Systems are in place to ensure staff working with the children are suitable to do so. The nursery offers families the chance to supplement the children's developing skills by offering extra curriculum classes in French and computer skills within the nursery's daily routines.

The nursery has ongoing self evaluation systems in place. A questionnaire for parents provides families with opportunities to share their experiences of the nursery. The information is analysed at staff meetings. Action plans are developed and the outcomes shared with parents so they are kept fully informed about day to day routines within the nursery.

The leadership and management is good. The staff team who are responsible for the planning and implementation of the nursery education work well together. They receive additional support from a qualified nursery teacher. The grouping of the children, staff deployment, and different areas of play and learning provide children with a secure routine in a stimulating setting.

Timed action plans and identified training opportunities ensures the nursery develops and enhances all areas of the children play and learning.

The staff team work effectively together to ensure the provision offers an inclusive environment where every child matters.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last care inspection the nursery was given three recommendations; to ensure the baby sleep room is maintained at an appropriate temperature; to minimise hazards to children both inside and outside; to ensure appropriate resources are accessible to children.

The nursery maintains all rooms at an appropriate temperature. Children are cared for in warm but well ventilated environment. The storage of household and garden substances has been reviewed, children do not have access materials that may be a danger to them. The nursery reviews and updates resources on a regular basis to ensure all children have access to a range of good quality, age appropriated toys to develop and extend their play experiences.

At the time of the last nursery education inspection the nursery was given two recommendations; to develop more formal links between assessments and planning to show how children progress; to extend the children's experiences from different perspectives such as high and low.

The nursery consistently reviews the planning and assessment systems to ensure all children reach their full potential. Children have a range of opportunities that fully develop their understanding of different perspectives through of well planned activities.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 good.

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 children's independence with regards to food preparation, serving and tidying away plates after snack and meal times.

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):

- develop opportunities for mark making and mathematical concepts in all aspects of the children's play and 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