

Victoria Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY365886
Inspection date	11 July 2008
Inspector	Carol Johnson
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Registered person	DRAXCO Ltd
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?

Victoria Nursery is one of three nurseries run by Draxco Ltd. It was registered in 2007 and operates from a large converted house in the Harborne area of Birmingham. A maximum of 40 children, of which 14 can be under two years old, may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 07.45 to 18.00. The nursery is closed on Bank Holidays, for one week at Christmas and for three staff training days each year. Children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 50 children on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. Most children come from the local area. The nursery has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 16 staff all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. The nursery is a member of the Preschool Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are effectively protected from the spread of infection because they are cared for in a clean and healthy environment. Staff members are good role models and ensure that children follow thorough hygiene procedures. Older children are developing independence with regards to personal care as they are encouraged to be responsible for washing and drying their own hands with minimal help. These children understand why they need to wash their hands, for example, after visiting the toilet or before touching food. Several staff members, including the cook, hold current food hygiene certificates and this is reflected in their good everyday practice with regards to cleaning routines and food storage and preparation.

Children benefit, in the event of illness or a medical emergency, from the well-stocked and easily accessible first aid supplies and the high number of staff who have attended first aid training. A clearly written sickness policy makes sure that parents are aware of the setting's health procedures and know not to send children who are clearly unwell and could pose a potential health risk to others.

Children's dietary needs are well met because they are offered a wide range of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. Menus are thoughtfully devised and special dietary needs are catered for. Portion sizes are generous and food is attractively presented. All staff members are aware of any special dietary requirements and meal times are well organised. Staff sit with children and actively encourage social skills, table manners and discussion around healthy eating. Children are not at risk from dehydration as drinks are offered at meal times and water is easily accessible at all times.

Children are learning about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through both planned and spontaneous play. They enjoy regular fresh air and exercise and children have participated in activities that encourage them to explore the health and nutritional benefits of a range of foods. A range of produce is grown in the nursery garden, including tomatoes, cucumbers and pumpkins and children have developed, through hands-on investigation, an awareness of what plants need to grow. The nursery also has its own allotment that is a short distance away from the setting.

All children in the setting benefit from regular physical play that helps to develop their muscles, co-ordination and confidence. They play out in all weather conditions and there is plenty of space for children to run about and let off steam. Children are able to explore and play in the exciting and stimulating outdoor environment and resources to support children's physical play are plentiful and easily accessible. The well-planned garden enables children to enjoy a variety of play. For example, there are areas for children to dig and ride wheeled toys and there is a large tepee that offers additional indoor play space and protection from the elements. Indoors, children dance and join in with action rhymes and they use tools and equipment that encourage the development of their large and small muscles. For example, they participate in threading activities, play musical instruments and regularly use scissors and writing implements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the provision's warm and welcoming premises. Displays are bright and attractive and include examples of children's work, photographs of staff and children, and general information about the setting. Consequently, children are helped to develop a sense of belonging and parents are provided with visual information about what their children are doing and how the setting operates. Space, both inside and outside, is thoughtfully arranged to provide different areas for rest and play. However, children using the toilet can easily be seen by others as there are no vanity panels in the toilet area and the door to this room is usually left open. Consequently, children's privacy and dignity is potentially compromised. Resources throughout the nursery are plentiful and staff ensure that they are safe and developmentally appropriate for the children in their care. Children's independence is suitably promoted as a selection of toys is stored where it is easily accessible.

Children's safety is effectively considered and a range of written risk assessments alert staff to any potential risks. Daily checks of the premises and equipment are carried out and a wide variety of security and safety precautions are in place. For example, safety gates prevent children's unsupervised access to unsafe areas and entry to the premises is closely monitored. Staff are vigilant about children's safety and talk to children about safe practices. For example, children are reminded not to run indoors or leave toys where they could become damaged or pose a tripping hazard to others.

