



Castle Nursery at South Hill

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY305501
Inspection date	18 April 2006
Inspector	Joanne Lindsey Caswell
Setting Address	Castle Nursery, 14 South Hill, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3SY
Telephone number	01483 533 344
E-mail	
Registered person	Castle Daycare and Preschool 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Castle Nursery at South Hill has been registered under its current ownership since 2005. It is one of several nurseries owned and managed by Castle Daycare and Preschool Ltd. The nursery operates from a former Victorian school building in a residential area of Guildford, Surrey. The town centre is close by and within walking distance. Children are cared for in separate age groups. All playrooms have safe access to toilets, hand washing, sleep and nappy change facilities. Children share

access to secure outdoor play areas. A maximum of 39 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00, 51 weeks of the year.

There are currently 46 children, aged from 8 months to 4 years, on roll. This includes 16 children who receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of nine staff work with the children. Of these, five hold recognised early years qualifications. All staff have training in first aid and food hygiene. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn how to keep themselves healthy and the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. They clearly understand they must wash their hands before meals and cookery activities or after using the toilet. Older children access tissues independently, enabling them to wipe their noses and dispose of tissues hygienically, encouraging children to take care of their own health needs.

Staff implement good hygiene practice during nappy changes and care routines. For example, staff wear gloves and aprons when they change children's nappies and clean the mat with anti-bacterial spray between changes. The toys and equipment in the Buttercup room are regularly cleaned and sterilised. All babies' and children's drinks are clearly labelled, ensuring that children do not share cups. These measures help to protect children against cross-infection. All nursery rooms benefit from plenty of natural light and ventilation and all rooms are clean and well-maintained. This helps contribute towards a healthy and hygienic environment for children.

Babies and children take part in regular physical activity that encourages their healthy development. Children of all ages play outside every day, weather permitting. They benefit from fresh air as they play in the nursery garden and enjoy visits to the local park. This enables children to use different equipment and apparatus, which encourages them to move in a variety of ways. For example, children enjoy using the wheeled toys and balancing resources in the garden. They visit the park where they run around freely, encouraging their physical development. Babies enjoy playing in the garden where they use resources enabling them to push and pull toys. They use dolls' buggies, and play with small resources, such as bean bags and balls, which contributes towards their healthy physical development. Non-mobile babies play with toys, which enhance their physical skills. There are resources enabling children to roll, pull themselves up and encourage crawling.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy regular drinks and children in the Bluebell and Sunflower rooms help themselves to drinks and snacks at the snack bar. This enables children to respond to their body's needs when they are thirsty and

hungry. All children enjoy a healthy, well-balanced, nutritious range of meals and snacks and there is good provision in place to meet babies' individual weaning needs. Children clearly enjoy their meals and portion sizes are not restricted. Meal times are regarded as social occasions and children in the Bluebell and Sunflower rooms are encouraged to take an active part in the preparation, serving and clearing away routines. This encourages children to develop positive attitudes towards meal times and helps them develop good eating patterns.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery offers a very bright, secure and welcoming environment for children. The different play rooms enable babies to be cared for safely with appropriate equipment to support their differing care needs. Children are supervised at all times, as all sleep rooms, toilets and nappy change facilities are integrated into the group rooms. Sleeping babies and children are regularly checked and monitored to ensure their safety and welfare.

All areas of the premises are safe for children and appropriate precautions are taken to protect children from hazards. The front door is secure and all electrical sockets are inaccessible to children. The front gates to the nursery are kept securely locked whilst children play outside, preventing children from leaving unsupervised or unauthorised visitors gaining access. Close staff supervision ensures that mobile babies and children negotiate the small steps to the nursery garden safely. Children are kept safe whilst on outings and visits away from the nursery as staff ensure children are supervised closely and higher staffing ratios are implemented.

Children have access to a very good range of safe play materials and resources. These are organised so that children can easily choose things for themselves. Children have ample room to play freely and safely, due to the effective layout of the playrooms.

Children learn about the importance of safety as part of topic work. For example, during a recent topic of Transport, children learn about characters such as Sammy Seatbelt and Handy Hold. This enables children to develop a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, through practical and fun activities.

