

# The Old Fire Station Childrens Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	228975
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 September 2007
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<b>Registered person</b>	Bucklemount Ltd.
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

The Old Fire Station Children's Nursery opened in 1992. It operates from 11 rooms in a grade II listed building, which once housed Birmingham's busiest fire station and which has retained much of its character. It is situated in the Jewellery Quarter in Hockley, Birmingham and is within walking distance of Birmingham city centre. The nursery does not have access to an outside play area.

There are currently 57 children from eight months to four years on roll. This includes 11 funded three and four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07:30 to 18:30.

There are 13 members of staff working with the children. Over half of the practitioners have appropriate early years qualifications. The group receives support from the local authority early years service.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and welcoming environment where they are learning to understand simple health and hygiene practices. For example, they know that they need to wash their hands carefully to get rid of germs before cooking activities and prior to eating. Children are well cared for if they have an accident or become ill as there are detailed procedures in place to record medication requirements and any accidents, which are all signed by parents. Children are kept safe from the spread of infection as tables are cleaned before and after use and food debris is cleaned away after meals. Practitioners wear gloves and aprons during nappy changing, helping to minimise the risk of cross-infection.

Children are learning to develop their physical skills through the use of an indoor area dedicated to large play apparatus, including a large climbing frame with slides. They can practise and refine movements including, balance, pedalling skills and coordination by using equipment, such as bicycles, scooters and play tunnels. Babies develop their mobility skills within a safe and stimulating environment. They show delight when being encouraged to take their first steps and practise their walking skills. Children play with a good variety of safe and well-maintained toys and resources that are regularly checked for safety and suitability. Children rest and sleep according to their needs as dedicated sleep areas are provided with individual bedding.

Children are provided with healthy and nutritious meals that meet their dietary requirements. The menu reflects a selection of vegetarian dishes including, macaroni cheese and cous cous. Children learn about healthy living through activities and discussions. For example, they make links with a story called, "Handa's Surprise" by tasting different types of fruit. Babies are provided with fluids ensuring they keep hydrated. Drinks are provided in suitable containers including bottles and drinking cups. Older children have access to water and healthy snacks including melon and apples.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and welcoming environment. All visitors sign in and a closed circuit television system is in place to monitor both entrances, ensuring children are kept safe from members of the public. Practitioners are attentive about children's safety and complete daily safety checks. However, the risk assessment has yet to be finalised to encompass an action plan for the premises and specific evaluations of vulnerable times of the day, such as children's sleep time. This potentially compromises children's safety.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe because they are reminded not to run around the nursery in case they trip or fall. They use safe and suitable equipment including scissors with skill and accuracy. Children take part in regular emergency evacuation practises. Fire exits are kept clear and notices displayed throughout the setting. This helps children learn to take responsibility for their own safety in the event of a fire.

Children are protected because practitioners understand their role in child protection and are clear about reporting procedures. However, documentation lacks sufficient detail relating to allegations being made against a practitioner. This undermines guaranteeing a consistent

response in the event of a concern being raised. Practitioners attend regular training so as to raise their awareness of possible signs of abuse or neglect.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children take part in a range of activities which they find stimulating and enjoyable. The attractive environment has many displays of children's work including, collage sunflowers. Planning and assessment of children's progress incorporates the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Younger children have access to a wide selection of resources including, chalk boards, construction bricks and small world play, such as a doll's house. Children are absorbed in their play and sing songs spontaneously as they play including, "Here we go round the motor bike".

Babies and toddlers explore their environment through all of their senses. They use paint and glue and squeal with delight as they squeeze paint through their fingers. They re-enact familiar scenes with the help of props including, dressing up clothes and a play kitchen. Practitioners use everyday routines, such as nappy changing to encourage babies to vocalise by singing familiar rhymes with them. Children's comfort objects are valued, especially at sleep time helping to meet children's emotional needs.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This ensures that children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Practitioners have an adequate understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and the early learning goals. However, some practitioners lack sufficient training in order to deliver the curriculum effectively. Assessment records are not always updated to give an accurate picture of children's progress and as a result, assessments are not used for future planning. The management team is aware of the areas for further development in their delivery of the educational programme and the setting receives support from an early years teacher to address these areas for improvement.

Teaching is broadly planned to provide a balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. Practitioners manage children's behaviour well by using positive behaviour strategies, such as negotiation and compromise. Children have devised their own pre-school room rules including, "We talk nicely to our friends and we share". This helps children to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Practitioners are very tolerant, for example, during a hairdressing activity, they act as models for children, who enthusiastically comb, pull and try out different hair styles, using a selection of fashionable hair accessories. The learning environment reflects the local community and the wider world. There is provision to cater for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English as an additional language, as practitioners recognise and prioritise the importance of working in partnership with parents and other professionals.

Children are confident and settled within the nursery, demonstrating a sense of belonging. They are sociable and establish friendships. They cooperate with each other whilst playing in the sand, sharing buckets and spades and commenting on their sand castles. They respond well to taking responsibility for tidying up. However, opportunities to further develop independence during daily routines are not always maximised, such as setting the table and clearing away after mealtimes. Children are developing mathematical skills through play. They handle plastic money whilst playing 'shops', counting out coins and notes when they pretend to give change.

They recognise that four comes after five and consolidate this learning by enthusiastically singing number songs, such as "10 in the bed", demonstrating competence in counting backwards from 10.

Children are learning about the local environment through visits and discussions. They make junk models of the local supermarkets. They are beginning to differentiate between past and present by studying the life cycle of a frog. They are familiar with the days of the week, knowing that Wednesday comes after Tuesday. Children are developing some technological skills as they have access to a computer, although this is not used frequently enough. They use mechanical equipment, such as cash registers. However, the batteries are not replaced regularly, limiting the technological enjoyment for children. Children are sociable and articulate and confidently refer to events in the past. For example, they refer to a trip to the zoo and describe a giraffe as having 'long knees'. They listen to stories with concentration and interest and comment on the illustrations within books and questions about stories. They re-enact stories including, "The Billy Goat's gruff".

Children develop physical skills by exploring malleable materials, such as play dough. They use cutters and rollers to pinch and mould play dough making different shapes and patterns. They make their own models by rolling out sausage shapes and making round balls to go on the top, saying they are putting on eyes. They understand that knives need to be used safely when chopping lettuce whilst making a salad. Children experience different ways of painting including, finger painting, string painting and leaf printing. They have drawn accurate self-portraits including spiky hair, eyes, nose, mouth and teeth. They show interest in learning by using their senses. For example, they experience tactile activities, such as describing what is in a 'feely bag'.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning to appreciate and value each other. They work harmoniously together whilst making choices about their play. They feel a sense of belonging because of the self-registration system, which involves them sticking their name cards on a board to show their attendance. They have a drawer to put their pictures in for taking home. Children's individual needs are mostly met as their records contain all relevant information relating to their care preferences and routines.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is fostered. They are beginning to value and recognise similarities and differences within society because pictures and posters throughout the setting depict positive images and planning includes opportunities for children to celebrate different festivals. Children behave well and clearly understand the rules of the group. For example, they line up before they walk through the setting. They are encouraged to apologise to each other after disagreements. This helps them learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Feedback from parents is very positive. They feel the setting provides a good service and that children are happy and enjoy attending. Parents are welcome at the nursery at any time and practitioners chat informally about children's welfare and progress. Parents receive detailed information relating to care and education including a progress report and an 'activities at home' sheet giving information and ideas about topics. This helps to consolidate children's learning in the nursery and makes links with their home life.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children enjoy attending this bright and welcoming setting. They enthusiastically participate in a wide variety of fun and educational activities within this unique grade II listed building. Babies respond well to the enthusiastic staff and established routines and mealtimes. However, individual feeding and sleep routines are sometimes compromised due to inappropriate staff deployment which means occasionally, some children have to wait their turn to be fed or rocked to sleep. This causes babies to become fractious.

Most required documentation is in place and stored confidentially, although some policies and procedures are in the process of being updated. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. However, procedures have yet to be finalised to check 'ongoing suitability' of staff, which potentially compromises children's welfare.

Leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. Practitioners are motivated and work well together as a team. They are encouraged to develop their professional skills through ongoing training. The management team has experienced changes over the last eight months and has re-structured accordingly. They have developed an action plan with timescales so as to prioritise and track improvements. Procedures for monitoring the curriculum include a commitment to raise standards through supervision and appraisal for all practitioners. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to ensure that the written procedure in the event of a child being lost included a statement, should a child go missing from the nursery building. Also, to make available to parents the written statement that provided details of the procedure to be followed if they had a complaint. Both of these procedures have now been reviewed and updated in accordance with the National Standards. The implementation of these recommendations ensures children's safety and well-being is fostered.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to create greater opportunities for children to relate to number and how it can be used in everyday activities. The second recommendation related to opportunities for children to experience music through a variety of activities. Planning systems have been reviewed and updated in accordance with the Foundation Stage guidance and more frequent opportunities are planned for ensuring children's mathematical and creative development are enhanced.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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 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 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):

- ensure staff deployment within the baby unit is appropriate so that routines are consistently adhered to especially at mealtimes
- review and update all policies and procedures and finalise procedures for checking 'ongoing suitability' of staff
- conduct a risk assessment of the premises to encompass specific evaluations of vulnerable times of the day, such as children's sleep time
- formalise procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

#### 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):

- increase opportunities for children to develop independence through daily routines
- ensure all assessment records accurately reflect children's progress and are used to help with future planning
- improve staff knowledge of the foundation stage so as to deliver age and stage appropriate activities in all areas of learning, especially in knowledge and understanding of the world.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)