

Chiswell Pre School & Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123640
Inspection date	27 November 2006
Inspector	Maura Pigram
Setting Address	Watford Road, Chiswell Green, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL2 3HG
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Registered person	Barbara Sullivan
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Chiswell Pre School School is privately owned and opened in 1980. It operates from the United Reformed Church in Chiswell Green. It has the use two rooms. It serves the local community. A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open term time only. It is open on Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 12.00. On Monday and Wednesday it is open from 09.00 to 15.00.

There are currently 86 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 10 members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from qualified teachers and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The nursery has recently gained the Herts Quality Standards award, this is a quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and well-maintained environment. Staff follow positive hygiene procedures to prevent the spread of infection, such as carefully changing children's nappies and ensuring these are disposed of safely. Measures such as using tissues and wiping surfaces with anti-bacterial wipes ensure children are protected against cross-infection. Children are made aware of the importance of good personal hygiene through the organised routines, for example, washing their hands prior to snack time. Sufficient tissues, soap and paper towels are all easily accessible to children who confidently use and dispose of tissues correctly. Children are well nourished and have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating because the staff sit with the children during snack time. Here, they discuss the fruit and the benefits of the range of food they are eating.

Procedures are in place to assist staff to care for children should they require medical attention. All required documentation, including written parental consents and contact details, are in place. Consequently, staff are able to act quickly if children become ill or if there is a medical emergency. All of the staff hold current first aid certificates. There are well stocked first aid kits in each play-room and these are routinely checked to ensure the contents are suitable for use. This means that children's health, if they have an accident, is effectively protected.

Children physical skills are well-promoted. Everyday they use the outdoor area. They enjoy using large outdoor equipment such as bikes and scooters. They ride these with confidence, moving imaginatively and with control. They love taking part in activities such as parachute play and dancing with ribbons to Caribbean music. Here, they delight in the fun music time, swirling their ribbons and freely express their feelings. Children use scissors, cutters, glue-spreaders with ease. This means that children can develop their hand-eye co-ordination and fine manipulative skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure environment. Adults are very safety conscious and complete daily risk assessments to ensure the premises and outdoor area are suitable and safe for the children to use. There is a high ratio of adults to children present and they have a sound understanding of security. Busy periods such as collection time is managed safely and consistently. This ensures that children can not leave the premises unsupervised and there is no authorised access to children.

The children actively contribute in developing an awareness of their own safety. Younger children learn to hold onto the 'special rope' when they are walking to and from the outdoor area. All children take part in emergency evacuations, discuss using equipment with care and have regular visitors such as road safety officers. As a result, children learn how to keep themselves safe through fun activities. Children are encouraged to tidy away toys during the specified 'tidy-up-time' and are rewarded with positive praise. They are able to practise their climbing, balancing and pedalling skills both indoors and outdoors because the areas have been made safe.

Children's welfare is promoted by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection issues. Relevant training is completed and there is a designated member of staff responsible for child protection. There is a detailed policy in place which has been up-dated recently to incorporate the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. This ensures that any concerns are dealt with promptly, appropriately and sensitively.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a child-friendly environment. Children enter enthusiastically and settle easily. The first part of the sessions have been effectively planned to facilitate children's independent learning as resources are stored easily within their reach. During this free play time the children are extremely busy and engrossed in their play. However, the organisation of the routine during tidy-up-time and snack time disrupts their play and they spend a long time sitting at tables waiting for the activities to re-commence. New and younger children are well supported by the close interaction of the staff. Children have good relationships with the caring staff and delight in their interaction during the free play sessions. They have started to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework in all planning.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The children are progressing well, supported by staff who have a competent understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children develop. Systematic planning covers all six areas of learning. Children are taught by experienced key staff who know the children well. There are purposeful procedures in place to ensure children's starting points are known. This means that they make good progress towards the early learning goals. However, current planning and assessment is not sufficiently linked to the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage to match children's progress and guide planning. Children are able to extend their knowledge because the staff make appropriate adaptations to activities. Although, no records are kept of the changes. This means that individual children's progress is not always fully monitored.

Children arrive happy, quickly settle and engage in activities. They are aware of boundaries and demonstrate high levels of good behaviour. Children's independence is generally fostered. Children, for example, are fully engrossed in their play during the free play sessions. Here they are encouraged to choose toys to play with, use their initiative and judgement. They are able to concentrate for long periods of time on self-chosen tasks. In particular they love exploring the home area which is regularly changed to enhance the children's learning and to maintain their interest. A group of children delighted in playing in the 'hospital'. They happily take turns in the various roles, 'writing' notes and prescriptions to make the patients feel better. Their language and understanding is developed because the staff skilfully interacts with them during their play. Much laughter is generated through the role play as the children 'give injections' and 'medicine' to their patient who is a member of staff. Their senses are also developed through the routine play such as exploring with sand, paint, play-dough and junk modelling. Children's creativity is valued as staff provide a wide range of opportunities for children to develop their skills imaginatively. They love taking part in music sessions where they dance and move with rhythm. As a result, children learn to respond, explore, express and communicate their ideas.

The children listen with enjoyment to stories, songs and rhymes. They are able to concentrate well during story time as staff make these whole group times fun and interesting. For example, the use of a soft toy engages the children's attention and the fun interaction by the staff enliven these sessions. Children can self-select books and use books for pleasure. They are

learning to recognise letters, sounds and words through the effective use of the weekly themes. They use name cards throughout the day to help them recognise their own name and that print carries meaning. Children are given many opportunities to develop early writing skills. They eagerly use a wide range of resources such as clip boards and sand trays so that they can mark make or practice their writing skills. For example, children playing in the 'hairstylists' are provided with the tools to 'make appointments'. All children are encouraged to take part in the daily outdoor session. Here, the activities tend to be adult led with the children enjoying playing with the parachute, balancing on beams or riding wheeled toys. They are able to move with control and co-ordination. They use a wide range of small tools such as pens, pencils, paint brushes and scissors with confidence.

