



Epsom Downs Children's Centre Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY312652
Inspection date	26 April 2006
Inspector	Joanne Lindsey Caswell
Setting Address	Merland Rise Primary School, St. Leonards Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5RJ
Telephone number	01737 354313
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Registered person	Governors of Merland Rise School Childrens Centre
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

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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?

Epsom Downs Children's Centre Day Nursery has been registered since 2005. The centre is located within Merland Rise Primary School in Epsom, Surrey. The governors of the school have overall responsibility for the centre and a Sure Start Family Centre is also included on the premises. A manager is responsible for the daily management of the nursery, supported by the headteacher of the school. The nursery is situated in a self-contained annexe within the school grounds. Children are

cared for in different age groups, with nappy change, toilet and hand washing facilities easily accessible. A fully enclosed garden provides an outside play area. A maximum of 39 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open for 51 weeks each year, from 07:45 to 18:00. Children from the local area have priority but places are offered across the borough and outside of the borough, if available.

There are currently 47 children, aged from 6 months to 4 years, on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children who have special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of six staff work with the children. Of these, four hold recognised early years qualifications. The staff are supported by the school headteacher and the local authority Sure Start programme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is clean and well-maintained and provides a healthy environment for children. There is plenty of natural light and ventilation and children have regular opportunities to play outside in the fresh air. This contributes towards children's good health. The nursery rooms are clean and hygienic and babies and children play with toys which are regularly cleaned and sterilised. This protects children from germs and infection. Staff protect children against cross-infection through good hygiene and personal care routines. For example, babies are protected during nappy changes as staff wear gloves and aprons and ensure the cleaning mat is cleaned between nappy changes. All surfaces and tables are regularly cleaned with anti-bacterial spray before children sit down for snack and meal times. Babies and children have their own bedding, which is laundered on site, to ensure it is clean and fresh for children's use.

Children are protected against illness as parents are provided with information regarding the incubation periods for infections. This ensures that children do not attend the nursery when they are harbouring infection and prevents the spread of illness.

Babies and children enjoy many activities to develop their physical skills. Non-mobile babies enjoy activities enabling them to roll, sit up and crawl. Mobile babies negotiate the small steps to the low level slide and build their muscle control as they move around freely and use resources for pushing and pulling. Older children enjoy regular outside play enabling them to use the wheeled toys, a climbing frame and balancing resources. They play with small resources, such as bats and balls, encouraging children to kick balls and throw and catch. This encourages children's physical development and increases their co-ordination.

Some provision is in place to meet children's dietary needs. There are arrangements

for school catering staff to provide the children's lunch. However, cooked meals are often changed at short notice. This restricts staff from using the printed menu to enable them to prepare children for the day's cooked lunch. Cooked meals are of a satisfactory standard to meet children's health and nutritional needs. However, as yet, there are no formal systems in place to ensure that catering staff can meet babies weaning needs. Children enjoy healthy snacks, such as fruit and breadsticks which contribute to their good health. Older children learn about the importance of food and nutrition as part of topic work. This enables children to understand the principles of healthy eating.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are secure and there are effective procedures in place for staff to monitor visitors to the nursery. For example, all external doors and gates are kept locked. This prevents children from leaving unsupervised or unauthorised personnel gaining access to the nursery. All areas of the nursery are easily accessible, allowing babies and children to move around freely and safely. There is a designated area for the non-mobile babies to ensure their safety from the older children.

The outside area provides a large space for children to play freely. However, the former sensory garden to the rear of the nursery has not been made safe for children and is not inaccessible. This compromises children's safety whilst playing outside. There are written procedures in place for emergency evacuation, although these are not regularly practised. This restricts children from learning how to keep themselves safe in the event of an emergency and is a breach of regulations.

Children play with a good range of high quality toys and play materials, all of which are stored at low level, enabling children to access their toys freely and safely. All equipment and furniture is of very good quality and is used appropriately to ensure children's safety.

Older children learn the importance of safety. They understand how to protect the younger children from hazards and ensure that they are careful whilst playing near the babies. Children are supervised closely at all times to ensure their safety. There are effective systems in place to ensure sleeping babies and children are regularly checked in the interests of safety.

Children are satisfactorily protected against harm and abuse as most staff have a working knowledge of child protection. Some staff have completed formal training, ensuring they are familiar with the procedures to follow, should they ever have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and children are happy and settled within the nursery. They arrive happily and

are keen to quickly engage in play and activities. Babies have many opportunities to develop their curiosity as they use their senses to explore the environment. A very good range of resources and play materials enables children to explore textures, listen to sounds, watch lights and respond to actions. For example, babies enjoy pressing buttons, turning handles, rolling balls and listening to sounds and music. The Sensory Room is used well to capture children's interests and enables them to develop their cognitive skills. Babies enjoy experimenting with paint and enjoy rubbing their hands through the paint to make marks on paper. They sit enthusiastically for craft activities and explore glue and collage materials.

Older children enjoy musical activities. They sing enthusiastically with staff and request their favourite songs, joining in happily with actions. There are good opportunities for children to enjoy role play. They use a well-resourced role play area and enjoy extending their games with supporting resources such as tea sets, dressing up clothes and dolls.

Staff are qualified and experienced childcare practitioners. They have a sound understanding of how children learn and develop and use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to monitor children's progress. Play and learning opportunities are better planned for the younger children, as staff working with the Foundation Stage children lack confidence in effective curriculum planning.

Staff are attentive to children's care routines. Babies are held closely for bottle feeding. Nappy change routines are in accordance with children's own needs. This ensures that each baby's developmental needs are appropriately addressed.

All children enjoy close interaction from staff. Children and staff play closely together and children clearly enjoy and benefit from, the staff's attention. Children approach staff happily for comfort and support and all children receive plenty of cuddles and physical affection. This ensures that each child feels happy, secure and settled within the nursery.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have an understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, although curriculum plans have some missing elements relating to the six areas of learning. Focus activity sheets demonstrate that staff plan activities with clear learning intentions, although these are not used consistently. This sometimes restricts staff from using plans to build on and extend, all children's learning needs. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is satisfactorily monitored. Staff have not been able to utilise the links with the staff in the school nursery to share their knowledge of the children's individual learning needs.

There are some opportunities for children to develop their independence. For example, they competently put on and take off their own shoes and coats and prepare themselves for going home and outside play. However, further opportunities for children to develop independence within the daily routine are missed. For example, staff pour children's drinks at snack time and children have little input in preparing the table for lunch and serving the food, as this is done by staff. This

restricts children from developing confidence and taking responsibility for their own needs.

Children play very well together and clearly enjoy the company of the other children. They play co-operatively and understand the importance of sharing. They apologise to one another and show well-developed social skills. They wait patiently for lunch to be served and are aware of the younger children's needs. Children behave well and clearly understand acceptable behaviour. This is reinforced by staff who praise children for 'good sitting' and 'good listening'. This enables children to understand boundaries.

Children communicate confidently and enjoy engaging in conversation with their peers and adults. They ask questions and respond positively to staff's open-ended questioning, encouraging them to use language effectively for reasoning and explanation. There are some opportunities for children to develop writing skills. They access mark making resources easily and have opportunities to develop pencil control and letter formation. Children develop their interests in books and stories as they have access to a well-presented, attractive book corner. This enables children to see books easily and provides a comfortable place for children to sit and look at books on an individual or small group basis.

Children learn about numbers through practical activities. For example, they use a camera to make a number line consisting of photographs of themselves in different number groups. Children play with resources such as scales and sand timers, enabling children to develop an understanding of the mathematical concepts of weight and time through practical play experiences. Children use beads to make patterns and follow sequences and develop their understanding of capacity as they play with sand and water. Children have a good understanding of positional language, as they talk at lunchtime, whilst sitting at the table, about children sitting 'next to', 'opposite' and 'in the centre'.

There are good opportunities for children to explore and investigate. They handle natural materials, such as shells, conkers and bark. Plans show that children use magnifying glasses and study objects to make comparisons. They discuss the weather each day and compare seasonal change. Children explore lights and textures as they play with the light table and explore shape and form. They have a good understanding of how things work as they use programmable resources, such as remote control cars, and understand how to turn battery toys on and off. Topics, such as People Who Help Us, enable children to learn about the role of others and the current topic of Food enables children to broaden their experiences away from the nursery, as they visit the local shop. Children learn about the wider world as they look at and taste foods from around the world and explore topics such as Transport.

Children develop their physical skills as they move around the nursery freely and easily, showing good co-ordination. They negotiate obstacles and furniture well and develop their muscle control as they use equipment enabling them to move in a variety of ways. For example, children develop their climbing skills using the climbing frame. They improve their muscle control as they successfully use wheeled toys and move in a variety of ways, such as balancing and crawling. Children develop their dexterity and manipulative skills as they competently use cutlery at lunchtime; they

undertake writing and mark making and enjoy activities such as threading, to improve their hand/eye co-ordination.

Children access art and craft materials freely and easily. They use paints and drawing resources independently and create their own pictures. Children have free access to sand and water, enabling them to explore textures and develop their senses. There are good opportunities for children to develop their imagination. The well-resourced role play area enables children to recreate familiar scenarios. For example, during the topic of Transport, children use the role play area as a travel agents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are very child-orientated, encouraging all children to develop a strong sense of belonging. They see many examples of their photographs on display and their art and craft work is clearly labelled, enabling children to be proud of their achievements and share them with their parents and carers. Children develop high self-esteem within the nursery as they are valued as individuals. Staff ensure they obtain detailed information from parents and carers regarding each child's personal care needs to ensure they meet these appropriately in daily practice. For example, parents provide detailed information on each child's routine needs, incorporating their sleep routines, feeding needs, likes and dislikes, comfort measures and personal care needs. This ensures that staff can address these in the planning of the daily routine. This enables children to feel secure within the nursery as they follow consistent routines between home and nursery.

Children develop positive attitudes towards diversity as they play with resources which reflect a diverse range of backgrounds, cultures and customs. Children learn about the wider world through topic work. For example, they taste foods from around the world. As a result of this, children learn how to respect others and gain an understanding of how other children and their families live. This ensures that their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There is some support in place for children with special needs. The nursery manager is the nominated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Children's individual needs are made known to staff and appropriate support is given, where necessary. This ensures an inclusive policy for all children.

Children behave well and understand acceptable boundaries. Staff offer a stimulating and positive environment, encouraging social skills and good co-operation. Younger children are encouraged to share and take turns, enabling them to recognise right from wrong in a practical context. Staff reward good behaviour and action and interact positively with all babies and children to ensure the opportunities for negative behaviour are minimised. This creates a happy and purposeful atmosphere for children.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff are committed to working closely with parents to support them in the care and development of their

children. There is some information available regarding the nursery's routines and activities implemented as part of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The entrance area to the nursery is bright and welcoming to parents and there are many examples of children's photographs on display. This enables parents to understand the nursery's curriculum and activities and encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning. Staff provide a very welcoming atmosphere and make themselves available at all times for parents to share any concerns. Information is exchanged on a daily basis regarding each child's daily achievements and written information is provided for the babies and younger children. Staff are committed to seeking parents feedback and have introduced a Suggestions Book to enable parents to share any comments or concerns they may have. This contributes towards the partnership staff are committed to forming with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are suitable systems in place to ensure that all staff are cleared to work with children. The staff team consists of qualified and experienced childcare staff, who all have a clear understanding of the National Standards for Full Day Care. This ensures that the nursery is organised satisfactorily to meet appropriate staffing levels and children's care needs. All staff have access to further training, enabling them to increase their knowledge and skills and keep abreast of changing developments in childcare and early years education.

The daily routine is organised well and is focused around the needs of the children. Appropriate time is set aside for child-initiated play, outside activities, mealtimes and rest periods. The nursery rooms are organised well, offering a stimulating, welcoming and child-orientated environment.

Nursery routines and policies are clear and staff are familiar with them. There is a staff induction programme in place, ensuring that all new staff are fully supported and appropriately informed regarding nursery practice.

Regulatory documentation is maintained and is stored securely. A record of children's attendance is in place, although this does not clearly reflect when children have left the provision as there are no systems in place for parents to sign their children in and out of the provision. Documentation is stored confidentially and securely in the nursery office.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The nursery manager leads a very dedicated team of staff, all of whom are committed to the success of the nursery. At present, close links have not yet been made between nursery staff, the family centre staff and school staff. This restricts all staff from working together to enhance the care and learning of all children using the facility. As all staff are currently actively involved in caring for children's needs on a daily basis, the nursery manager has been unable to oversee the planning for the Foundation Stage curriculum. This has restricted staff from working together, in conjunction with school staff, to ensure that all elements of the curriculum are appropriately covered, which has led to weaknesses in the quality of teaching.

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.

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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):

- improve the communication between catering staff and nursery staff to ensure that all cooked meals consistently meet children's dietary requirements
- ensure the sensory garden behind the nursery building is made inaccessible, or is made safe for children's use
- improve children's understanding of the emergency evacuation procedures
- ensure an accurate record of children's attendance is maintained at all times and reflects children's actual times of arrival and departure

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):

- review the format of short term curriculum planning to cover all elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum and ensure staff use these records to indicate children's progress towards the early learning goals

- develop staff's understanding of how to use observations and assessments to inform curriculum planning and target children's individual learning needs
- improve the opportunities throughout the daily routine, for children to develop their own learning as they increase their independence and take on responsibility for their personal needs
- improve the overall leadership and management of the nursery to ensure that staff can utilise links with the school staff and Sure Start Family Centre to enhance the learning and care needs of all children and their families

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