

# Chatterbox Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** EY341207

**Inspection date** 29 March 2007

**Inspector** Jane Wakelen

**Setting Address** Tramways Community Centre, 2 Tramways, Luton Road, Chatham, Kent, ME5 7LS

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**Registered person** Medway Council

**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](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 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?

Chatterbox Pre-School is one of two settings run by Medway Council. It opened in 2007 and operates from one room in a community building. It is situated in Luton, Chatham, Kent. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children will share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 16 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school currently employs three members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a further qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children experience daily routines, such as washing hands before snack time and after using the toilet. They are beginning to understand the personal care routines, such as using a tissue for their nose and then putting it in the bin. Children benefit from the practitioners' knowledge of hygiene procedures, such as using antibacterial spray on the food table and sterilising cups and bowls, to help prevent cross infection.

Children are protected from harm because staff have a good knowledge of maintaining accurate medication and accident records and all staff hold current first aid certificates. Medication is stored securely and the appropriate consent obtained for the administration of medication. Notices are displayed for parents regarding life threatening conditions, such as meningitis and are given a prospectus containing the policies, including the sick child policy to ensure they have a clear understanding of procedures in place.

Children benefit from a daily menu for snack time, which provides a selection of healthy options. Children make choices such as raisins, carrot sticks and cheese and enjoy looking at the child-friendly menu for the following day. They make decisions about what to drink, using the visual aids if unsure of the words, from milk or water and carefully pour from a small jug. Children's independence is well promoted as children use knives to spread their own choice of spread on the crackers or pour their own drinks.

Children have some opportunity for physical play during group singing sessions, doing large actions to rhymes, such as jumping and hopping. At present the outside area is not safe or secure. However, plans are in place to make changes to provide a safe, fun play area for the children, together with a good variety of quality equipment already available. In the meantime, staff are in the process of adapting the room layout to provide space for children to develop their large physical skills indoors, such as the use of tricycles in the entrance area.

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

The provision is good.

Children enter a welcoming, bright environment where they are safe and secure because staff are extremely vigilant and implement daily risk assessments before children arrive to remove hazards. Safety measures have been put in place, such as a door bell, chains on doors, finger guards and window locks. This helps promote children's well-being and safety. There are sound procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children, with staff welcoming children in and waiting by the door to let them out with their parents. A password system is in place if the normal adult cannot collect the children and the necessary documentation is in place and accurate, such as the attendance register with times of arrival and departure listed.

Children play with new, good quality equipment that is suitable for their age and stage of development. They are able to easily access resources from low level storage drawers, which are clearly labelled with pictures and words. Children are independent in helping themselves to alternative resources and are able to identify the correct storage container to choose to pack the toys and resources away at 'tidy up' time, showing pride when showing the visitor where toys go. There are good systems in place to check equipment and resources to ensure they are safe, in good repair and a cleaning routine is in place to ensure all equipment is well maintained.

Children move freely around the room with opportunities to relax in the cosy book corner, or engage in creative activities, role-play and explore small world and construction toys on the floor. They access the computer in its own area in the corner of the room and make full use of the mark-making materials accessible to them. Children have use of a good range of play equipment and resources, although provision for outside play is not yet accessible. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as they are given gentle reminders from the staff, such as holding the knife carefully when using the spreads for snack time and waiting until the water has been mopped up, after over-filling their cup, helping children gain an understanding about everyday hazards.

Children are well protected from harm because staff have an excellent understanding of their role regarding child protection and know how to implement local safeguarding children procedures. Practitioners make each other aware when they leave the room, supervise toileting and keep records of visitors, accidents and existing injuries. This enables staff to act in the children's best interests and safeguard their welfare.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and enjoy their time at pre-school. They arrive confidently and make their own decisions about the activities they involve themselves in, from the pre-selected options chosen by staff, or helping themselves to alternatives from the accessible storage drawers. All children are familiar with the staff and their environment, which enables them to settle into the environment and move around freely and independently. They enjoy sitting quietly in the book area looking at books or playing games on the computer and printing off the pictures. Younger children are absorbed in their play and choose from a stimulating range, such as playdough with a range of cutters and tools, or 'gloop' with different utensils or the excellent resources in the fully equipped home corner. Children are encouraged to help during the session, such as putting toys on the table, or being helper for the day. They take responsibility for watching the sand timer and then tell children it is time to tidy up. Children demonstrate good team work, all helping to pick toys up from the floor or pack table top toys away in their containers. They show a good understanding of routines, such as having to wash their hands before snack time and sitting in the book area once they have tidied away the toys, gaining a sense of belonging and feeling part of the group. Staff have a good understanding of child development and are developing their knowledge of the Birth to three framework and how to effectively implement this into their planning, using children's next steps in their development.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Comprehensive planning effectively ensures all six areas of learning are covered. Staff know children well and regularly observe individual children's development, plan their next steps of learning and use these to inform future planning. However, staff do not always find effective ways to fully support children with English as an additional language in their assessment process and plans to ensure they are making progress in all areas of their development. Each term parents meet with the keyworker to discuss children's assessment records and have the opportunity to contribute any ideas or make comments towards their child's progress record. This ensures children make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are confident individuals who enjoy talking to staff and other children. They are keen to learn and try new experiences. They access an extensive range of well chosen resources and are able to take responsibility for their own learning. Staff interact well to extend children's understanding and skills. They provide good support when necessary, such as when a child was using the computer, helping them learn to print out their pictures. Children have space to explore for themselves without interruption, for example, when engrossed in creative play in the role play area, or sorting beads into coloured towers.

Children have access to a range of mark-making equipment, including different pens, rulers and a hole punch. They enjoy using a variety of different paper and resources, to write, draw or explore different techniques using glue and different collage materials. Some children are beginning to write their name and link sounds and letters. Children show an interest in the written word, asking what words around the room say, or spelling words with the soft velcro letters and then asking what it says. Excellent visual aids around the room support children's understanding of the written word, with a welcoming book corner and adults good role model in handling books. Staff are planning on putting words from different languages around the room to reflect the diversity of children attending.

Children are developing an understanding of number and support this learning when using some computer programmes and practical activities, such as snack time. Staff encourage children to count when playing, such as how many men in the lorry or how many beads in the tower, but sometimes staff do not use methods to help them fully understand children's concept of number when children have English as an additional language. They are able to name some two dimensional shapes, such as square and circle and are able to sort by colour and shape. They are beginning to use mathematical language in their play, such as little, big and more.

Children have opportunities to use the computer on a regular basis and have good control using the mouse to operate the programme. Children use different materials to join, build and construct and are beginning to develop complex structures. They learn about the world they live in through topic work and various items staff and parents bring in to support the theme. Children observe changes in the weather and learn the sequence of the days of the week. They engage in meaningful role play, acting out familiar roles from home and developing practical sequencing skills, such as putting washing in the machine, in the basket and then on the washing line using mini pegs. Children use a range of resources to explore, such as shaving foam, coloured rice and playdough, using tools with skill, developing good hand/eye co-ordination. They have excellent opportunities to develop their fine motor skills, sticking small pieces of collage, putting on dressing up clothes and putting the pegs on the washing line.

Children join in with enthusiasm when singing simple familiar rhymes from memory. They know the actions and move their bodies according to the words, such as the bear jumping over the mountain. Children present good listening skills and adults ensure they choose a book with pictures to allow all children to join in the group session. They have good opportunities to develop their skills in working in small and large groups and are developing their understanding about sharing and taking turns.

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

The provision is good.

Children are made to feel welcome in the setting and come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. Staff value and respect children's individuality, as well as the family context for each child. They obtain full information about each child's family, culture and personal circumstances

to ensure their individual needs can be met. This enables children to experience continuity and promotes their self-esteem, supporting and valuing their culture. The setting has a settling-in policy which is implemented effectively, with staff offering each family a home visit before they start. The diversity within the setting helps children gain an understanding about the society they live in. They learn about each other's similarities and show interest in learning about the differences, such as tasting food or seeing what clothes people wear from different cultures. However, at present there are limited resources or positive images around the setting to fully promote children's identity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning disabilities are fully integrated into the setting. The supervisor is the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and is highly effective in ensuring that all children are helped to achieve their full potential. The excellent links with outside agencies and professionals provide a comprehensive support service for the child and their family, promoting children's welfare.

Children are well behaved. Their understanding of right and wrong is promoted through consistent boundaries which enables them to learn desirable behaviour, developing their confidence and self esteem. Children are learning to take turns and share the toys, with occasional support from staff when necessary. They assist staff in tidying up and have positive relationships with adults and other children. Staff manage children's behaviour successfully because they use positive strategies to reinforce wanted behaviour with praise and roles of responsibility, such as being the 'tidy-up monitor' with the sand timer.

Partnership with parents of children receiving nursery education is outstanding. Parents are enthusiastic in their praise for the setting. They feel welcome and supported within the group and feel staff are 'fantastic' in the care they offer and give to the children. The setting has recently moved premises, having had to close for a few months. Many parents waited for the group to re-open because of the excellent care they feel their child receives and the excellent support network set up by Sure Start. Parents are fully involved with their child's development and learning and meet with their child's keyworker every term to discuss their child's progress and next steps. Parents are asked to contribute to the assessment process and to be involved with their child's learning. They are encouraged to bring in items relating to the topic or help staff learn about their traditions and cultures, supporting the learning environment and enriching the opportunities for children. One afternoon a week parents can attend a craft session with their children to gain ideas to use at home and gain support from other families in similar situations and talk informally to the staff. Noticeboards are displayed for parents, providing information about topics relating to the nursery and the community, with information leaflets available to take away.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the enthusiastic, motivated and qualified staff, who promote children's welfare and provide good support to both children and their families. They have an excellent understanding of the needs of the children and the community and work alongside outside agencies and professionals to promote children's welfare. Induction training, policies and procedures are well-thought through and implemented well in the setting to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. The measures to monitor the provision are good and the small staff team enables changes to be made quickly and efficiently once concerns or ideas have been initiated.

All staff have a probationary period of three months, including an effective induction programme ensuring that the policies and procedures are implemented effectively to ensure children's well being, keeping children healthy and safeguarding their welfare. Measures are in place to monitor the provision and the procedures are constantly being reviewed by all staff at regular staff meetings to ensure the practice being offered meets the needs of the children.

Leadership and Management are good. The supervisor forms part of the well qualified staff team and provides strong support for the staff and the setting as a whole. She has an excellent understanding about the needs of the children and together with the staff, constantly strives for ways to improve and provide a stimulating environment, to meet the needs of all the children. She works closely with her line manager, through Sure Start to highlight the needs of the children and the resources necessary to provide high quality care, for example, the urgent need for a quality, safe outdoor area to provide for children's health and physical needs. All staff contribute to the planning process, attend regular staff meetings and know the children well, contributing to the quality care and education offered.

The premises are well organised to enable children to be independent, such as taking themselves to the toilets. The room layout promotes choices for children and allows them to move around freely, selecting equipment and choosing to play on their own or alongside their peers. Staff are aware of the necessary ratios for the numbers and ages of children and ensure staff attend training courses on a regular basis to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date.

All policies and procedures are in place and children's records kept confidential in the new filing systems. The secure and regular systems for sharing information with the parents, such as consultations, reports and newsletters promote children's well-being and ensure parents are fully involved in their children's learning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

#### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

#### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider of 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**

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):

- expand opportunities to promote large physical play, both indoors and outdoors on a daily basis

### **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):

- continue to develop a system of planning to meet the needs of all children to ensure they make progress in all areas, including children with English as an additional language (also applies to care).

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