Children are effectively protected by a staff team who demonstrate a good awareness of child protection issues. They know that their first priority is children's safety and confidently describe a range of possible signs and symptoms of abuse and appropriate recording and reporting procedures. Children are only released into the care of known individuals and are not left unsupervised with persons who have not been thoroughly vetted. Information regarding child protection policies and procedures are easily accessible to both staff and parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities and experiences that promote their all-round development. Some are planned by staff, whilst others are freely selected by the children. Staff regularly observe children to assess their needs and they plan an exciting range of experiences that suit their various abilities and interests. Topics are used throughout the nursery as a focus for children's play and learning and written activity plans are displayed for parents to see.

Children are happy and eager to participate and learn. For example, they explore using all of their senses as they experiment with materials that include paint, cornflour, sand and water. They independently select toys of various textures and experiment with those that make sounds and respond to their actions, for example, 'pop-up' toys and musical instruments. Resources to support children's experiences are plentiful and of good quality. They are suitably organised and stored to encourage children to explore, gain independence and become confident in their surroundings.

Children are treated with kindness and concern by caring staff. They are very settled and are at ease to go to staff for comfort, support and reassurance. Staff talk to children and listen to what they have to say. With younger children they acknowledge their attempts at communication through responding knowingly to their gestures and babbling. Efforts and achievements are

promptly acknowledged and greeted with praise and smiles. Consequently, children are motivated to learn and achieve.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, the stepping stones, and how children learn. This enables them to plan a broad range of experiences across the six areas of learning. Topics are used throughout the nursery as a focus for children's experiences, for example, 'All about me', 'People who help us' and 'Colours'. Activities are flexibly planned around these themes and adapted to suit children's needs and interests.

Staff observe children to find out what they know and can do and regular communication with parents provides staff with additional information about children's needs and interests. However, current systems for planning, observation, evaluation and assessment are still under development and observations and assessments are not used effectively to inform future planning and children's progress records. Consequently, children may not be appropriately challenged or supported.

Staff help children to learn through the use of a range of teaching methods and by using open-ended questions to extend and consolidate their learning. For example, during a group discussion around emotions a staff member invited children to consider what made them happy or sad and why. One child described how his friend made him happy and another said it made him sad when children threw sand. This led to discussions about caring for others and nursery rules and children eagerly contributed to the discussion. Most understood the need to take turns in conversation and to listen when others are talking.

Children are learning to behave appropriately and are starting to understand the effect that their actions have on others. Staff and children have decided on the rules together and good behaviour is acknowledged and encouraged. Children are outgoing, confident and are learning to be independent. For example, they pour their own drinks, use cutlery with confidence and help to clear away after meals.

Children enjoy lots of creative activities and evidence of these are attractively displayed around the setting. These displays help to create an attractive and welcoming environment and shows children that their efforts are valued. Children's creativity is encouraged and developed and an artist was invited into the setting and worked with children to create a painted canvas based on the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. A variety of books are available to children and they look at them both independently and with staff members. Children enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and staff encourage them to join in with familiar texts and to make up rhymes of their own.

Children happily engage in role play. Boys and girls dress up and play with dolls and non-stereotypical play is actively encouraged. Children play both with and alongside each other and act out familiar situations, for example, going shopping and washing their 'babies'. Children count and more able children can count to twenty and beyond. They are able to name a variety of two-dimensional shapes and talk about more and less. However, there are limited resources that encourage children to independently use words and numbers in range of play situations and within everyday routines. Consequently, opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding in this respect is reduced.

Children have daily access to a computer. Children show that they understand simple software and can operate the mouse with confidence and purpose. They enjoy lots of opportunities to learn about the natural world. For example, they have planted and tended various produce and flowers in the garden, hunted for 'minibeasts' and had a visit from the 'animal lady' who brought in a variety of creatures including a pygmy goat, a snake and some land snails. Physical play is given a high priority and all children regularly enjoy fresh air and exercise. They dance with 'ribbon sticks' to a variety of music; they pedal wheeled toys with confidence and demonstrate an awareness of space and the need to consider others when running around. A yoga and dance teacher visit the setting on a weekly basis and they help children to gain control over their bodies and express themselves through movement and music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated as individuals and with equal concern. A keyworker system is used to provide children and parents with a consistent adult with whom they can develop a trusting and supportive relationship and key staff talk to parents and exchange important information. Staff find out about children's personalities, likes and dislikes and home routines and settling-in for new children is flexibly arranged. The provision has suitable systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has had appropriate training and staff work in partnership with parents and other agencies to meet children's individual needs.

Children have access to a general range of toys and resources that offer positive images of diversity and encourage them to gain a sense of belonging and self-esteem. For example, children can choose from a variety of dolls, dressing-up clothes and small world figures. Non-stereotypical play is encouraged and craft activities, discussion and stories are used to help children learn about a range of religious and cultural festivals. Consequently, children are developing an understanding of similarities and differences and are learning about the wider community. Children's spiritual, moral, social, cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well. Older children are beginning to understand how their actions affect others, they show respect and concern for others and are learning to take turns. Staff encourage children to behave because they are good role models and use a range of positive behaviour management methods. For example, staff use distraction, explanation and praise where appropriate. Behaviour management strategies are shared with parents and all staff have received relevant training.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The nursery offers children and parents a welcoming atmosphere, with approachable staff and this helps to foster regular communication. Regular newsletters are produced, policies are readily available and parents receive clear information about their children's care, through feedback at the end of the day and the daily diaries that are completed for younger children. Confidentiality is respected and personal information is securely stored.

The parents and carers of children receiving funding for early education receive some information to help them understand the Foundation Stage curriculum and activity plans are displayed. Parents are invited in to the setting for workshops, social events and fundraising activities. For example, workshops have recently been put on to offer parents information regarding strategies used to promote children's mathematical development and communication, language and literacy. Individual progress records are maintained for children and parents are formally invited

to share them at sessions arranged throughout the year. However, children's learning is potentially restricted because strategies to actively involve parents in their children's learning are not fully explored. Also, shared information about children's learning is insufficient to provide staff and parents with a clear picture of individual children's progress and to effectively plan for their next steps in learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled in a warm and welcoming environment where space is creatively organised to enable them to enjoy a wide range of experiences. Staff are clear with regards to their roles and responsibilities and daily routines and activities are flexibly organised to reflect children's needs and interests. Group sizes are managed effectively to ensure that children have sufficient support and space to play in comfort and safety.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and documentation to ensure the safe and effective management of the setting is generally well maintained. All required paperwork is in place and available for inspection. However, children's departure times are not always recorded and this puts their welfare and safety at potential risk.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. There has recently been a change of registered person and a range of improvements have been made and are planned, however, the impact of these have not been fully realised. The registered person plays an active and hands-on role within the setting and an additional member of staff is employed to help with administrative tasks. Consequently, other staff are able to concentrate on caring and providing for the children. The manager is supernumerary but helps out in the rooms as and when required, for example, to help cover staff breaks.

There are satisfactory systems for monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of the provision and regular staff meetings are used to cascade information and discuss practice issues. An appraisal system has been devised to help identify individual and collective staff training and development needs and the nursery benefits from a well-qualified staff team. Personal and professional development is encouraged and a range of training has been attended and arranged. For example, all staff have recently had training in health and safety and behaviour management. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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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 records show children's hours of attendance
- ensure that the dignity and privacy of children are respected.

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):

- improve systems for planning, observation, evaluation and assessment. This specifically refers to ensuring that children are provided with appropriate challenge and support and ensuring that observations and assessments are used effectively to inform future planning and children's progress records
- increase opportunities for children to use numbers and to read and write for a purpose in a range of play situations and within everyday routines
- develop strategies to actively involve parents in children's learning and review methods for informing them of their child's progress.

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