



Cleverkidz

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY278278
Inspection date	25 January 2007
Inspector	Susan Marriott
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Registered person	Cleverkidz
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Cleverkidz Nursery was registered in May 2004, and is part of a small chain of nurseries. The premises are purpose-built, next to Tithe Farm Lower School, in Houghton Regis. The nursery is privately owned, with an experienced and qualified management team. The provision is registered for 79 children from birth to eight-years-old. It also provides out of school hours care to children attending the local lower school. There are currently 60 children on roll, and of these, 17 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and is able to support children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery opens on weekdays, from 08.00 until 18.00, throughout the year. The nursery opens from 07.00 for a breakfast club when parents request the facility. There are 14 staff who work with the children and all have relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the staff adhere to clear, extremely well-structured health and safety procedures, which are consistently applied to prevent the spread of infection. Sick children are excluded from the provision to minimise the spread of infection and the premises are maintained in a properly clean state. Tables are regularly sprayed with anti-bacterial spray to prevent cross contamination. In the baby room, there is a 'no shoes' rule. The milk kitchen is kept spotlessly clean, the fridge temperatures are rigorously monitored and all bottles are labelled to prevent cross contamination, the spread of infection and to ensure children's safety. Children's cot bedding is changed meticulously to maintain high standards of hygiene. Children receive appropriate treatment in medical emergency because all core staff hold suitable and current first aid qualifications. The first aid boxes are accessible and the contents are checked regularly. Staff record accidents appropriately, include the relevant details and monitor these rigorously as part of the risk assessment process.

Plans refer to the 'Healthy Child' aspect of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and underpin exemplary practice. Children are protected from the risk of infection because the staff provide excellent guidance to the children on hygiene practice. For example, children cough in the cold air outside and staff remind them to put their hand to their mouth so as not to spread germs to everyone else. Staff consistently weave learning about germs and personal hygiene into the daily routine so that it becomes second nature to children. For example, some children no longer need to be reminded to wash their hands before snack and after visiting the toilet. They do this automatically because the staff actively promote discussion about the reasons for these practices. Older children carefully explain to younger ones that they must use soap to wash their hands to get rid of the germs and show them how to use the soap. Children can access tissues easily and a bin for disposing of the soiled article is provided nearby. Staff gently prompt younger children about wiping their noses and encourage children to learn appropriate etiquette, putting their hands to their mouths when coughing and sneezing. Children learn to dress appropriately for the weather conditions. For example, children understand that they need to fetch their scarves and gloves because it is very cold outside.

The nursery has now obtained the Healthy Eating Award and continues to participate in the annual programme. The rationale behind the programme is explained to parents and the setting is constantly seeking ways in which to improve how it works with parents to ensure that children's health and dietary needs are met. Staff positively promote the health benefits of eating fruit and vegetables and explanatory notices remind staff not to give raisins for morning snack. Water is constantly available throughout the session and children serve themselves so that they do not become thirsty. Children needing to rest can sleep on a bed or cushions in the book area.

The existing outdoor area is used well and exciting plans are underway to develop a delightful and stimulating outdoor learning environment. Children currently enjoy an extensive range of physical activities and have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. All the children enjoy varied and sometimes challenging activities, which enable them to develop control of

their bodies and improve their physical skills. For example, staff support children who wish to try to balance on empty milk crates and show them how to jump and count on the hopscotch grid. Children have regular access to a range of wheeled toys and large climbing equipment. However, the current climbing apparatus lacks real challenge for the older and more able children, who currently have limited opportunities for increasingly energetic play. Children practise hand-eye coordination with a wide range of small equipment, bats and balls, footballs, hoops and bean bags.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

This extremely well-run and effectively monitored nursery gives high priority to children's safety and welfare. The entrance hall is exceptionally welcoming because the tape player plays classical music all day, and children's work is displayed attractively. Staff welcome everyone and greet parents and children individually. Security systems are robust and thorough, focussed risk assessments ensure a safe environment. Staff help keep children safe in the nursery because they fully understand and comply with health and safety requirements. Supervision is exceptional. For example, generous adult to child ratios allow flexibility in preparing and organising activities and the environment. Before outside play, the staff fully prepare the garden for the children and complete their risk assessment. This ensures that children can move from one activity to another without having to wait. Staff support children well and meet their individual needs. Staff know what to do in the event of an emergency and children practise their evacuation plan with suitable frequency.

Children use a sufficient range of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate resources which are well-organised in child-height furniture to encourage independent access. The nursery is set up every evening to make the setting inviting for children. Staff are then able to welcome children and settle them in without too much added pressure. A road safety box containing traffic lights and flags, enables the staff to talk about road safety through play on the playground. Visitors from the police and the fire services talk about hot objects and home safety. This helps children to learn about keeping themselves safe.

Child protection procedures are robust and children remain well protected. Strong recruitment and induction procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience, training and vetting checks. Children remain the primary focus of care in this well-organised and managed setting and comprehensive recording of pre-existing injuries and any form of spillage of body fluids, protect the children and staff. Staff are vigilant in their practice and are highly confident in their knowledge of child protection, reporting concerns to senior staff and the appropriate authorities. Open relationships between home and pre-school ensure that children's needs remain the most important factor. The child protection co-ordinator ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and make sustained progress in learning, leisure and personal development because the staff are confident, enthusiastic, highly skilled and knowledgeable in their childcare practice. Babies enjoy their time in the 'Smarties' room, where the staff have taken real ownership of the environment and an active responsibility for the quality of their practice. Babies play contentedly in a lovely bright square room with beautiful, stimulating displays. For example, a red, white and black themed corner features colour coded soft furnishings. Children are enthralled with lots of bright and modern toys attractively set out on the floor in distinct areas. For example, a town layout mat with cars and trucks is set well away from the soft ring cushions for younger babies with rattles and shakers. Staff sit on the floor and interact with babies at their level. For example, a member of staff interests children with the sound of a stiff brush on drum and encourages the children to explore the instrument themselves. They praise children enthusiastically when they take a few tentative steps across the room. Staff know the babies well and follow individual routines from home, which enables babies to settle readily into the provision.

Older babies move into 'Bright Sparks', where the staff are gentle and caring, soothing children off to sleep and speaking proudly about the achievements of their children. Children become confident, independent learners as they freely access the pre-selected resources set out for them. Staff provide positive role models for children and give sensitive support to all children. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff. Staff encourage and build children's vocabulary through constant praise and recognition as they support play. They skilfully adapt their level of language and questioning to reflect each child's stage of development. For example, a staff member makes clear eye contact and speaks slowly and clearly to an 18-month-old.

Two-year-olds become 'Shining Stars' and demonstrate advanced skills for their age and stage of development. The staff have appropriately high expectations and the children count confidently as they line up to go outside to play. They join in rhymes and songs with confidence. Three children in the garden play a ball game and a member of staff asks how many of them there are, at each corner of their shape. The children know that they are standing in the shape of a triangle and when a fourth joins the group, they identify the new shape as a square. The children play with the staff, rolling and bouncing a ball with excellent control. Children show care and concern for each other. For example, they cuddle one another and ask if their friend is alright. Staff confidently implement the four aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' guidance and actively use this framework as the basis for their planning and assessment for children under three-years-old. However, some evaluations of the planned activities refer to what the children have enjoyed rather than identifying what the children have learned. They do not yet provide a useful source of information to inform future planning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The welcoming and friendly staff team create a lovely, relaxed atmosphere in the pre-school room for the group known as 'Geniuses'. Children engage in purposeful play, supported by excellent interaction from all staff who are enthusiastic

and committed to their roles. Staff deploy themselves to support children's learning with sensitivity and respect. They have an increasingly competent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a varied programme of play-based activities which provide an overall balance across all six areas of learning. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their ages and starting points. The pre-school room is set out with distinct labelled areas, reflecting all six areas of learning. Children are happy and settle quickly in the gentle and nurturing environment. Staff consistently promote extremely high levels of independence and self-reliance in children. Children generally display high levels of involvement and gain a sense of achievement, self-confidence and self-esteem through self-chosen activities. Older and more able children maintain their interest in the activities due to the skilful intervention of staff who re-direct their learning appropriately. However, some activities are ordinary and lack added interest and vitality to capture children's curiosity.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is given good emphasis. In particular, children progressively develop excellent self-care skills, such as fetching a tissue to blow their own nose, putting on outdoor clothing and managing their own toileting routines. Snack time is a generally effective learning time for children. Children develop their hand-eye coordination as they pour drinks and hand round the snack. Children enjoy good, trusting relationships with staff who get down to their level and engage in meaningful questioning, conversation and discussion which develops learning through play. Excellent priority is given to the development of children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Children share books with staff and their contributions are valued and affirmed as they respond to the familiar refrains during the story of 'The Gruffalo'. Plans show that children learn about numbers, use mathematical language and solve simple problems. They make their own clocks, and link the times shown by the hands to specific events during the day. Song and rhyme is used well to promote learning about numbers and calculation within the daily routine. For example, children calculate how many men left during a song of 'Five little men in a flying saucer'.

Children explore and investigate through planned activities and free child-led discovery. A superb science table with lots of interactive labels prompts staff to ask open questions such as 'what happens if I?', and 'what do you think this might be?' Children use a wide range of construction toys and become familiar with information technology through office play and computer programs which support learning in other areas. Artefacts from a variety of cultures are displayed and fun activities are planned to expand children's experiences of the wider world. For example, children will have an opportunity to eat noodles with chopsticks on the occasion of Chinese New Year. Children demonstrate a very good awareness of space as they dance to music tape after the story of the Gruffalo. Children jump and do a simple exercise and warm up routine once they get outside in the fresh air. They count jumps, bend and stretch, stand on one leg, and take tiny steps and giant steps. Staff ask if children can stretch wide, stretch up tall and follow my leader. The children recall the worm they had in the playroom at the beginning of the week and the staff member follows up their interest by asking if they can see any worms and if they know where they might be. The children notice that the grass is white and she encourages them to bend down and feel that it is stiff and frozen in the frost. The children begin to chat about snow falling yesterday and ask 'where has all the snow gone?'

Planning is manageable for the setting and generally effective because the staff have increasing ownership of the system. Management have introduced a simple and straightforward three

stage planning process for staff. Plans are clearly displayed and are no longer rigidly based upon topics, although flexible monthly themes are evident. Long term plans relate closely to the Foundation Stage guidance and clearly identify early learning goals and specific stepping stones as learning intentions. Whole clusters of learning are identified on a monthly basis and all the relevant stepping stones are printed for staff reference. Staff are very clear that they need to be offering all children access to the appropriate stepping stones in order to progress their learning and thereby meet the needs of all children. The short term plans identify child-led and adult-led activities, which are carefully planned with clear learning intentions. The daily routine is also posted on planning boards with details of the identified stepping stones covered.

Staff make competent baseline assessments when children enter the pre-school room and this information provides a clear starting point upon which meaningful assessment can be based. Conscientiously kept assessment folders are based upon dated observations, arranged under the six areas of learning and parents and carers make their own contributions. Photographs and examples of work are dated and stuck into the folders which provides evidence for assessment. Plans are evaluated well in the pre-school room and contribute positively to the identification of the next steps in children's learning. The system enables children's progress to be tracked readily against the stepping stones and is becoming fully effective in securing children's progression in learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The nursery has a comprehensive and practical equal opportunities policy that is used consistently on a daily basis. Children's individuality is valued and their needs and beliefs are documented and respected. They are given the opportunity to learn about other beliefs, ways of life and the wider community, through discussion and a good range of resources. Children feel a sense of belonging and work harmoniously with others because effective transition policies smooth the move from room to room. Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language are warmly welcomed in the nursery. Children learn about a diverse range of different cultures, festivals and traditional celebrations. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others.

Highly skilled staff implement excellent systems to ensure that children with specific needs receive appropriate support in the setting. This enables them to join in with all activities and make very good progress given their age and starting points. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents in detail. Any special requirements or information are discussed and consistent communication and information exchange takes place. Special needs of children are recognised and met sensitively. A comprehensive policy is in place regarding special needs which details how the service will be provided to children. The very good levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive a great deal of individual attention so that their needs are effectively met

Children are extremely well-behaved, and very polite in response to the consistent expectations of caring staff. Their good behaviour is encouraged through a rewards system and clear class rules. Staff set clear boundaries for the children about what is right and wrong, appropriate to their age and stage of development, so they know what is expected of them. Staff give constant

reminders about 'sharing is caring', explaining that 'we share and show we care'. Staff praise children for their achievements, specifying what the children have actually done well. For example, they say 'well done for putting your coat on', 'well done for noticing that' and lots of positive language is used with the children. Children learn to take turns and show a well-developed concern for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff are most welcoming to parental input. There is a wealth of information which is easily accessible which includes general care and educational literature. Parents value the openness and honesty of staff. This supports the appropriate sharing of information in sensitive situations. Parents are highly complimentary about the level of service provided. Staff encourage parents to actively contribute towards individual assessment records. Therefore, children benefit from a two-way sharing of information between parents and practitioners to enhance their learning. This underpins their progress in the setting and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The nursery effectively communicates and fully shares literature and information about the educational provision. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The implementation of rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures now ensures that the staff team are well-qualified and committed to continuous professional development and improvement which secures the highest standards of quality childcare and education. The staff team are caring and friendly and have clearly designated roles and responsibilities. Rotas are robustly implemented. Skilled room leaders provide excellent role models for less experienced staff. Staff demonstrate a real affinity with children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. This promotes highly positive outcomes for children.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The dynamic management team are highly effective in safeguarding and promoting children's care and welfare. The manager has a clear vision for the future development of the setting and ensures that the standards are good enough for her own children. She wants every child to have a memorable day to discuss with parents and carers. The manager is supernumery and this freedom enables her to rigorously monitor the quality and standards of care and education in the setting. The basic office work is covered by an administrator, who ensures that the manager is always available to oversee the operation of the nursery. Comprehensive policies and procedures have been developed and are practical working documents. These are read by staff, signed as accepted and then the manager does 'spot checks' daily to ensure that all staff are implementing these all the time. This process is highly effective in securing constantly rising standards. Planning and assessment systems are superb, appropriately detailed and ensure a clear focus to secure and progress children's learning. The provision meets the needs of all children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of day care, eight recommendations were raised. These concerned issues relating to behaviour management; nappy changing conditions and procedures; children's safety

in the outside play area; the maintenance of staffing levels; effective hygiene practices to prevent the spread of infection; appropriate storage of milk products and the naming of all drinks provided from home; the provision of sufficient books in good condition; and the introduction of a checking procedure to ensure staff understand all policies and procedures.

A new management team was put in place some four months ago and their actions and highly effective evaluative and monitoring skills have substantially improved the quality and standards of care and education which are reflected in this report. This is the first inspection of nursery education.

Complaints since the last inspection

In March 2005, concerns were raised relating to staffing ratios, Standard 2 (Organisation); lack of activities, Standard 3 (Care, Learning and Play); rubbish and hazardous materials in the garden, Standard 4 (Physical Environment); and inadequate furniture, Standard 5 (Equipment). Ofsted made an unannounced visit on 21 March 2005 and raised an action under Standard 6 (Safety). This was to remove hazards and waste from the outside play area. Other recommendations were made to the provider under Standards 2, 3, 6 and 7. These were to ensure effective staffing levels are maintained within each age range; to check that books which children have access to are complete and appropriate in number; to ensure that children's dignity is maintained during nappy changing; to ensure the planned use of the outdoor area takes account of children's safety; to consider the use of disposable aprons alongside polymer gloves in the nappy changing area; to ensure mats used are clean, undamaged and hygienic; to ensure that all milk products are stored appropriately and that drinks provided from home were named. A satisfactory response was received and the provider remained qualified for registration.

In September 2005, concerns were raised about the safety of the outside play area, the lack of toys appropriate for the age of the children, the nappy changing facilities and the amount of food given to children at this provision. These concerns related to National Standard 5, (Equipment); Standard 6, (Safety); Standard 7, (Health); and Standard 8, (Food and Drink). Ofsted made an unannounced visit on 20 September 2005 and set three actions under Standard 3, (Care, Learning and Play). These required the provider to improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of books for the children. Two actions under Standard 6, (Safety); required the setting to ensure that risk assessments and forms for checking inside and outside are fully completed and that lunchtime procedures and supervision of the toilet area were improved with regard to hygiene practices. A satisfactory response was received and the provider remained qualified for registration.

In December 2005, Ofsted received a complaint that raised concerns regarding staff qualifications, staff to child ratios, the complaints procedure and lack of adequate supervision and care. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to the provision on 12 December 2005 to inspect against Standard 1, (Suitable Person); Standard 2, (Organisation); Standard 3, (Care, Learning and Play); Standard 7, (Health) and Standard 12, (Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers). As a result of the inspection, the provider was given two actions under Standard 12. These were to ensure that a record of all complaints is maintained and appropriate information from that record is shared with parents on request; and that appropriate and prompt

action is taken when any concerns are raised and that complaints are investigated. Complainants should be notified of the outcome of their complaint within 28 days. Ofsted received a satisfactory response to the actions set and 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

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 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 the outdoor area to improve children's physical development. Improve the evaluation of planned activities to inform the next steps in children's learning.

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):

- enhance the existing provision of play opportunities for children to explore, experiment and be creative, to spark their curiosity and expand their horizons.

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