There are clear procedures in place to ensure that children are familiar with the procedures to follow to keep themselves safe in the event of an emergency. The written evacuation drill is appropriate for most children, although this has not been reviewed to ensure that it meets all children's needs.

Children are protected well against harm and abuse as staff have a very good understanding of child protection issues. Some staff have completed formal training and all staff are familiar with appropriate procedures. This ensures that children's welfare is promoted at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled within the nursery. They enjoy very close, warm and loving relationships with staff and enjoy plenty of cuddles and physical affection. Staff know all the children's individual needs very well. This ensures that all children's care and welfare needs are appropriately met. Staff have a good understanding of children's developmental needs. This enables them to plan appropriately stimulating and challenging types of play and practical learning activities. Staff are very familiar with the Birth to three matters framework and use this effectively to plan activities to monitor and record children's developmental progress. Children enjoy a very good range of play and practical learning opportunities. Babies in the Buttercup group develop their skills in learning and explore their senses as they play with jelly, frothy sand, cornflour and clay. They handle textures and enjoy exploring treasure baskets. They develop their curiosity as they handle sensory bottles and gaze in wonder at the moving objects.

Children in the Bluebell group enjoy a wide range of play. They develop their imagination as they use a very well-resourced role play area. They play with train sets and dolls' houses, enabling them to express their ideas creatively. Children have many opportunities for art and craft activities. They have freedom of choice with activities and experiment freely with paint. This enables children to explore the textures of paint, as they happily paint their hands and delight in making their own prints on paper.

Children in the Bluebell group develop their skills in sharing and co-operation. They wait patiently for their turn during group activities. Gentle staff interaction encourages children to take turns and share in their play.

Babies and children extend their learning away from the nursery as they enjoy a wide range of visits and outings. Recently, babies and children participated in the Maundy Thursday celebrations in Guildford when the queen was visiting the city. This encourages children to develop their understanding of the wider world through activities and outings and enables children to broaden their experiences.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are qualified and experienced early years practitioners who have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is closely monitored and all curriculum plans relate to the stepping stones and areas of learning. All activities have a clear learning intention and children's individual learning targets are clearly identified. Weekly activity plans show a good balance of child-initiated play and adult-directed learning. There is some provision in place for the outside area to be used to extend children's learning and there are plans in place to utilise this further. Children's behaviour is managed very well. Staff encourage a very happy, positive environment and give children plenty of praise and encouragement.

Children are very happy and confident. They have high self-esteem and enjoy close

relationships with the staff and their peers. This enables children to feel secure and settled within the nursery. Children develop good skills in independence as they take care of their own needs. They choose their own activities, pour their own drinks at snack time and help to prepare for meal times. They play very well together and show courtesy and respect for one another. Children develop self-confidence as staff are committed to celebrating children's achievements. The Sunflower of Achievement enables children to share their achievements and be proud of seeing their efforts rewarded. Children display their work freely and enjoy seeing their work on the walls. This enables children to develop a strong sense of belonging in the nursery. Children behave very well and clearly understand acceptable boundaries.

Children's communication skills are very good. They engage in relaxed, fluent conversation with staff and use language effectively to convey their needs. Children's vocabulary is extended well as staff use effective questioning methods. Children see many examples of text and words on display within the nursery. This encourages children to develop an understanding that words and signs carry meaning. For example, children recognise they can access drinks at the snack bar, when they see the 'open' sign. Children have a clear understanding of letters and recognise sounds in their names and in words around them. Children confidently identify their own names. They develop good writing skills as they use a wide range of resources. Some children confidently write their names from memory, enabling them to label their own art and craft work. Children develop their listening skills as they contribute confidently towards group discussion and listen attentively. They play games, such as Chinese Whispers, enabling them to develop skills in conveying messages.

Children see many examples of numbers on display. They experiment with resources, enabling them to develop skills in sorting, weighing, measuring and counting. This enables children to develop their understanding of the mathematical concepts of number, colour, size, shape and weight through practical experiences. Children use numbers freely in their play and recognise numbers on familiar objects, such as telephones. They use appropriate mathematical language to make comparisons between towers made of bricks of different heights and lengths. This encourages children to talk about 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' in a practical format.

Children learn about the community in which they live through practical topic work. They talk enthusiastically about a recent visit to Guildford on Maundy Thursday to see the queen visiting. As part of the topic of Transport, children enjoyed a ride on a bus. Children also regularly visit the library and other features of the town. This enables children to learn about the role of others and develop an understanding of the local area. Children develop their understanding of the wider world as they take the nursery 'Travelling Bear' on their holidays and share in special events. This encourages children to talk about places they have been to.

There are many opportunities for children to explore and investigate. They handle resources, such as telephones, computer keyboards and binoculars and find out how things work. Children also regularly use the computer and understand how to use electronic toys. Children undertake many science experiments. They observe ice melting and use magnifying glasses to study objects.

Children's physical skills are developing well. They use a selection of apparatus,

enabling them to move in a variety of ways to develop muscle control. They run around freely and carefully negotiate obstacles. They develop their co-ordination as they throw and kick balls and crawl through tunnels. Children develop their manipulative skills by pouring their own drinks, serving their lunch, using scissors and completing activities, such as writing and threading. They make their own sandwiches and assist in the preparation of snacks, enabling children to develop their co-ordination and dexterity.

Children have many opportunities to develop their creativity. Their art and craft work adorns the nursery walls and reflects a range of techniques and different media. Children use art and craft resources independently. This enables them to express their own ideas and experiment with a range of textures and materials to make their own drawings and pictures. Children develop their imagination through role play, as they recreate familiar scenarios such as shopping in the role play greengrocers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated equally and are valued as individuals as their personal needs and interests are respected. Staff are vigilant in ensuring babies follow their own individual care routines and all children's personal needs are made known to staff. This ensures that all children are treated fairly and in accordance with their own needs. Children play with resources, which reflect diversity within society and there are positive images of children from a range of backgrounds. This encourages children to develop respect for diversity within the wider world. As a result of this, children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children with specific needs are supported very well. There is a designated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in place, who is familiar with the Special Needs Code of Practice. Staff demonstrate a very positive attitude towards identifying and addressing each child's personal needs. This ensures an inclusive policy and addresses each child's differing needs.

Children behave very well. They undertake a wide range of stimulating activities, enabling them to be busy and occupied and preventing the opportunities for unacceptable behaviour. Staff promote a very fair and positive environment, offering children plenty of praise and positive interaction, creating a very happy atmosphere. Older children clearly understand acceptable behaviour and apologise to one another and manage their own disputes, demonstrating their very well-developed social skills. They co-operate and share in their play and use negotiation to maintain a harmonious and positive environment.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and staff display daily activity plans, enabling parents to share in their children's learning. Parents extend children's learning at home and contribute resources to support topic work. This enables children to see the staff and their parents as equal partners in their learning. Staff make themselves available to parents at all times and organise regular social events, such as coffee mornings. This enables parents to feel more involved in their children's care and learning at nursery

and strengthens the partnership between staff and parents. Staff offer parents a very relaxed environment and regularly exchange all relevant information regarding children's progress and daily achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff team consists of qualified and experienced childcare professionals, who work well together as a dedicated and supportive team. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are fully vetted and cleared to work with children. Staff have access to additional training to ensure their knowledge and skills are regularly updated. The nursery is organised well. This ensures that babies and older children are cared for in designated areas, offering activities appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. Staff deployment is effective to ensure that all required adult to child ratios are adhered to, in accordance with the National Standards. The daily routine is organised well, offering children a balance of adult-led activities and child-initiated play. Regulatory documentation is maintained in full and is stored confidentially.

The leadership and management are good. Staff have access to further training relating to the Foundation Stage curriculum, to ensure their knowledge and skills are regularly updated. The nursery manager supports all staff well and leads a committed, professional team. Staff development is seen as a priority and all staff have access to additional training to enhance the delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum. All staff contribute fully towards curriculum planning, enabling them to feel valued and respected members of the team.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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.

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):

- review the procedures for emergency evacuation to ensure that all children's needs are identified appropriately

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 develop the provision to extend children's learning opportunities in the outside area

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk