



Little Cherubs

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	120100
Inspection date	23 June 2006
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
Setting Address	60 Station Road, West Byfleet, Surrey, KT14 6DX
Telephone number	01932 348348
E-mail	
Registered person	Little Cherubs Nursery
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Cherubs Day Nursery opened in 2000. It is a privately owned provision. The nursery operates from a converted chapel building in a residential area of West Byfleet, in Surrey and is situated close to the railway station, shops and schools. There is a very small enclosed outside play area and children are taken to the local

park and they visit the canal to feed the ducks. Children attending the setting come from the local area.

The nursery is open each day between 07:00 and 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year and children may attend full or part days. It is registered to care for a maximum of 28 children at any one time and there are currently 52 children from five months to four years on roll. This includes 10 children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties/disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language.

There are eight members of staff who work at the nursery. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two staff members who are currently on further relevant training courses and another is due to start training in September. One member of staff works with children in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery receives support from the local authority. There are two pet rabbits that live in the outside play area.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff implement mostly satisfactory practices to ensure hygiene and prevent cross-infection. Babies and young children have fresh bedding and all children use a separate flannel when washing their faces after eating. Staff wear disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changes and they wipe changing mats with an anti-bacterial spray. Nursery staff are responsible for cleaning and most areas are maintained in a clean state to minimise potential risk to children. However, arrangements for monitoring the cleanliness of some kitchen equipment are not fully effective. Currently, there is no system in place to ensure that people do not wear outdoor shoes in areas where young babies are crawling and playing. This is potentially hazardous, both in terms of safety and in ensuring good levels of hygiene.

Staff take positive steps to ensure children are protected from illness. They inform parents of outbreaks of infection by displaying relevant information and they issue medical alerts. Parents are not, however, asked to inform staff of any immunisations that their children have had.

Older children are independent in their self-care skills and staff provide appropriate support for younger children who are developing these. Children wash their hands before lunch-time but not everyone is encouraged to do this before snack-time to ensure a fully consistent approach and make sure children do not receive mixed messages.

An outside catering company provides lunches and teas, including a separate weaning menu for babies. Children enjoy their lunchtime meal; it smells and looks appetising and is supplied in sufficient quantity to allow children to have a second portion if they wish. Meal times are valued as social occasions. All children over the

age of one eat together. Babies' individual feeding routines are respected and staff are aware of those children who have specific dietary requirements; these are catered for accordingly. Most children are adept at using appropriate cutlery at meal-times, with younger children being supported and encouraged to develop these skills. Snack time foods include a variety of items, including some fruit and biscuits and children may also have breakfast at nursery.

Young children sleep according to their individual need and their parents' wishes. Sleeping babies and toddlers are checked at regular intervals to ensure their safety and well-being. Older children have a period of rest and relaxation after lunch. Babies have sufficient space to move around and practise crawling within their base-room. Staff provide appropriate support to those children who show interest in pulling themselves up and standing. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor area and staff aim to take children out each day. Children explore the equipment and apparatus available. Space outside is limited which does restrict the range of resources on offer to children at the same time. On occasions though, when ratios permit, staff take children out to a local park or to the canal where they can feed the ducks. They do not, however plan for outdoor learning or children's physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are accommodated in a generally safe, welcoming environment. Good attention is given to ensuring the security of the premises. The main entrance remains locked at all times and a buzzer and intercom system is in place, together with closed circuit television for some areas of the provision. Staff control access and parents are made aware of their role in ensuring all children's safety by not allowing anyone to enter the premises with them. Risk of accidental injury is minimised through use of appropriate safety measures, daily safety audits and supervision of children. Risk assessments are carried out. Staff are aware of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire and children regularly practise fire drills to develop their understanding. However, existing fire safety arrangements are not fully effective because staff do not ensure that the attendance register is accurately maintained at all times; this compromises children's safety.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe as staff respond to situations that arise. For example, they explain clearly to children about using the sea-saw and climbing frame in a safe way. Children use a variety of resources that are of a safe, clean condition. Play materials are of good quality and are predominantly appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the children using them. However, babies and toddlers are not provided with chunky crayons or chinks to aid their use and minimise potential dangers. Staff regularly check children's play provision and remove any items that are broken or unsafe.

Children are safeguarded because staff have a suitable knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. Some members of the staff team have attended child protection training and relevant documentation in the form of a policy

and reference materials are readily accessible. A member of staff has designated responsibility for child protection but is unaware that she has been allocated this role. Parents are informed of the setting's responsibility with regard to child protection via its written terms and conditions. There are effective collection procedures in place to ensure children's safety in the event of authorised persons, other than the usual carer, collecting them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children are content and relaxed within a homely atmosphere. Most children enter well and separate easily from their parents. Babies are accommodated in a bright and cheerful environment that is warm and welcoming. They enjoy the closeness of cuddles and their early communication skills are encouraged as staff respond to their gestures and babbling. Children in the toddlers and two-to-threes rooms are secure in their relationships with their carers. Toddlers benefit because staff talk to them in quiet voices, they ask questions and show interest, for instance, as young children point out their new shoes. Children in the two-to-threes room like playing outside. They explore the climbing apparatus and throw balls.

The range of resources and play materials available within the nursery include some interesting items to support children's learning and development; these are shared between the different rooms. Good organisation of resources in the baby room means that babies can see what there is to play with and also reach things easily. This allows them to begin to explore and develop their curiosity. However the quantity and range of items that are easily accessible to children in the toddler and two-to-threes rooms is not extensive and limits their ability to make their own choices about what they do and to become competent learners. There are some toys stored in stacking drawers in the toddler room but children do not seem to be aware of their presence and so, ignore them. There are insufficient accessible items in the two-to-threes room. Staff do rotate resources throughout the day but children are not always interested in what is provided and they then stand around aimlessly as there is nothing else for them to choose from. This is not addressed by providing alternative materials and thus, children's overall enjoyment and achievements are restricted. Children participate in messy play activities, such as painting, although staff do not always present these appropriately. For instance, for a printing activity using sponges, children are provided with pots of paint that are too small for the sponges to fit in. Staff working with under threes have regard for the Birth to three framework of good practice and they plan activities and provide resources to link to the different components of this, and the nursery's monthly theme. Current arrangements for planning do not work in practice though. Staff working with each age group take responsibility for planning a week's activities at a time and these are then rotated between the different age-groups. Not everyone adapts the activities to ensure that they are suitable for the ages and stages of development of the children concerned. As a result, some children are presented with activities that have little benefit or meaning for them. For instance, toddlers are presented with a "worksheet" to colour in, to help them try to understand the concept of big and little.

Nursery Education

The quality of nursery education is inadequate. Children are friendly and interact well with adults and their peers. They have the confidence to express their needs and refer to the member of staff caring for them by name. Children play co-operatively alongside each other and they offer advice to one another, for example when they are using the computer. They take turns and their behaviour is generally good. Children chat freely, for instance about things that have happened at home and where they are going on holiday. Staff do not however, extend children's vocabulary during conversation. Children recognise their written names and are encouraged to put their name cards away when they have had snack but do not use their name cards in any other way. They have easy access to pens, pencils and paper within their base-room but do not develop their writing skills during their play because they receive no encouragement to do this. Some children independently initiate discussions about letters and letter sounds but these are not developed further and it is not evident that this is planned for. Children listen intently to stories and remain engrossed. They recognise written numerals and they count with ease. They independently explain that the notices displayed by the snack table mean that they can only help themselves to one snack and that only two children can sit down at the same time. Their mathematical language and thinking is not however sufficiently well-supported or encouraged due to a lack of adult input. There is a clearly identified mathematics area within the base-room and the nursery has an interesting range of resources to support mathematical learning but these are not used to good effect. Children enjoy using the computer and, in discussion, most indicate that this is their favourite activity. They successfully and competently complete a range of programs. Children move around carefully and confidently indoors and outside, with awareness of space and others. They safely use the climbing frame and slide and practise and develop their skills as they play with bats and balls. Children develop control and co-ordination. For instance, they independently pour out their own drinks and carefully carry their plates of food over to the table at lunchtime. Children show enthusiasm for activities they enjoy. For instance, they eagerly take their socks and shoes off in anticipation of exploring the balance beams. They are encouraged to set these up by themselves and they enjoy doing this. Children carefully move along the beams, displaying good levels of balance. Those children who are less confident are provided with support to enable them to achieve. However, when children express a wish to turn the balance beams into a crane, they receive no encouragement or support. Due to space constraints within the base-room, there is no permanent role-play area. Resources to encourage children's imaginative play are set out on tables as part of the daily plan on some occasions. Role-play is poorly planned though and uninspired. It does not capture children's attention or stimulate their imagination. Consequently, children show little interest. They have access to a variety of resources within the messy play area and some children enjoy painting. They talk about the colours they are using and comment on the new ones they create as they mix paints together.

The quality of teaching and children's learning is inadequate. The room is not always ready for children to explore and they have to wait whilst activities are set up. Children are often left to their own devices with little or no adult input to support or encourage their learning. As a result, children do not make sufficient progress

towards the early learning goals. Curriculum planning is in place and it is apparent from some planning documents what the learning objective of focussed activities is. However, this is not put into practice and some activities are not delivered well. For instance, an activity designed to encourage children's exploratory impulses by looking closely at objects through a variety of different viewers, such as telescopes and magnifying glasses fails, because children are not provided with an interesting range of objects to look at to encourage their curiosity in the first instance and they receive no adult support. Consequently, children are not interested and they ignore the activity. Some observations of children's progress are undertaken although these are not done on a regular basis. It is not clear from children's records what their starting points are and information gained from assessment is not used to plan the next steps in children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff treat children with kindness which helps them to feel increasingly confident and at ease. Young children's emotional needs are met because staff show care and concern for them. For example, staff are ready with a cuddle and a reassuring word for those children who are a little reluctant to say goodbye when they arrive in the morning. Children have their own special place to keep their belongings which helps them feel self-assured. With encouragement, even younger children are aware of where to find their drawer. For instance, some children fetch a nappy or go to find their sunhat before going outside. Children have access to some resources that reflect positive images to help them gain awareness of the wider world in which we live although these are not extensive and readily available at all times. Children with additional needs receive appropriate support. There is a recently appointed Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in place who is developing knowledge and understanding of her role. Children have opportunities to mix with others within the nursery. For instance, all children, except the youngest babies, come together for a singing session before lunch each day. On occasions, when numbers are low, babies and toddlers spend time together. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is generally good. They respond well to staff's use of praise and encouragement which supports their developing self-esteem. Children mostly play well together; they are learning to share and take turns.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff are welcoming to parents which helps children to feel at ease within the nursery environment. Parents receive information about the provision, including the Foundation Stage curriculum via the prospectus although currently, this does not contain anything about the Birth to three framework of good practice. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of settling-in visits when their children first start. Babies benefit because parents are asked to provide detailed information about their routines, which ensures that they receive care consistent with their home routine. There is a daily informal exchange of information which is supplemented by a newly introduced written communication diary for all children attending the setting. Information about the theme and colour of

the month is displayed in the entrance hall and plans are available within each room. There are opportunities for parents to meet with their child's keyworker to discuss their development and view their progress records, although these are not up to date in all instances. There is no formal system in place to enable parents to contribute to children's assessment records and they are not provided with ideas for supporting children's learning at home. Parents find staff friendly and approachable.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Most required documentation is in place although some essential records, principally the attendance register is not accurately maintained. This is a breach of regulations. The nursery's operational plan clearly states that parents signing their children in and out will suffice as the attendance register in the baby and toddler units. Staff rely on parents doing this. They do not check to ensure that it is done and that there is an accurate record of when children are present. Sampling of registers show that on some days it would appear that there have been no children present, because children were not signed in. Parents do not always sign their children out and it is not clear from room registers which staff are working with children and when. At the time of inspection, one register did not reflect the number of children actually present within the room. There is an inadequate understanding of the requirement to keep an accurate record of children's attendance and of the potential consequences of not doing this, for children's safety and welfare.

There is a broad range of policies and procedures in place that relate to different aspects of the provision. However, these have not been updated to ensure accuracy, for example with regard to staff working within the nursery and their roles and responsibilities. This means that parents and new staff joining the setting are misinformed about some aspects of the provision. The nursery's complaints policy has not yet been updated to include the recent changes to the National Standards.

Leadership and management are inadequate. There are procedures in place to ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and cleared to work with children. However, systems for monitoring and assessing planning and its implementation, the quality of teaching and the progress of children are not sufficiently robust to ensure that the needs of children are met.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous Children Act inspection the nursery was asked to improve some aspects of documentation and to ensure that staff are aware of amendments made to the lost child policy. All visitors to the nursery are required to sign the visitors book to provide an accurate record of all persons on the premises. Staff have been made aware of the updated lost child policy. The measures taken contribute in positive ways to the safety of children within the setting.

Two key issues were identified for attention at the last Education inspection. These required the nursery to improve the organisation of time and resources to provide children with increased opportunities to develop their independence, writing for a variety of purposes, calculation and creative skills using a wide range of materials and tools and to develop daily planning records, to clearly show the learning objectives of children. Insufficient progress has been made overall in addressing these issues. The base-room for three-to-five year olds has been re-organised to include an art corner. This is resourced with trays of materials and tools that children can easily reach themselves, for instance scissors and glue. They have to wait though for staff to provide paints and they only have small sheets of paper. Children do not write for a variety of purposes and they are not encouraged to develop their calculation skills. They are developing some independence although occasions when they could build further on this are not fully exploited.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs (toddlers and two-to-three year olds). Improve the range of play materials that children can independently access themselves
- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations and ensure that the attendance register is properly and accurately

maintained on a day to day basis to show which children are present on the premises. Keep a record of children's times of arrival and departure

- develop and implement an effective monitoring system to review existing practice, to identify strengths and areas for improvement within the nursery.

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- develop staff understanding of the early learning goals and their role in supporting children's learning across all areas of the curriculum. Improve systems to monitor children's achievements and progress and use the information gained to plan for the next steps in their learning
- devise and implement a system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and children's learning within the Foundation Stage to ensure children's needs are met.

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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