



Radnor Park Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 127478
Inspection date 01 June 2005
Inspector Beth Kingsland

Setting Address 5-6 Westbourne Gardens, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2JA

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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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Radnor Park Kindergarten opened in 1998 and moved to its present site in Folkestone, Kent in 2000. The kindergarten operates from a large Victorian property and is organised over three floors. It has access to eight rooms, toilets, a kitchen, and an outside play area. The office and staff room are located on the fourth floor.

The group serves children from the local area and surrounding towns.

There are currently 95 children on the roll, which includes 51 children in receipt of nursery funding. Children can attend a variety of sessions. The kindergarten staff have experience working with children who have special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The kindergarten opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08.00 until 18.00. Cooked meals are offered or parents may provide a packed lunch.

There are 22 members of staff working with the children. Of these, 17 staff have early years qualifications and attend short courses. The kindergarten receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and other agencies as appropriate.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children aged over three years are aware of the importance of their own personal hygiene and take responsibility for washing and drying their own hands throughout the day, for example, children confidently commented, 'let's wash our hands before we eat lunch'. However, younger children are not introduced to appropriate procedures to allow them to learn about the spread of infectious diseases, for example, they are not encouraged to wash their hands before meal times. Although staff protect children from cross contamination while changing children's nappies, facilities are not appropriate to afford children their privacy and dignity. Children's nappies are changed in full view of their peers, staff and any visitors and potties are left in the room as staff comment, 'It is easier that way as there is only one downstairs toilet and it is difficult to take children upstairs'. Procedures for ensuring that equipment is clean and well-presented have not been implemented. Therefore children use equipment that is dirty and in a poor state of repair, for example, garden equipment.

Children are provided with a choice of a kindergarten cooked meal or a packed lunch brought from home, with many of the children choosing to have the cooked meal. However, the food presented fails to provide them with a healthy and balanced diet, for example, much of the food is processed, containing high salt and sugar levels. Children have limited choice of food at snack times, and they are generally limited to toast and biscuits. Staff have not taken appropriate steps to ensure that children with allergies are fully protected. For example, meal times are unorganised and children are often left unsupported. As a result children can freely access other children's food unnoticed. Details of allergies are recorded on children's admission forms, however, there are no procedures to ensure this information is updated or that staff are fully informed. Details of allergies and preferences are displayed within the kindergarten; however this information is not updated and does not include information about relating symptoms. As a result, in the event of a child having an allergic reaction, staff

may not recognise the symptoms and act promptly to ensure children are safe and well.

Older children have access to outside play facilities and during the inspection played happily and confidently. They also have access to a large soft-play area, which is situated in the basement of the kindergarten. However, use of the garden area is generally limited to the warmer months; as a result during inclement weather children have limited access to fresh air and vigorous physical play. Opportunities for the children housed within the baby unit, to experience outside play activities, are limited. The garden area has not been adapted to accommodate younger children and insufficient activities are planned to allow children to benefit from fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

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

Staff have conducted a risk-assessment of the premises, highlighting areas for development; however, many of the issues have not been addressed. A recent inspection by a health and safety consultant highlighted many areas for concern, including the security of electrical intake and the locking of fire doors. However, insufficient progress has been made to rectify the highlighted issues, resulting in children's safety not being safeguarded. Fire-drills are not conducted effectively to ensure that children are familiar and aware of the procedures. For example, although the meeting point is situated on an adjacent side of the road from the kindergarten, staff fail to take children to the correct point; instead they are gathered immediately outside the premises. Consequently, in the event of an emergency, the premises may not be evacuated effectively and promptly. Effective systems have not been implemented to ensure that children remain safe while on outings, for example, records of individual children are not taken.

The children's welfare is not safeguarded with regard to child protection issues. Although procedures have recently been developed, information has not been shared with staff, resulting in them being unaware of what would happen in the event of an allegation being made against them. Staff have a limited knowledge of child protection issues and are unaware of their own responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

The children are aware of their daily routine and arrive eager and enthusiastic to join in with the activities provided for them. Children under 18 months are housed within a baby unit and supported by sufficient staff. Although children appear to know the staff well, the lack of adult stimulation to encourage and motivate children results in them not reacting and openly expressing themselves, for example, the children remained very quiet and staff failed to openly communicate and provide activities that allowed them to explore and find their own voices.

Children under the age of three are accommodated in two rooms. Opportunities for these children to select from a range of equipment that allows for discovery and exploration are limited. Although some staff have attended training for the Birth to three matters framework, this knowledge has not been put into practice. As a result, staff have a limited knowledge of early childhood development and the importance of self discovery and creativity. Children have access to a limited choice of equipment and much of the equipment is man-made. Use of equipment, such as sand, water and paint is limited to a four weekly rota, as a result children do not experience a balanced range of activities that allow them to explore, express their own ideas, discover how things happen and respond using their imaginations and thoughts. Activities are not appropriate to children's stages of development, for example, children aged 18 months old were provided with thin pencils and colouring sheets resulting in children losing interest and looking around for other activities. Although staff are beginning to make assessments of children's achievements, they fail to make effective use of these within planning. As a result all activities are the same, with no adaptation or differentiation for individual children.

Morale within the kindergarten appears low, with many staff settling into one room and then being moved randomly to another. This results in inconsistency in teaching and close relationships between children and staff being lost, for example many key workers no longer work with their key children, resulting in staff being unable to effectively monitor children's progress and development.

Nursery Education

The overall quality of teaching and learning is inadequate.

Children are aware of their environment and have developed clear relationships together. Children appear confident within their environment and are beginning to select from equipment stored in stacker boxes. However, children do not experience activities that allow them to use their initiative and take control of their own learning. Children confidently take themselves to the toilet; however opportunities to develop personal independence as part of their daily routine are limited. For example, at meal times children do not pour their own drinks, lay the table or serve themselves their choice of food. Although children are beginning to work together, they do not receive sufficient support to learn about and respect the values and feelings of others. For example, children regularly snatch toys from each other and are not guided towards turn taking, choosing instead to keep toys to themselves. Children are beginning to communicate their ideas; however, staff do not actively question children throughout the activities they complete. As a result activities lack challenge

and children soon lose interest. Children listen attentively to stories read to them by staff, actively joining in with the story and discussing the pictures they see. Although children are provided with a range of books to select from, the poor organisation of the room inhibits self selection and freedom of choice. Children are provided with limited opportunities to take part in role-play. The designated area has not been developed to allow children access; as a result this area is not used by the children. Children confidently count to ten and beyond. However opportunities for children to solve simple mathematical problems are not incorporated into the daily programme. As a result there are insufficient opportunities for children to identify numbers, recreate simple patterns and use practical problem solving as part of free-play. Children learn about living things, through visits from outside agencies, for example, children were visited by a variety of different animals, which they could hold. Opportunities for children to learn about the local and wider world are limited. Children do not work with a wide range of materials or substances that allow them to explore, investigate, observe and re-visit. Staff fail to provide appropriate questioning techniques that allow children to be naturally curious or enthusiastic about the activities they experience. Children do experience opportunities to develop their gross motor skills when they play outside. Children's development is not effectively extended or developed due to poor staff knowledge and ineffective planning for this area of learning. Children's creativity is stifled due to staff not creating a stimulating environment in which children can use all their senses to explore, express and communicate their ideas, while using their imaginations freely.

Staff display a poor knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, which has a direct impact on children's development. Staff fail to plan and provide an appropriate range of purposeful and meaningful activities that allow children to build upon what they already know. Although staff have begun to make assessments of children's development, staff fail to make effective use of their observations. As a result activities are not effectively planned to meet the differing needs of individual children, with activities provided with the same learning objectives and outcomes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children learn about their local community through visits by outside agencies. However, opportunities for them to learn about the views, feelings and needs of others from the wider world are not effectively supported. There is a limited range of equipment for children to develop a positive attitude to and increase their awareness of diversity.

Children are warmly welcomed into the kindergarten. However, the setting fails to meet the individual needs of children. They are given no clear guidelines with regard to discovering and understanding about set boundaries and limits. This results in some unruly behaviour with children displaying inappropriate levels of aggression, for example throwing toys and shouting at each other.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Support for children with special needs is weak. Staff fail to ensure that identified

needs are fully incorporated into the planning of the educational programme. Plans are not developed to include how activities can be adapted to meet individual needs and capabilities. Staff do not provide adequate support or guidance to children with English as an additional language. For example, there are no systems for gathering useful words in the child's first language, no literature is translated for parents and staff do not actively attempt to engage the children to join in with activities. Staff report that children only speak English while at the kindergarten, however, they were unable to identify what the child's first language was.

The partnership with parents and carers is inadequate. Parents are welcomed into the kindergarten and encouraged to stay and settle their children. This contributes effectively and leads to an easy transition that benefits children's development. However, parents are not aware of the person responsible for their child's development due to staff movement, and as a result they are not fully informed about their children's progress and attainment. Although parents are given information about kindergarten policies and procedures, staff do not ensure that information is up to date and in line with recent changes and developments.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Overall the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care and education.

The organisation of the kindergarten is not effective, resulting in activities and opportunities not being appropriate to meet children's individual needs. The management of the setting fails to act as a good role-model to motivate and encourage staff, resulting in low morale and confusion as to their role within the setting.

Staff have developed as a close team and know each other well, but this is not enhanced by the provider, for example not acting on weaknesses identified by the staff. Although staff are appropriately qualified they are not best placed to work with the children they know well. As a result children do not receive a balanced and broad range of activities that motivate and stimulate their natural curiosity. Although the kindergarten have produced policies and procedures these are not regularly updated and shared with staff. As a result staff are not able to implement policies and procedures fully, they do not ensure all mandatory documentation and consent forms are in place and completed correctly.

The leadership and management of the kindergarten is inadequate. Monitoring procedures are not effective to ensure that children receive a suitable range of activities that support their progress in the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff knowledge of the curriculum is not consistent; therefore they are unable to support children within the provided activities to help them progress on to their next steps in learning. Assessments of children are not effective and are not used to inform the planning of activities. As a result, activities are not adapted to meet the differing needs and abilities of children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the kindergarten agreed to develop a suitable range of equipment to promote equality and of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Progress made with addressing this issue has been poor. Children receive limited opportunities to select from equipment that introduces them to positive images of other cultures and traditions and activities are not effectively planned to support equality of opportunity. The setting agreed to ensure written records of medication were signed by parents and that consent was obtained for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. Although medication records are generally signed, there are inconsistencies in administration due to there being only one medication book within the kindergarten. This leads to confusion amongst staff as to who has administered the medication. The kindergarten has produced records for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment, however staff have failed to obtain consent from all parents.

At the last S122 education inspection for funded children, the kindergarten agreed to make effective use of assessment to inform the planning of activities to ensure individual children make effective progress. Poor organisation of the setting and limited staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage results in children not accessing good quality activities that promote and develop their learning. Observations and assessments are not used effectively to identify children's next steps in learning. As a result the assessments are not used to influence planning or support children's learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 there has been one complaint relating to standard 3 - Care, Learning and Play and standard 8 - Food and Drink.

Ofsted investigated the complaint by visiting the setting and found that the kindergarten had undertaken an internal investigation, which provided details of all action taken to rectify the situation. Ofsted were satisfied, with the outcome and concluded that the National Standards continued to be met.

Ofsted completed their investigation and decided no further action was required. The provider remains qualified for registration.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action

to improve.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs
- ensure the premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. Develop systems to ensure children have full and equal access to well-organised facilities that are maintained appropriately
- provide a suitable range of equipment to meet the developmental needs of all children within the kindergarten
- ensure effective safety procedures are developed and used to promote safety within the setting and on outings
- ensure changing and toilet facilities afford children their privacy and dignity and conform to environmental health standards
- ensure children are provided with regular drinks and that food is healthy and nutritious and complies with their dietary and religious requirements
- ensure children have equal and free access to a full range of equipment that promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- ensure all staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. Ensure that the child protection procedures comply with those of the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC)
- ensure that all records relating to day care activities are readily accessible and available for inspection at all times.

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

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

of learning

- ensure children have access to a suitable range of experiences and activities that allow them to explore, investigate and use their imaginations, both in and outside the kindergarten. Provide opportunities for children to use their initiative, to select freely and independently from a wide selection of purposeful and meaningful activities that are appropriate to their individual needs.

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk