



# The Secret Garden Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY307211
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 June 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Beth Kingsland
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Secret Garden Day Nursery, Chaucer College, Spring Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1SW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 479 696
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Asquith Court Nurseries Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

The Secret Garden Day Nursery is one of 104 nurseries run by Asquith Court Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2005 and operates from eight rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated on school premises on the outskirts of Canterbury, Kent. A maximum of 143 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is

open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 227 children under five years on roll. Of these, 78 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 45 members of staff. Of these, 25 hold appropriate early years qualifications and 5 are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is inadequate.

Children are provided with a balanced and healthy diet, which is prepared on the premises and have free access to regular drinks. Although the food is balanced and nutritious, nursery routines do not ensure that the provided food is free from germs. For example, the babies food is re-heated and staff 'blow' on the food to cool it down. Staff have not taken appropriate steps to ensure that children with allergies are fully protected. For example, snack times are unorganised and children are not sufficiently supported. As a result, children can freely access all the provided snacks unnoticed. Details of allergies are recorded on children's admission forms, and displayed throughout the nursery. However, there are no procedures to ensure that all the staff are fully informed. Details of allergies and preferences is not regularly updated and does not include information about relating symptoms. As a result, in the event of a child having an allergic reaction, some staff are not sufficiently able to recognise the symptoms and act promptly to ensure children are safe and well.

Children are not effectively made aware of the importance of their own personal hygiene. They are not introduced to procedures to allow them to learn about the spread of infectious diseases, for example, they are not consistently encouraged to wash their hands before meal times and after using the toilet. Although staff afford children their privacy and dignity when changing their nappies, facilities are not appropriate to ensure children are protected from cross contamination. For example, changing mats are torn with exposed foam matting. Procedures for ensuring that all areas of the nursery and available equipment is clean and well-presented have not been implemented. Therefore children use equipment that is dirty and in a poor state of repair, for example, role-play equipment.

Older children have access to outside play facilities and during the inspection played happily and confidently. However, use of the garden area is generally limited to the warmer months; as a result during inclement weather children have limited access to fresh air and vigorous physical play. Opportunities for younger children to experience outside play activities are limited. Although an area is available, it has not been adapted to accommodate younger children and insufficient activities are planned to allow children to benefit from fresh air. The nursery fails to ensure that room

temperatures are effectively maintained. For example, staff are unable to maintain the air conditioning units within the pre-school at appropriate temperatures, as a result, both children and staff complain of being too hot.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is inadequate.

Procedures to ensure the children's safety with regard to their arrival and departure are implemented well. Clear systems have been developed to ensure that children are only collected by authorised adults and entrances and exits are kept secure at all times. The children are generally housed within rooms according to their age and are given free and easy access to all available accommodation and equipment. They are given some direction with regard to their own safety within the nursery, for example, to walk carefully with scissors. However, due to poor organisation and management of equipment, children's safety cannot be assured. For example, within the pre-school room they receive little guidance from staff to put equipment away, resulting in children tripping and falling over equipment covering the floor.

A new manager has recently been appointed who has conducted a risk-assessment of the premises, highlighting areas for development; however, many of the issues have not been addressed. Fire-drills are not conducted effectively to ensure that children are familiar and aware of the procedures. Consequently, in the event of an emergency, the premises may not be evacuated effectively and promptly.

Children's safety in relation to child protection issues is insufficiently protected. There is a nominated member of staff who takes lead responsibility for child protection. However, this member of staff is currently on leave and no procedures have been put into place to cover her role. Although procedures have been developed, information has not been shared with staff, resulting in them being unaware of what would happen in the event of an allegation being made against them. Staff have a limited knowledge of child protection issues and are unaware of their own responsibilities.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is inadequate.

Babies and children are cared for in rooms according to their age. They are aware of their daily routine. Children under 15 months are housed within two rooms and supported by sufficient staff. Children know the staff well, and adults provide some opportunities to encourage children. However, there are inconsistencies in the caring of children within the two rooms, as a result, on occasions, babies and toddlers are left without support and become easily upset.

Children from fifteen months to two years are accommodated in two rooms. Opportunities for these children to select from a range of equipment that allows for discovery and exploration are limited. Staff fail to provide a range of activities to stimulate and encourage the children, with many staff choosing to remain seated in preference to caring for children. This results in children walking aimlessly with staff

failing to ensure the toddlers are provided with a broad and balanced range of resources that arouse their curiosity and build on their existing skills.

Children have access to a limited choice of equipment. As a result, children do not experience a balanced range of activities that allow them to explore, express their own ideas, discover how things happen and respond using their imaginations and thoughts. Activities are not appropriate to children's stages of development, for example, children aged 18 months old are provided with a small range of thin crayons and small sheets of paper.

Although some staff have attended training for the Birth to three matters framework, this knowledge has not been put into practice. Staff have a limited knowledge of early childhood development. Although staff have begun to undertake assessments and observations there are no systems in place to ensure developmental records are updated regularly. Consequently, staff are not yet able to identify and monitor children's development and plan for their next steps in learning.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate.

Staff display a poor knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, which has a direct impact on children's development. Staff fail to plan and provide an appropriate range of purposeful and meaningful activities that allow children to build upon what they already know. Although staff have begun to make assessments of children's development, staff fail to make effective use of their observations. In addition, the current system of planning, including that for outdoor play, does not ensure the curriculum covers the breadth of the Foundation Stage. Consequently, children are not consistently afforded regular opportunities to participate in activities covering all areas of learning. As a result, activities are not effectively planned to meet the differing needs of individual children, with activities provided with the same learning objectives and outcomes for all.

Children are aware of their environment and beginning to develop relationships together. Children appear confident and are beginning to select from equipment made available to them. Children receive opportunities to develop personal independence as part of their daily routine. For example, at meal times children pour their own drinks or serve themselves their choice of food. However, children do not experience activities that allow them to use their initiative and take control of their own learning. Children are not encouraged to work together; as a result many children work independently and are not effectively guided towards turn taking, choosing instead to keep toys to themselves. Children are beginning to communicate their ideas; however, staff do not actively question children throughout the activities they complete. As a result, activities lack challenge and children soon lose interest. Children listen attentively to stories read to them by staff, actively joining in with the story and discussing the pictures they see. Children are provided with a small range of books to select from. However, they are poorly displayed resulting in children not using, respecting and enjoying books. Children are provided with opportunities to take part in role-play. However, lack of planning and meaningful equipment results in children not experiencing purposeful play that extends their language, explores their

feelings and develops relationships.

The programme for mathematics is given insufficient focus. Children are encouraged to count to ten and beyond. However, opportunities for children to solve simple mathematical problems are not incorporated into the daily programme. As a result, there are insufficient opportunities for children to identify numbers, recreate simple patterns and use practical problem solving as part of free-play. Opportunities for children to learn about the local and wider world are limited. Children do not work with a wide range of materials or substances that allow them to explore, investigate, observe and re-visit. Staff fail to provide appropriate questioning techniques that allow children to be naturally curious or be enthusiastic about the activities they experience. Children's fine motor skills are developed through experiences, such as pegs and boards and pouring activities. Children have access to outside play; however, due to the management of the outdoor play area, opportunities are restricted to warmer months. Staff do not plan for physical development, resulting in children's development not effectively extended or developed. Children's creativity is stifled. Staff do not create a stimulating environment in which children can use all their senses. Activities are not planned to allow children to use their imagination in music, dance or song.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is inadequate.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Children are warmly welcomed into the nursery. They generally behave well and staff use consistent approaches to managing their behaviour. Activities are provided to allow children to talk openly about their home and family life. However, opportunities for them to learn about the views, feelings and needs of others from the wider world are not effectively supported. There is a limited range of equipment for children to develop a positive attitude to and increase their awareness of diversity.

The lack of suitable equipment and the poor organisation and planning of the nursery, restricts children's free and equal access. As a result staff generally select equipment for the children before they are able to make independent choice.

Children with special needs are supported throughout the session and the nursery works in partnership with outside agencies. They receive one-to-one guidance and their needs are assessed using comprehensive monitoring records, which are used to provide separate activities to meet individual needs. However, the daily planning of activities are not adapted to incorporate additional needs. Children who speak English as an additional language receive insufficient support to allow them to develop and extend their existing language and develop spoken English.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are welcomed into the nursery and encouraged to stay and settle their children. This contributes effectively and leads to an easy transition that benefits children's development. Parents are informed of children's development through daily exchanges of information and feel able to contact parents if they have a concern about children's attainment. They

receive some information about the activities children complete, however, the information received, does not link to the Foundation Stage.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is inadequate.

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

The organisation of the nursery is not effective, resulting in activities and opportunities not being appropriate to meet children's individual needs. Routines for babies and younger children are not implemented fully, for example, meal times and rest times are organised around the nursery routine, resulting in mass sleep times and meal times. In addition, some staff are expected to cover in different rooms where they are not fully informed of the children's individual needs and the poor organisation of some activities, leaves children unsupported. As a result, on occasions, children lose interest, become restless and under-stimulated.

The management of the setting fails to act as a good role-model to motivate and encourage staff, resulting in low morale and confusion as to their role within the setting. A new manager has recently been appointed and has introduced new procedures. Although she has identified many weaknesses within the nursery, as yet these have not been implemented. There has been no systematic or rigorous method for monitoring the quality of the nursery education provision and evaluating its impact.

Staff generally work closely as a team and know each other well. However, a limited number of staff have sufficient knowledge of nursery education. As a result, children do not receive a balanced and broad range of activities that motivate and stimulate their natural curiosity. Although the nursery have produced policies and procedures these are not regularly shared with staff. As a result staff are not able to fully implement policies and procedures. Although all mandatory documentation and consent forms are in place, there are weaknesses within the completion of children's attendance records.

The leadership and management of the nursery is inadequate. Systems for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating practice throughout the nursery are not effective to ensure that children receive a suitable range of activities that support their progress in the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff knowledge of the curriculum is not consistent; therefore they are unable to support children within the provided activities to help them progress on to their next steps in learning. Although a new assessment system has been introduced these have not been effectively implemented. As a result, assessments of children are not effective and are not used to inform the planning of activities. Activities are not adapted to meet the differing needs and abilities of all children.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration Ofsted has received one complaint. The concerns raised related to National standard 11 - Behaviour in that staff members allegedly captured images of children attending the nursery on their mobile telephones. The provider was asked to investigate and report back to Ofsted within 10 working days on how the concerns were addressed. A full internal investigation was conducted and appropriate steps were taken to ensure members of staff involved in the incident were reprimanded. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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:

- improve the organisation of staffing to ensure babies and children receive consistent care that is conducive to their individual needs
- ensure the premises are suitably organised for their purpose. Develop systems to ensure children have full and equal access to well-organised facilities that are maintained appropriately, including the temperature of the individual rooms
- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of issues relating to the care and well-being of young children, taking account of individual routines, dietary needs and the suitability of sleep areas, ensuring they are safe and clean to enable babies and children to sleep comfortably, in line with up to date recommendations for sleeping babies
- ensure babies and children are provided with a balanced range of activities that are appropriate to their ages and stages of development (this also applies to nursery education)



- ensure that sufficient furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose, well-maintained and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment
- ensure all staff are aware of child protection procedures, including arrangement to safeguard children from abuse or neglect and the procedures to be followed in the event of allegations of abuse or neglect
- ensure high standards of hygiene are maintained at all times and positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection
- improve systems for monitoring the temperature of babies food to ensure it is hygienic and make sure that details of symptoms associated to allergies are in place, easily accessible and adhered to

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 the leadership and management of the nursery. Introduce appropriate systems to monitor the quality of teaching to ensure all staff implement a consistent approach to children's learning
- increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum Guidance of the Foundation Stage to improve the quality of teaching and children's learning
- make effective use of assessment to inform the planning of activities to ensure all children, including those with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language, make consistent progress within all areas of learning

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)