



Joint Colleges Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221578
Inspection date	19 October 2006
Inspector	Clare Elizabeth Pook
Setting Address	6B Chaucer Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB2 2EB
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Registered person	The Management committee
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Joint Colleges Nursery opened at its present location in 1987 and is a registered charity managed by a committee of parents. The nursery is situated in a quiet road close to Cambridge city centre and occupies a purpose built building which includes an enclosed garden and play area.

A maximum of 57 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery open each weekday from 08:30 to 17:30 all year round. During the summer holidays the nursery also offers a holiday play scheme for older children at another location.

There are currently 50 children aged from birth to five years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for early education.

The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 18 members of staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are being cared for in a clean environment where positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection by staff and children. Children wash their hands independently before meals and after toileting, however not all children understand why they need to do this. Individual flannels are provided for children to wash their faces after meals in some areas of the nursery, other less effective methods are used in other areas, which does not encourage children to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. Good arrangements are in place if children are ill. Staff are trained in administering first aid and have appropriate permissions and records in place regarding the administration of medication to children. They keep records of all accidents in the setting and inform parents.

Children are well nourished and their dietary needs are catered for, promoting growth and development. A chef is employed who prepares and cooks healthy and nutritious meals ensuring all dietary needs are catered for. A selection of fresh fruit and vegetables are provided each day at meal times and snacks to help children receive a balanced diet. Children are able to access fresh drinking water independently throughout the day when they are thirsty. Staff make up babies bottles each day and the chef prepares cooked fruit and vegetables to be pureed for weaning babies. Staff and children sit together for meals. Serving dishes are placed on the individual tables for children to help themselves. Appropriate crockery and cutlery is usually provided, however there are some inconsistencies throughout the nursery and sometimes food is served directly onto tables rather than plates at tea time.

Children enjoy physical exercise and are developing positive attitudes. Babies have space to crawl and move about. Staff encourage babies to walk by holding their hands and verbally encouraging them. The babies respond by smiling. All children have good access to outdoor play. The babies are appropriately dressed so they can participate in outdoor activities. A wide range of activities and experiences are provided for children outside covering the six areas of learning. However planning does not show how large motor skills, ways of travelling and the effects of exercise on the body are included. During outdoor play children enjoy pedalling the scooters, drawing around their hands, searching for worms and spiders in the soil or quietly looking at books. Children handle small equipment with good control. They use nails to hammer, scissors to cut, hole punches and staplers at the graphics table and use a range of different mark making tools which all help to develop their physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure premises, which is welcoming for children and parents. The rooms are warm and welcoming and brightly decorated with children's art work and photos and posters. Equipment is kept clean and in a good state of repair and is frequently checked for safety. Young babies sleep outside in prams and mattresses are provided for older children to rest. Travel cots are being introduced for older babies to sleep in more comfortably. Adults are deployed effectively throughout the nursery and during outdoor sessions so that children are supervised at all times.

The rooms are organised well so that children can safely move around and easily access toys and activities. Effective risk assessments are in place including daily checks which help to reduce hazards and keep children safe. Children access resources independently and make choices about what they do. Children are learning to keep themselves safe when carrying scissors, using staplers or out on local visits practising road safety skills.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Children are cared for by adults who are vetted and have relevant experience, excellent knowledge and skills.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy coming to the nursery and settle quickly and contently into their play. Staff work directly with the children offering support and care where needed. They interact well with the children encouraging babbling and smiles from young babies and repeating words for those learning to talk. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used as a basis for planning for children under three years, however the colour coding system used is not clear as to what aspect or learning intention it links to. Staff have attended training and have a sound knowledge of how young children develop. Assessment records are maintained covering the four aspects of 'The birth to three matters' framework and records are shared with parents.

Although children are separated into different age groups they have plenty of opportunities to mix with both older and younger children, enabling them to learn different skills. A range of art, craft and media play is provided for all ages. The babies enjoy watching shredded paper being sprinkled and are encouraged to scrunch it up to see how it feels. Children listen attentively to 'Maisy' stories and count to number five with staff as Maisy reaches the different bus stops. Staff praise and encourage children throughout their day for example managing to put food on their spoon, finding their coats or walking on the flower pot stilts.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

All of the staff working with funded children are qualified and some have accessed training specifically for the Foundation Stage. Good systems are in place to support less experienced

staff and monitor their planning and teaching. Most aspects of planning are in place and are effective. They have begun to plan meaningful activities that build on children's interests and enable children to learn across all areas. However, short term plans do not clearly show how the learning intentions link to the activities planned. Key activities are in place, but do not show how to adapt the activities for differing abilities including how to extend activities to challenge the more able child. Staff are aware that they need to develop their teaching methods to provide more challenge for children.

Children are confident speakers who chat happily to their peers and staff. They clearly explain that they are building a car, making a person or introduce 'Mr Charlie dog' and 'piglet' puppets to their teachers. They have free access to graphics materials to write and draw and pretend to write shopping lists in the home corner. However opportunities for the more able child to attempt to write their name are not often encouraged. Effective labelling is used around the room to show that print carries meaning. Children make up stories when looking at picture books and are encouraged to take these home to share with parents.

Children say and count numbers in everyday situations. For example counting their fingers as they draw around them or windows as they build a house with lego. Some children understand that three objects represent the number three as they proudly point out the three candles on the stickle brick cake for their mum who is three. They mathematical language in their play such as bigger and smaller hands, full and empty tubes of water. When pretending to take their teacher's temperature they exclaim its four and half meters.

Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences. They enjoy searching for worms in the soil and using the magnifying glasses to look at them more closely. Children have good opportunities to learn about technology through playing with battery operated toasters and kettles in the home corner and learning to operate the CD player. Children are competent on the computer and some are able to print off their own work. Children are learning about their diverse society and the differing cultures within it through topic work. They take part in celebrating traditions and festivals of the children who attend the nursery as well as the more familiar festivals such as Chinese New Year.

Children are able to be creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play. They take part enthusiastically to dance sessions and enjoy moving to 'Bob the builder'. Children act out imaginary situations, for example pretending to be going to London to see the Queen and needing to use an aeroplane to get there. They use their senses and imaginations to create their own work and to communicate their feelings. Children use a widening range of materials and tools to help them to express their creativity and enjoy being able to freely select resources from a well stocked arts trolley. Some children draw people and animals detailing facial features and 'the mane' on a lion clearly.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff understand policies on equal opportunities and work within them. Staff foster links with children's own cultures where relevant and gain information from parents to help them feel

secure and festivals they may celebrate. Children have access to a broad range of resources, play opportunities and activities, which reflect diversity and acknowledge differing abilities.

Children are generally well behaved. Staff demonstrate a consistent approach to challenging behaviour. They are calm and professional in their approach to behaviour. Explanations are at the level the children understand. Clear boundaries are set and children are learning about right and wrong. Children are praised for good behaviour and their self-esteem is promoted well. Children's work is attractively displayed and children are able to put up their own pictures on a low level board. Children are able to serve themselves at meal times and clear their own plates which gives them a sense of responsibility and promotes their independence.

Children who attend with learning difficulties are valued and respected. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that the best support and care for their child is provided. Additional help in the form of one to one workers is provided. Information is gathered from other professionals from their visits to the group and shared so that children feel secure and are fully included.

Partnership with parents and carers is good and contributes to the progress and well-being of children, including those who receive funded nursery education. Parents speak highly of the setting. Parents are fully informed about the Foundation Stage through information packs, parents evening and notice boards. Parents are kept updated regularly through newsletters. Parents are able to speak to staff on a daily basis to exchange information and more formal meetings are held on request or at parent's evenings. Notice boards keep parents updated on important issues and general information. Parents opinions and thoughts are sort through questionnaires which the staff act upon to improve their practice.

Children's Spiritual, Moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled. They enjoy activities and achieve well because staff create an environment where they have appropriate space and resources to do so. Adults working with children show care and concern for their welfare to give them a sense of well-being and regular staff know them well. They have good levels of support to help them feel welcome, comfortable and at ease. The person in charge and her deputy have a clear vision of how children thrive and use their skills, knowledge and experience to lead by example. Staff are suitably qualified or are working towards recognised qualifications and continue to develop personal and professional skills through training.

Staff maintain and use appropriate forms of record keeping and refer to policies and procedures in order to promote children's care and learning. Information gathered from parents is made known to staff to ensure that their wishes are followed. This level of attention contributes to the continuity of children's care so that they feel secure. The rooms and outside play are well organised and set out attractively. All aspects of the curriculum are covered most of which can be experienced either inside or out. Staff are deployed effectively to supervise children well in all the areas. The free flow system in operation between the pre-school and main play room

works well and children which enables children to access more resources. A key worker system is used and staff work well as a team and pass on any observations to the relevant key workers.

The quality of leadership and management is good.

The staff team is relatively new, with a recent appointment of a deputy and promotion of the manager, but work well together. Regular meetings are held within the staff team, management team and the committee, so that good communication channels are developed at all levels. Staff are motivated and keen to improve the care and education for all children. They have a clear vision and use action plans as well as questionnaires from parents to develop practice.

Overall, the provision meets the range of children's needs who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The policies and procedures have been updated and are currently being reviewed again. daily routines have changed and more small group work is now organised. The deployment of staff is effective so that children are supported and well supervised at all times. Staff have attended training on behaviour management. The strategies observed were effective and appropriate for the ages and stages of the children involved. Effective risk assessments are in place and any hazards identified have been addressed so that children can access their coats safely. Children now have access to an arts trolley which houses a wide range of materials, paints, glue, staplers and tape for children to design and create their own work. An art easel is set out with paints, chalks or drawing for children to freely use.

The programme for nursery education has also improved. Sessions for children to explore music, try out musical instruments have been incorporated into the planning. Through re-organisation of the arts area it has enabled children to access art resources more freely and to experiment with different media play. Parents are now encouraged to write comments in their children' progress files. Books are taken home to share and parental questionnaires are used effectively to gain parents opinions and develop practice.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 records 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 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):

- develop health and hygiene practices to ensure consistency throughout the nursery by ensuring that suitable arrangements are in place to clean faces after meals and that appropriate equipment is provided for children to eat their meals off

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):

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of how to deliver the Foundation Stage to enable them to appropriately challenge the more able child and develop ways of extending activities to ensure children make good progress. Also develop planning to clearly show how the learning intentions are linked to the activities and how they can be adapted for differing abilities
- improve the programme for physical development by showing how large physical development is promoted and how children become aware of the effects of activities on their bodies

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