

The Park Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY305263
Inspection date	04 January 2008
Inspector	Paula Durrant
Setting Address	3 Park Avenue, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 7HR
Telephone number	01923 202056
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Registered person	Bright Horizons Family Solutions 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 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?

The Park Nursery originally opened in 1998 operating as Child and Co and registered under its current ownership of Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited in 2004. The nursery is located on the outskirts of the town of Watford and operates from a large Victorian property which has been adapted for use by children. The nursery has ten main rooms with four key age bands that use these areas. The ground floor comprises of the older children aged two to five years, the first floor babies and toddlers aged three months to two years, whilst the second floor facilitates the managers office and staff room. The nursery serves the local community. A maximum of 63 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday between the hours of 08:00 until 18:00, for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 92 children aged three months to five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 staff. Over half of the staff hold an appropriate early years qualification and three staff are currently working towards a childcare qualification. The nursery receives teaching support from the local early years development and childcare partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill as practitioners have a sound awareness of health and safety procedures drawn from environmental health guidance. For example, antibacterial hand sanitizer solution is accessible throughout the premises including the entrance foyer where visitors too are asked to comply with the nurseries health promotion policy. Cleaning rosters ensure the cleanliness of each base room and the equipment in it, children who sleep have access to their own bedding and all staff wear protective clothing and gloves when changing nappies or supporting children with toileting needs. All of this good practice ensures cross-contamination is effectively minimised. Rigorous adherence to exclusion periods for childhood diseases and the maintenance of a sufficient number of trained first aiders means that children stay healthy and receive appropriate care in the event of a medical emergency. All appropriate records and consents are in place for the documentation of accidental injuries and medication administered. There are sufficient medical supplies in the first aid box.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. They know for example, that it is important to wash their hands prior to eating, after using the toilet and when returning from outside play. They understand the reason why they wash their hands as staff consistently introduce conversations about getting clean and germs. They also learn about self-care needs as they are encouraged to access tissues to wipe their noses and as they brush their teeth following mealtimes.

Children receive a varied nutritious balanced diet. Although the nursery kitchen does not lend itself to meet the requirements of cooking for the allotted number of children on site, the group have in place a contractual arrangement with the local school for this provision. They are responsible for cooking the meals off site following daily updates from staff who advise of the quantity and specific individual dietary needs required to be catered for. The nursery then collect the meals in appropriate insulated containers which comply with environmental health guidance. Food is then temperature checked prior to being dispensed into serving bowls for the children. Staff are very aware of the children's individual dietary needs. They refer to the pictorial table mats of the children with their specified allergies or dislikes when monitoring children through the lunch period.

Children remain well-hydrated as they have constant access to drinking water throughout the day. Babies receive milk feeds in line with their home-care routine in addition to cooled boiled water to quench their thirst at other times. Whilst older children have access to labelled water bottles which they can access independently throughout the day at their leisure, although staff do encourage drinks such as following outside play.

Children have daily access to the garden. Provision of warm clothes and additional footwear, such as 'Wellingtons' means that children can go out to play regardless of the weather conditions. This means children receive regular access to fresh air, to exert their energy and to develop increased physical control as they climb, ride bicycles and throw and catch balls. All children

are able to rest and be active according to their needs. Younger children sleep in line with home-care routines, whilst older children have the opportunity to lie down on a mat after lunch in order to recuperate their energy levels.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety and welfare is given due attention in this vigilantly monitored premises. Practitioners help keep children safe in the nursery and on outings because they understand and comply with safety requirements. All necessary safety measures are in place. Risk assessments are undertaken frequently. Access to the premises is effectively monitored by a Closed Circuit Television Viewing system (CCTV) and through the supervision and management of the entrance area. Visitors to the site are asked to verify their identity and to record their presence in the visitors log book.

Whilst the nursery overall is of a reasonable standard of cleanliness and repair the kitchen is not. This area remains in a poor state. Whilst meals are not cooked on site they are transferred from the school containers to the nurseries serving dishes within this location. Fruit snacks and light evening meals are also prepared in this area which is not presently of a suitable standard of hygiene. Environmental health has visited and actioned work to be undertaken. This is yet to take place.

Children access a suitable range of age-appropriate resources. These are effectively organised in child-height furniture to encourage independent access. Staff skilfully explain safe practices, such as the need to pick up items dropped on the floor, so that other children do not fall or hurt themselves and to sit with their bottoms on chairs so they do not slip or tumble. Adherence to the nursery rules of being safe, being kind and looking after the nursery helps children to learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Children have a sound awareness of fire safety as they take part in regular practice drills.

Staff protect children well. Strong recruitment and induction procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience, training and vetting checks. Staff are vigilant in their practice and are confident in their knowledge of child protection, reporting concerns appropriately to senior staff. Open relationships between home and nursery ensure that children's needs remain the single important factor. The child protection coordinator ensures that procedures are up-to-date and that staff understand their responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and make good progress in learning, leisure and personal development because practitioners are confident, enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their childcare practice. Staff effectively use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance to provide a varied range of practical play experiences to progress children's learning and all round development. For example, babies receive an array of tactile sensorial experiences exploring through touch, taste and sound. Toddlers are effectively supported in their play developing an awareness of number as they count blocks when building towers and increasing their vocabulary as they name familiar objects when sharing books with an adult. Significant emphasis is given to supporting children in learning through exploration. For example, children are actively encouraged to experiment with the science of change as they add liquid to a solid when making fairy cakes. Positive relationships

with staff and sound planning systems support the progression and development of younger children's natural curiosity as learners.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are engaged and motivated by a varied range of stimulating, practical activities related to their needs. They access an extended range of good quality resources, which support their learning across the Foundation Stage. All children are keen to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They listen with considerable levels of concentration to stories and can recount favourite books. Many children use marks readily to represent their ideas and older children are becoming adept at writing their own names. Children are highly imaginative as they create their own role play, becoming explorers in the wilderness as they dig for worms in the garden. They are beginning to make sense of the world around them as they correspond with other nurseries in different countries and celebrate cultural festivals throughout the year. Children create three dimensional models, collages and draw pictures many of which are displayed. They are inquisitive, fascinated by how things such as keyboards work and wonder at the changes they see as they observe the changes in the seasons when completing their daily calendar.

Children work very well together. For example, younger children learn about turn taking and sharing as they play with the older children who enjoy explaining the importance of being fair and kind. Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play and respond well to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. For example, children promptly acknowledge that one soap bottle is heavier than another inviting a lovely comparison and use of mathematical terminology in practice opportunity when washing hands before lunch. Children gain plentiful opportunities to develop their large and fine muscle skills such as through daily access to the garden, regular music and movement sessions and through use of a variety of tools such as pencils to draw and scissors and knives to cut.

Staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and use this information to support children in achieving their full potential. Planning systems are appropriately detailed and provide a clear tool to guide staff in the delivery of a balanced curriculum. Although these do not offer formal identification of challenges for the less confident or more competent child. A flexible approach to the day and a balance between energetic play and quiet spells allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions successfully to encourage children's thinking and language skills. The nursery have in place a system to observe and record children's achievements but are yet to fully embrace their full purpose filtering data from these back into future plans.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are warmly welcomed in the nursery. Practitioners ensure that the resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others. Children are extremely well behaved, and very polite in response to the consistent expectations of caring practitioners. The manager ensures that a warm welcoming and homely environment is provided, prioritising the welfare of the children in attendance. Children take turns and show concern for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Staff encourage parents to actively contribute towards individual assessment records. Children benefit from a two-way sharing of information between parents and practitioners to enhance their learning. This underpins their progress in the setting and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The nursery effectively communicates and fully shares literature and information about the educational provision.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust recruitment procedures underpin the stability of a mature and highly skilled staff team. The majority of staff are qualified and all staff gain frequent opportunities through their personal development plans to access short courses. This enhances their knowledge and understanding of current childcare practices. Staff demonstrate a real affinity with children; they respect their feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Adult to child ratio's are effectively maintained ensuring children remain the primary focus of care at all times. Comprehensive and highly detailed written policies ensure a clear framework for staff to adhere to. All of which are compliant with National Standard requirements.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Whilst planning structures are unique and individual to each room and child this information is not always translated across into formal structures. For example, although staff plan topics which children can relate to they do not always draw on key skills and attributes from assessment profiles to progress learning. This is partially due to staff knowing each child very well and the vast range of incidental learning opportunities that they skilfully impose at regular intervals throughout the day, making full use of the daily routine and child-initiated play. Although it is clearly evident that children are making progress this is more on a holistic scale than individual. Planning systems are also yet to make clear learning intentions for the less able and more able child. This again is due to staff having a good understanding of each child abilities, though this does not aid delivery at the appropriate level in the event of static room staff not being present. Whilst staff are truly competent in delivering an inspirational and intuitive curriculum monitoring in content of the educational programme is yet to become totally effective. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group were required to ensure that observations of children's achievements are consistent, dated and used to effectively monitor children's progress. A vast majority of children's attainments are regularly updated. This supports staff in developing children's skills and attributes. The nursery recognise this is an area of continued development but have yet to put structures in place to monitor this.

At the last nursery education inspection the group were required to ensure that activity plans identify how the more and less able children will be targeted so all children have equal chances to achieve. Children benefit from opportunities to challenge their abilities as staff know each individual child well. They skilfully set targets in line with each child's ability to enable the less confident and stretch the more competent child. This is yet to be translated across into formal written plans.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received two complaints. The first related to Standard 1 (Suitable Person), Standard 2 (Organisation), Standard 7 (Health), Standard 8 (Food and Drink) and Annex A (Babies). Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit on 29 March 2007 which resulted in two actions relating to Standard 1 and Standard 2. The second complaint related to Standard 2 (Organisation), Standard 4 (Physical Environment), Standard 6 (Safety) and Standard 12 (Working in partnership with parents and carers). An inspector carried out an unannounced visit on 24 May 2007. This resulted in five actions and one recommendation relating to National Standards 2, 6 and 12. These have since been actioned and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure that the kitchen conforms to environmental health and food safety regulations (4:17).

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):

- continue to evolve planning structures further to ensure the uniqueness of each child is not lost through the transference of individual knowledge, this refers to consistent management of assessment profiles and a traceable system for differentiation
- ensure there are effective systems in place to monitor the quality of the learning programme.

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