

Chigwell and Hainault Synagogue Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	404660
Inspection date	01 May 2007
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	Limes Avenue, CHIGWELL, Essex, IG7 5NT
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

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

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

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

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Chigwell and Hainault Synagogue Nursery opened in 1980 and operates from two sets of rooms, and a large hall, within the Chigwell and Hainault Synagogue. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:15 until 12:15 during term time. There is also an optional lunch club which runs from 12:15 until 13:15 every day except Friday. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

A maximum of 52 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 34 children on roll, aged from two to under five years, and of these, 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local Jewish community. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

A total of 12 staff work with the children. Seven of the staff, including the head teacher, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the Pre-school Learning Alliance and the Agency for Jewish Education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well as the nursery has good medical procedures in place. If children require medication, staff ensure that they have the correct information about its administration and written permission to administer it. Children are protected from infection because parents are given clear information about excluding children with infectious illnesses. In the event of an accident, children are well cared for as staff have good access to first aid equipment and are well trained. If children play outdoors in hot weather, they are reminded to wear hats and drink regularly to avoid any adverse effects from the heat. These procedures contribute effectively to keeping children healthy.

Staff pay close attention to maintaining good hygiene. They ensure that children are cared for in clean surroundings. The nappy changing facility is well resourced so that children can be changed in a hygienic manner. A record of changes is kept so that parents can be informed. Children are becoming aware of good hygiene. A special set of steps has been installed in the toilet area so that they can easily wash their hands. They are all aware of the need for hand washing before eating or preparing food. They learn about looking after their teeth when a dentist pays a visit. Staff have a good knowledge of food hygiene and promote healthy eating through their provision of snacks and lunches.

Children enjoy a selection of fruit at snack time and a choice of drinks. Those who stay for lunch have fun making their own sandwiches using an array of healthy ingredients, including, tuna, cheese and salad. Staff adhere to the requirements of a Jewish diet and parents are well informed about what the children are offered. Lunchtimes are a good social experience for the children, helping them to develop independence and an awareness of healthy foods. Any children who have food allergies are catered for appropriately so that their dietary needs are met. Therefore, children are well nourished.

Children enjoy very good opportunities for regular physical activity. They enjoy using a wide range of resources and equipment in the large hall, for example, a climbing frame, trampoline, wheeled vehicles and balls. They gain self confidence as they explore different ways of moving and negotiate space. Staff are always on hand to encourage them and ensure their safety. Children also have the opportunity to play in the large car park area and benefit from the fresh air and exercise. In these ways, children develop body awareness and physical skills which help to keep them fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. The rooms are bright and attractive for children, with pictures and artwork around the walls. Children use designated rooms, the hall and outdoor areas and, therefore, have good opportunities for playing in different environments. Resources are set out attractively for them so as to facilitate independent access. For example, children can select toys laid out on tables and mats, sit comfortably in the book corner or paint at large low easels.

Staff promote children's safety and security effectively through ensuring that potential risks are minimised. They carry out regular risk assessments and are very thorough in their daily

safety checks. The rooms in use are made safe through safety measures, such as, making sure chairs are piled up away from play areas and covering low-level electrical sockets. Young children are kept safe in their room as staff fit safety gates in the doorways for extra security. There are good fire precautions in place, including alarms, fire blankets and extinguishers, and these are checked regularly. Staff practise an evacuation plan with children, making sure that they know how to exit from all the rooms used by the nursery.

Children use a wide range of safe, and suitable, resources. These are all in good condition and rotated from day to day in order to provide an interesting variety for children. Staff check toys and equipment for safety so that children can always play safely. They replenish the available resources at times in response to children's needs and interests. Children are learning to keep themselves safe in play activities, for example, using large physical equipment safely. They are aware of how to use knives carefully when cutting up fruit for snack and making sandwiches. However, they are not aware of the need to take care when choosing fruit at snack time. They often put pieces of fruit in their mouths as they return to their seats and this results in a potential risk to their personal safety.

Children play safely outdoors as all gates are padlocked. When involved in play activities on the smaller paved areas, staff arrange furniture so that children keep to a safe designated area. There are bell entry systems at all entrances to the synagogue and security cameras in place. Consequently, staff are able to monitor visitors closely and this helps to ensure children's security while in the setting. If taking children on outings in the local area, procedures are followed carefully so that children are well supervised at all times. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. There is a system in place for recording any concerns and information is readily available to enable staff to seek advice. Therefore, children are well protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well settled and play happily at nursery. They enjoy play and exploration in a relaxed atmosphere, for example, sitting on the floor building models, or at tables, printing patterns. Staff give good support, enhancing children's experience through conversation. Children are free to take part and explore resources in their own way, and in their own time, and enjoy the interest shown by staff in their activities. As a result, children are gaining confidence and independence. They move around the play room choosing from the resources and activities on offer. Staff encourage children to try new activities and carefully involve them in circle time, for example, helping them to recognise different kinds of weather using large pictures. Children receive much praise as they participate in activities and this helps to develop their self-esteem.

Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan a wide range of activities for children. These include opportunities for children to be imaginative and creative, and also to develop an awareness of numbers, letters, colours and shapes. For example, children enjoy decorating 'kites', sticking boxes and dressing up. They like to listen to stories and join in number rhymes. In this way, they are learning to make connections with their environment. Staff encourage the development of communication skills through talking with children and encouraging their involvement in singing and dancing. They are sensitive to the needs of young children, providing good opportunities for them to acquire skills in a variety of play situations.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children show interest in the resources, for example, they are keen to colour pictures, participate in role play and play games. They are developing good concentration skills and show initiative, for instance, requesting alternative resources for a particular activity. Children relate well to each other, chatting together as they play around the sand pit or in the home corner. They are becoming aware of other people's feelings through discussion and this helps them to develop respect for others. Staff encourage children to communicate through engaging them in talk. Children volunteer opinions and answer questions with enthusiasm, thereby developing their use of language. They learn about letters of the alphabet in different ways. For example, they do word puzzles and collect objects which have the same initial sound. They are learning to recognise and write their own names. However, children are not always able to explore mark making in a variety of ways so as to extend their early writing skills.

Children are developing good number skills through counting, matching and comparing. They have a good understanding of concepts and are acquiring a range of skills, often using mathematical language and numbers spontaneously during play. They find out about shapes and patterns, for example, in cooking and painting activities. They enjoy card games and number rhymes, such as, 'Five little speckled frogs', which help to extend their awareness of calculation. Children learn about the natural environment and living things through activities based on different themes. For instance, they grow flowers, plant a tree and talk about sea life. They learn about the different seasons and enjoy exploring outdoors, using magnifying glasses. There are good opportunities for children to learn about people who work in the local community, for example, police and firefighters, and to use a computer to extend their learning in other areas.

Children take part in various activities which encourage them to develop creative and physical skills. They enjoy imaginative play with toy animals, vehicles and a pirate ship. They have great fun exploring a collection of musical instruments, discovering the different sounds they make. Children particularly enjoy songs and music as they celebrate festivals. They make a variety of things which fit in with themes, such as, Star of David flags and bird's nests, using different materials. There are also opportunities for children to develop their own ideas, for example, using paints and art tools. Children are developing manipulative skills as they model clay and use scissors, and knives, for cutting. In music and movement sessions, and parachute games, they learn to move in different ways and develop control and co-ordination.

Staff plan a wide range of activities for children around the Jewish festivals, and other themes. These are carefully interwoven so as to offer children a variety of learning experiences. All areas of learning are well covered in the written plans and it is clear what children are expected to learn from each focus activity. Staff take into account children's individual needs when planning focus activities, making use of detailed assessment records and evaluations of previous activities in order to inform their future planning. Therefore, children are stimulated and challenged effectively, especially in language, literacy and mathematics, although opportunities are not always taken to extend children's writing skills in different ways.

Staff work closely with children during the session and interact purposefully to promote learning. They explain to children what is on offer each day and keep them focused on activities by suggesting ideas and helping them to complete tasks. They encourage children to participate by becoming involved themselves, for example, in music and movement, games and role play. Staff encourage children to think for themselves through asking questions and explaining new words, for instance, at story time. They use extra resources, such as, finger puppets to reinforce children's learning. They have recently introduced 'Brilliant books' in which they record any

special achievements made by children. Overall, their teaching and encouragement of children is successful in helping children to make good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included. They chat with staff about their families and home life and this helps them to develop self respect. Staff have a caring attitude and make children feel welcome. Young children who are a little unsettled benefit from the close attention of staff who encourage them to play. They ensure that all children are given the opportunity to take part in the activities on offer. Children have a sense of belonging to a community and this is encouraged through gathering together for registration, activities and lunches. Children learn about the Jewish religion, culture and traditions. They sing songs in English and Hebrew and take part in a Sabbath Party each Friday, when families are invited to join too. Children find out about other cultures through using resources that reflect diversity in society. Children learn about the needs of other people through making collections for charitable organisations and in this way make a positive contribution to society. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive very good support. The nursery liaises closely with the Special Needs co-ordinator for the area in order to set targets for children's development and offer more individual attention. Children are learning to make decisions for themselves through having plenty of choice, for example, during play and at lunch times. Staff ask them to make a choice of activity after snack time each day and monitor this so that children can be encouraged to make alternative choices over time. Children's behaviour is good and they are generally aware of their boundaries. They share resources fairly as they play. In group times, they learn to take turns in games and discussions. They move around the building in an orderly fashion, responding well to instructions from staff. Consequently, they are learning to behave responsibly.

The nursery works closely with parents and carers. Parents receive detailed information in the brochure about the nursery's policies and procedures. There is also good information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Parents and carers of new children visit the nursery and liaise with staff to help settle their children in. The nursery has its own website and communicates conveniently with parents through email. Staff make use of notice boards and newsletters to keep parents up to date with news and events. Parents and carers also have access to a set of literature on parenting, and childcare, which offers helpful information about bringing up young children. Parents take turns to man the outer gate at the end of the session according to a security rota and are invited on an annual family outing to a wildlife park. This helps them to feel involved in the setting. They are generally highly satisfied with the care that is offered to their children.

The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is good. There is useful information in the brochure about the Foundation Stage and areas of learning. Each week a list of planned activities is posted on the notice board so that parents know what the children will be learning. These are easy to read and encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning. Parents can talk with staff at any time about their children's progress and are invited to discuss any concerns that staff have in this regard. However, there is no system in place for keeping parents regularly informed about their children's progress while at nursery. Overall, children benefit from the working partnership between staff and parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. All the necessary policies are in place and readily available to staff and parents. The documentation is particularly well organised, all letters and forms being clearly labelled and easily accessible. Information about children is kept securely in locked cupboards. The written planning is produced on the computer each week which means that it is very clear and easy to use. The paperwork overall provides a good framework for the nursery's practice and contributes effectively to keeping children, healthy, safe, and, enjoying and achieving.

Staff have a high regard for children's well-being. They ensure that children are safeguarded through carrying out checks on all staff and taking care not to allow adult helpers to be alone with children. There is a student placement policy in place and staff adhere to this at all times. New staff have a three month trial period to make sure they are suitable to work in the nursery. Staff are committed to continually improving the provision through attending training courses. They feed back to each other so that all can benefit from newly acquired knowledge.

Staff make good use of the available space in the synagogue to provide children with different environments in which to play and partake in activities. The splitting of children into age groups works well in enabling staff to meet children's needs appropriately through resourcing and planning. Each class follows a set routine to allow for shared use of the large hall. Staff maintain good adult to child ratios so that children feel secure and well cared for in the setting. The rooms are laid out attractively for children and, in good weather, they have the opportunity to move freely between indoor and outdoor activities. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and this helps sessions to run very smoothly. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The head teacher is keen to develop the educational provision and has worked hard on improving the supporting paperwork. She meets with staff regularly to plan the programme and ensures that they all have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' framework so that the planning is done in parallel for both classes. She monitors the provision continually and this enables her to respond to children's needs through the purchase of new resources, for example, a 'shop' to extend role play. In this respect she works closely with the committee and takes into account the requirements of the Jewish Education Agency. She leads effectively through being actively involved with staff and children. Her management contributes successfully to the provision of a good nursery education programme.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the nursery was asked to obtain written parental consent for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice, obtain contact details for seeking advice about child protection concerns and ensure that children's attendance registers show the times of arrival and departure. The required consent is now obtained from all parents and the registers are maintained appropriately. The information on child protection has been updated. This response has contributed to the improvement of health and safety procedures.

At the previous nursery education inspection the nursery was asked to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills through providing more opportunities to learn about sounds and letters, and addition and subtraction. Children now have good opportunities to increase their skills in

these areas through phonics work, word recognition, games and rhymes. This contributes to children's good progress in these areas of learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

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

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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):

- review the organisation of snack time to ensure children are aware of personal safety.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that staff provide a variety of opportunities for children to extend their early writing skills
- develop a system for keeping parents informed about their children's progress towards the early learning goals.

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