

The Crescent Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	120263
Inspection date	05 October 2007
Inspector	Joanna Scott
Setting Address	Merrow Cricket Club, Epsom Road, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2RE
Telephone number	01483 537280
E-mail	
Registered person	Lynn Flaherty
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?

The Crescent Nursery School is privately owned. It opened in 1988, and has been under the current ownership since 1998. It operates from Merrow Cricket Club, in Merrow near Guildford in Surrey. During operational hours the group has sole use of the single storey building which consists of one main room, toilet facilities, a kitchen and an enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. It is open each weekday during term time only from 09:15 to 12:30. In the summer term one session per week is extended to 13:00 and includes a lunch club.

There are currently 31 children aged from two years and six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs six members of staff, including the proprietor. Of these five staff work directly with the children each session. Five staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children's good health is promoted. They play in a clean and well maintained environment. Staff ensure that the pavilion is well prepared for the children before they arrive, for example ensuring that the toilets are cleaned, and well stocked. Posters are displayed for the children to remind them to wash their hands after toileting, with pictorial instructions for them to follow. Staff talk to the children about the importance of cleaning their hands before cooking activities. They encourage them to think for themselves what they must do, and discuss why this protects their good health. These verbal and visual reminders help children to make links between good health and personal hygiene. There is a sick child policy in place, and parents are informed of any known illnesses which cause children to be absent, such as chicken pox or vomiting. This helps to minimize the spread of infection. Minor accidents are dealt with compassionately and with good practice. This ensures that children's needs are met, and that they are re-assured.

The children show an interest in food. As they arrive at the setting many of them go to look at the snack bar menu to see what foods will be on offer that day. Children chat about what their favourites are. The snacks are prepared by staff, then children take turns to come to the table and make their selection. Most children try a little of all the available foods, for example a biscuit, a piece of orange and some cucumber. Planned activities during the year include topics which focus on healthy eating, when children create colourful displays of fruit and vegetables. A visit from the dental hygienist raises children's awareness, and promotes good dental health. This helps children to learn to make good choices about food.

Children have opportunities to improve their physical skills on a daily basis. Children use soft play equipment inside which promotes their gross development, and use scissors, cutters and pencils to improve their fine motor skills. Whenever possible they have opportunities to play in the outside area where they climb on a frame, and play with sand and water. Staff are vigilant about sun safety, and help the children to be aware of playing in the shade and wearing a sun hat. Children benefit from being in the fresh air. Occasionally the group plan activities provided on the cricket field in front of their building. This is a large and open space where children have space to run around more actively. Each year children have the opportunity to bring their bikes to the group as well as taking part in sports day. This encourages children to develop a positive attitude to exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children arrive to a welcoming environment which the staff create each week. There are areas for children to work at low level tables, and to take part in more active play. A well stocked book corner provides space for children to relax. Excellent use of partitions and wall hangings to display children's art work provides stimulation inside, and promotes the children's pride in their achievements. Resources are selected in line with the group's planning, and are accessible to the children. All are of a high quality and are used safely by the children. There is a detailed risk assessment completed annually, and daily checks of the premises and equipment are carried out to protect the children.

Children arrive and are greeted by the staff within their key areas. However, drop off is a busy time and nobody is responsible for supervision of the door so there is a risk of unauthorised

entry. At all other times staff are deployed effectively. They supervise the children very well. After drop off a buzzer on the door is turned on. This causes a loud audio alarm to sound and alert the staff when the door is opened, as the door remains unlocked.

Children learn about keeping safe, for example they practise evacuation and understand how to leave the premises quickly and safely, and planned topic work includes a visit from fire fighters. This raises children's awareness. When they are climbing in the garden the staff encourage the children to do so safely, for example reminding younger children to use both hands, and take their time.

Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of child protection issues, and the procedure to follow should they have a concern. This safeguards children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children participate in a wide range of activities which the staff link with both the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. They arrive happily at the setting, identify their own pegs for their coats, then find their name cards and settle with their key workers for a table top activity such as playing with play dough or building blocks, whilst their friends arrive. This is a busy time, children chatter with each other and the staff, and are fully interested in the activities that are provided. Their enjoyment is increased by the staff's interaction and encouragement.

Circle and story times are delivered extremely effectively. All the children sit together and take an active role in discussion and re-enacting stories and songs, such as "10 in the Bed" and "The Enormous Turnip". The children are confident, and gain huge enjoyment from these sessions.

The children enjoy very close and warm relationships with the staff and their peers. They approach each other freely, and like to involve others in their play. This is a very comfortable environment, where the children feel valued and nurtured. They experience a regular routine which helps children to feel secure, and gain an understanding of time as the morning progresses. Children's development is recorded, and assessed to ensure children are suitably challenged. The key workers know their children very well, and staff understand children's individual care and learning needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The proprietor of the setting, and her manager a qualified teacher, organise the long term planning for the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff take an active role in planning the activities in the medium and short term, and meet as a team weekly to ensure that activities are well planned and delivered. Written plans cover all areas of learning. Staff observe children as they play and learn, and record their development. This, along with discussion at staff meetings is used to assess and move children on.

The children are confident, both in their small groups with their key workers, and when in a large group. They happily participate in group discussion, and singing. They display good levels of concentration, and are able to sit for extended periods at activities. However, staff do not always maximize opportunities for increasing children's independence, for instance in preparing or serving snacks. The children are encouraged to be aware of each other, to take turns, to share, and to co-operate. They are polite.

The children communicate clearly. Staff use group discussion to explain activities. Staff are skilled at asking children to think about their play, and recall what they have been learning about. The children record their achievements in exercise books, using mark making to carry meaning. They demonstrate a real enjoyment of books and story telling. This is reinforced by staff as they bring books to life through colourful story telling. For instance the children stand up with a member of staff and go on their own dinosaur hunt around the room, squelching through the mud in their adaptation of the familiar book "Going on a Bear Hunt". The children enthusiastically join in with the familiar refrains, enjoying the variation of the story. Books are displayed on tables and in the book corner, making them easily accessible and attractive to the children. Children pick them up with interest. The children have a very good understanding of letters and sounds, and they take sound books home. This enables parents to share and reinforce children's learning at home. They recognise their names as they self register and put their pictures in their own drawers. Children have daily opportunities to improve their pencil control. They are confident with numbers. They have regular opportunities to count, and some confidently count the total number of children in the room. They sing about numbers, and count up and down as an introduction to the start of things. They use resources such as maths bears to compare colour and size. The room is richly stimulating, and there are many examples of letters and numbers displayed, including number lines. This sparks the children's awareness, and reinforces their learning, however, this is not so evident in the outside area.

Children are interested in the natural world. They enjoy autumnal walks, and grow and nurture plants in the garden. They show an interest in how things work; they talk about using the computer at nursery, they play with torches shining the light into the cave they have built from soft play equipment and sheets, and they propel wind mills in the garden with their fingers and lots of blowing.

Children benefit from going out on visits in the community, and from adults visiting them at the setting. This helps to bring some of their topic work to life, such as a visit from the postman delivering a letter from India. Children have many opportunities to be creative; they play musical instruments, use collage materials to make large dinosaurs, and use their imagination during role play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued, and learn to value others. They feel a part of the setting, and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children take great pride in their achievements, and enjoy sharing them, for example a child calls to her friend to show her the glittery crayon drawing she has made, and the children look at the displays on the wall talking about what they have done. At group times the staff make every opportunity for children to voice their opinions and feelings, and children know that they are listened to. Staff praise and encourage children as they play, and the children are encouraged to persevere. This promotes very good self esteem.

The children behave very well. The staff communicate clearly with children, and their positive, consistent and calm approach is highly effective. Children understand how they are expected to behave, and staff are skilled at promoting wanted behaviour, and helping children feel secure. They support children to share and take turns. The children are kind and caring towards each other, happy to see their friends, and keen to involve them in play. The children have taken an active roll in developing the group rules, and these are displayed prominently.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff liaise closely with parents to find out about the children's needs and development. There are daily opportunities to share information verbally. Good use of notices keep parents informed of what is going on at the setting. Children take books home, for the parents and children to share at home. Children's development is recorded, and parents are invited in each term to share this. Annual written reports are provided which reflect children's achievements and identify their next steps. Parents are made aware of the policies and procedures and operation of the setting through the detailed written information they receive. This includes a complaints procedure, and is in compliance with regulations.

Staff meet children's individual needs. There is excellent support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All children are welcomed into the setting, with very high regard given to inclusion. Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and work extremely closely with parents and external agencies to meet children's specific needs.

Children learn about their community as they enjoy visits to the library and post office, and local horticultural gardens. They learn about the wider world as they cover topics such as "food from around the world", which gives them an insight into other countries and cultures. The staff and children take opportunities to practise some key words in other languages, for instance children confidently call out "bonjour" as an alternative at "hello" registration time.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are robust procedures in place to ensure that suitable staff are recruited who are checked and cleared to work with children. Annual appraisals highlight areas for further staff training development. The key worker system in place ensures that staffing ratios are maintained at all times, and children are well supported.

The staff organise the resources effectively, and according to the planning. This ensures that children are able to come straight in and settle at an activity. They are a highly effective team, who work together to transform the room from a cricket pavilion to a child friendly and stimulating environment each Monday morning. The time table ensures that a regular routine is in place which allows times to participate in planned activities in small groups, large groups, and enjoy free play. Children have the opportunity to be active and for more restful occupation. All regulatory documentation is in place and maintained.

The leadership and management are very good. The proprietor and the manager work together, and are dedicated to providing a good quality provision, with high standards of care and education. Staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This highly motivated and dedicated team are committed to self appraisal and development of the setting, and attending training to build on skills and knowledge. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection three recommendations were made. Firstly they were asked to revise the child detail forms to include information about religion and language spoken at home. This is now recorded, and ensures children's needs are met, and that they are treated with equal concern. They were asked to keep a record of all pre-existing injuries. This is recorded, although

not always signed by parents. Finally they were asked to ensure that all regulatory records are maintained in ink. This is in place, and ensures permanency.

At the last nursery education inspection, one point for consideration was made. That was in relation to ensuring that evidence and references that link planning, assessments and the children's profiles are clearly identified and consistently recorded and dated. This is in place, records are meaningful, and provide clarity.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the April 2004, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints 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):

- further improve safety procedures for children by ensuring security of the front door when the session is in operation and during arrival at the setting, in line with any recommendations made by the Fire Officer

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

- develop further the labelling in the outside area to reinforce children's learning and provide a more stimulating play environment, particularly in terms of mathematical development

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