Children routinely use numbers in their play, their understanding of mathematical language is effectively promoted because the staff use relevant language. For example, children enjoy taking part in interactive number rhymes and games. As a result of these games, they develop their self-esteem and learn to use calculation language. Some children can confidently count to ten and beyond. They are encouraged to develop their mathematical thinking and use comparative language, such as bigger or smaller, to describe construction made from bricks. Children use programmable toys to help them investigate technology and have access to interactive activities such as 'leap frog' and remote control toys. Children take part in the meaningful celebration of festivals and enjoy having visitors to the nursery such as the 'reptile man' and parents who share their experiences with them. As a result of this, they develop a curiosity about the world around them. They recently investigated how plants grow by planting bulbs in tubs in the outdoor area. Consequently, children are learning in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued and included in all aspects of the provision. They are able to participate in all activities because staff are dedicated to inclusion. A number of staff have completed relevant training and are enthusiastic about implementing their knowledge. This ensures children with special educational needs are extremely well supported. There is a Special Needs Co-ordinator in each base room, they work closely together and with parents ensuring that every step is taken to ensure that each child is highly regarded. There are purposeful links with support agencies such as health visitors and speech therapists who regularly visit. Consequently, children with special educational needs benefit fully and are able to flourish from their attendance at this setting. All children have a main key worker whose purpose is to ensure that the child is happy and reaches their individual potential. This is successfully achieved as staff use their observations, experience and close communications to support children's personal development. Praise, encouragement and acknowledgement of efforts is consistently used. As a result, children develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem.

Children behave very well, they are encouraged from an early age to be kind and caring to each other. All staff are polite and consistent. Children follow their example. The introduction of a 'special helper' in the form of a soft toy help younger children develop their ability to be attentive during activities. During this time the children are memorised, so are able to concentrate on the activity for a long period of time with minimal disruptions. Any slight disagreements are calmly managed and positive strategies are used to help children take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children's art work is attractively displayed and the rigorous use of children's individual name cards at break times ensure the children develop a secure sense of belonging.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are helped to develop consideration for others and a positive attitude by taking part in the routine prayer of the day. Prior to snack time, children join in with a relevant words of thanks for the food they are about to enjoy. Children have extensive opportunities to gain an understanding of the wider community. Parent's and carers are invited into the provision to share their personal experiences or festivals celebrated within their own family. Many festivals are celebrated, with parents and visitors making the occasion interesting and vibrant. Recently, the children enjoyed experiencing Chinese writing and shared in the celebrations of a Chinese children's festival. Here, relevant items were shown to the children such as clothes and food eaten on this particular day. As a result, the children learn about diversity and the world in a fun, stimulating and interactive manner.

Parents are welcome into the provision at any time and several speak highly of the dedicated staff. They receive valuable information about the pre-school and the nursery which informs them about the services it has to offer. In addition, a display table showing the topics of the week and the planning for each age group is set up in the foyer area. As a result of this, there is continuation of care between all parties and a valuable partnership is fostered. There is a system in place to record any complaints which complies with the requirements of the National Standards. This means that parents are aware of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns regarding the welfare of their children.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good.

Information about the nursery education is provided for parents through the registration system when all details about the Foundation Stage is explained to parents. Newsletters and notice boards are well used. Weekly plans, for example, are on display in the foyer for parents to read. Laminated information on various aspects of play are also available for the parents. This ensures parents know the benefits of different types of play and are able to be involved in their child's learning. In addition, parents have an opportunity to exchange information about their children on a daily basis. Formal consultation meetings are offered so that parents are fully informed about their children's achievements. Each child has a 'progression book' which parents receive when their child leaves the provision.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for within welcoming and warm rooms that have been generally planned to enable them to initiate their own learning. They achieve this by being able to freely access all resources during their free-play sessions. Staff are consistent, each child has a key worker who ensures they are valued and well supported. The staff communicate closely with each other, exchanging information on the children's individual needs. As a result of this, children's learning is successfully promoted. Staff ensure all training taken on board such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework is evaluated and discussed. Consequently, ideas are shared to enhance the children's enjoyment at the setting. Policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Effective vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for safely.

The leadership and management of funded children is good.

The experienced manager has a clear vision for the pre-school and is a good role model. She is proactive, networking with other local pre-schools and works closely with the Pre-School

Learning Alliance to ensure that good practice is shared. She has developed an effective working partnership within the local community to enhance the children's learning experience. Recently, they worked in partnership to fund raise for a secure outdoor play area. The long-term staff are highly valued, they are committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters. Continuous development is given a high priority and those undertaking any training are well supported. Strong links with local schools and qualified teachers are established to ensure children make good progression through the stepping stones. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure that room temperatures are monitored and that children are supported in creating their own individual art and craft ideas. She also agreed to up-date the complaints and lost child policies.

There is now a system in place for monitoring the temperatures of the rooms. This ensures children are comfortable at all times. Children are now provided with time and resources so that they can make their own individual art work. As a result, children are able to make decisions about their work and take pride in their individual achievements. The policies have been amended to include all the necessary information. Consequently, children's welfare and safety is effectively promoted.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the 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 organisation of the routine so that resources are readily available for the children.

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):

- ensure that assessment and planning show reference to the Foundation Stage stepping stones
- develop plans so that they show adaptations for children.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk