

NCH Folkestone Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	151503
Inspection date	30 November 2007
Inspector	Cilla Rachel Mullane
Setting Address	The Early Years Centre, Dover Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 1QF
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Registered person	N C H
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Folkestone Early Years Centre Nursery Unit opened in 2001. It operates from a purpose built building in Folkestone, Kent. The nursery has access to two rooms, an office, toilets and an outside area. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 39 children on roll. This includes 33 funded three and four year old children.

Children attend morning or afternoon sessions. The nursery has experience caring for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children speaking English as an additional language.

The Pre-school opens five days a week, term time only. Sessions last from 09.00 to 11.30 and 13.00 to 15.30.

There are five staff who work with the children, four of whom hold an early years qualification, and all attend short courses. There are also 'bank' staff, a caretaker and an administrator. Two staff are currently undertaking training. The nursery receives support from an early years advisor.

The nursery is part of a National Children's Home (NCH) centre, which is currently working towards Children's Centre status. In addition to the nursery, the centre provides a variety of other services for children and their families. There is an out of school club, a parents' room, parents' courses with crèches, a variety of drop-in support groups for parents, carers and their families, play therapy, health advice and speech and language work. Also, staff work in the community, visiting families at home, and supporting other local groups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The nursery is kept clean, and staff consistently apply thorough health and hygiene procedures. For example, they use disposable gloves when serving food, which helps to prevent the spread of infection. However, the use of blocks of soap instead of liquid soap has the potential to increase the spread of germs between children. Children are learning to keep themselves clean: pictures of hand-washing in the toilet area help to reinforce the message. Staff effectively model good hygienic practices, for example, they discuss the fact that they have washed before eating, and children readily follow their example. All staff hold current first aid qualifications, so children would receive informed care in case of an emergency. Accident records are thorough, and children are further protected because staff check these for patterns. Children who require medication are carefully looked after: records include photographs of the child concerned.

At snack times children make healthy choices of fruit and vegetables, and help to grate carrot and cheese, and slice tomatoes. They learn about the origin of the food when staff chat about, for example, where cheese comes from. Children with food allergies or special diets are well looked after as lists are displayed for staff both in the kitchen and the nursery.

Children benefit from playing in the large outside area on a daily basis. In inclement weather, they wear waterproof suits and wellies. Children are challenged by balancing and climbing apparatus, and develop coordination and spatial awareness riding trikes and throwing hoops and balls. They are helped to understand the benefits of exercise, for example, a child using a saw noticed that the hard work made him hot. There are frequent opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills: they competently hammer nails into wood, and pick up small pieces of pasta to carefully stick to paper.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The environment is warm and welcoming, children and their carers are greeted warmly, and staff take time to chat to parents about their children. The nursery environment is well planned and set out, enabling children to act independently, initiate their own play and make choices. For example, they confidently select from the range of craft resources and compile collages. They pour their own drinks at the snack bar. Children's work is attractively displayed, with written descriptions, showing children that it is worthwhile and valued. Toys and equipment are plentiful, and very well organised and maintained. For example, in the well resourced home area children pretend to cook and serve meals. Although staff take time throughout the week to set up activities encompassing all the areas of learning in the outside area, they are working towards having clear permanent areas for different activities, for example, growing and role play.

Children are kept safe within the setting. Thorough risk assessments and checklists are used to good effect, for example, the premises are checked daily for trip hazards and to ensure that cleaning materials are inaccessible to children. A good procedure is in place for the arrivals and collection of children: an adult stands at the door, while parents enter to talk to staff. Great care is taken regarding children's safety on outings. They wear high visibility vests, and staff carry walkie talkies. Fire drills are practised each session for a week on a termly basis, so all children and adults are included. The centre's caretaker tests the fire bells weekly, in addition to clearing up at lunchtime, checking large equipment before use, and ensuring that quick action is taken to eliminate any reported hazards.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children procedures, and understand their responsibility towards protecting children from harm. A clear written procedure reflects local guidance, informs practice and is understood by staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are generally secure and happy within the nursery. They enter confidently, separate happily from their carers, and quickly find something to do. Staff are really caring towards the children, gently supporting those who are a little unsure, sensitively involving them in activities, and encouraging friendships. Children feel able to approach staff for reassurance and cuddles: a child who had a minor accident immediately approached an adult for a hug. Staff are openly kind and helpful to each other, and children imitate their encouraging and reassuring gestures, such as stroking their friends' arms. Children are acting independently, initiating play and helping themselves to snacks, and taking themselves to the toilet. Children are always active, and are never frustrated by having to stop, wait, queue and listen. They are using all their senses while learning, for example, feeling textures of dissolved soap flakes, listening to and identifying the sounds of different musical instruments behind a screen.

The wide range of interesting and exciting activities on offer, both planned and child initiated, ensure that children have a wonderful time at the nursery. Children are excited and involved in the activities. They become engrossed, for example, when a simple tea party develops into cutting up a real pumpkin, and making pretend soup. Birthdays are a popular time, when a child chooses three friends to help prepare and bake a cake. Children especially love the two nursery bears, who they take home, along with a camera to record what they do. Staff and parents make these photographs and anecdotes into beautifully presented books, which the children love to look at in the book area, calling their friends over to see their books.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

The environment has been carefully set out so that children can initiate and develop their own learning experiences. Children have opportunities to practise, concentrate, persevere and consolidate their learning because staff give them time, let them revisit activities, and support them, or leave them to succeed on their own. Children are very proud of their achievements, because often they have succeeded without help. Staff readily demonstrate their pleasure at children's successes in words and gestures, and also by taking photographs. There is a good balance between child initiated activities and adult led play: children therefore learn at their own pace, and are helped to develop new skills.

Staff are adept at responding to individual interests. Therefore children are learning from activities which they enjoy. For example, a child made and rode in a 'monster truck', and the doctor's surgery evolved into the reception area. If a child requests a favourite activity, staff accommodate their wishes, for example, the workbench was brought out at a child's request. Staff make the most of unexpected events, for example, engaging the children's interest when a parent came in with a baby. Staff hold the children's interest expertly at story times, using props and story sacks, and sitting on the floor with the children.

Children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals.

The promotion of personal, social and emotional development is a strength within the setting. Children are very motivated, and keen to investigate and explore. They concentrate for long periods, for example, on carefully constructing a collage with spaghetti and sweet wrappers. Children are making friends and looking after each other: two boys building with bricks reported that they were helping each other, and a child helped another understand a computer game.

There are many opportunities for children to mark-make and practise writing, such as swirling in foam, and making lists for Santa. Therefore children understand that the written word has meaning. They enjoy books, enthusiastically joining in stories, and 'reading' to each other. Their vocabulary is developing through activities such as messy play, where they discuss big waves, slimy textures, and popping bubbles which tickle their hands.

Creativity is encouraged, therefore children construct and use their imaginations, acting out scenarios in the home corner, and making models and collages. Mathematical development is well promoted: children practise simple calculation when counting plates at snack time, and talk about shapes and numbers continuously during their play. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is increasing. They learn about their community first hand, through outings such as a 'bear hunt' on the beach, and a trip to buy the Christmas tree. They use the computer adeptly, enjoying succeeding at games.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff know the children very well, and are therefore able to meet their individual needs for example, by providing activities which they know will interest them. Children see images of diversity on society around the setting, and activities are labelled in different languages. They are learning about their local community and becoming aware of wider society through enjoyable activities such as using a map on a local walk, buying stamps and posting letters in the post office, and shopping for food for their snacks.

Children's behaviour is generally good, as they start to learn about self control, and respect for others. Staff are good role models, behaving in a caring and respectful way towards each other and the children. When children disagree, staff help them to think about the effect of their actions on the feelings of others. Children feel valued, as staff constantly build their self esteem, encouraging pride in their work, and praise their achievements. They frequently use phrases such as 'that's wonderful', 'well done', and they show their work to other children and staff.

Partnership with parents is outstanding.

Parents are fully involved in the care and education of their children. They discuss their child's abilities and personalities at the beginning of their time at nursery, and both parents and staff

complete an initial assessment of their interests and abilities. Therefore there is a clear record of progress during their time at the setting. Staff visit children and their carers at home prior to their attending nursery, which makes children feel secure, and enables staff to treat them individually according to their needs. Parents receive good quality information about their children's curriculum: the prospectus provides information about the six areas of learning, and gives examples of activities within each, and the activity plans are available for parents to see. Parents are extremely happy with the caring and approachable staff, and how their children have grown in confidence. They feel well informed about their children's progress, because they can see their folders at any time, and staff make time to look at the folders together.

Children's social, moral and spiritual development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom care and education is provided.

Staff are qualified, enthusiastic and extremely competent, they regularly undertake short training courses such as 'respect and dignity', food hygiene and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) briefings, so children are cared for by informed and knowledgeable practitioners. Staff work well as a team, bringing different strengths and experiences to the setting.

The organisation of the sessions is good, with a pace and routine which meets the children's needs. The main part of the morning is taken up with child initiated or chosen activities, so children can make choices and learn at their own pace. Staff use the lunch time break extremely constructively, planning the afternoon session according to the needs and interests of the children who will be attending. Therefore the activities and play experiences provided are exceptionally well matched to children's needs and interests.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding.

The manager of the setting works with the children, and therefore knows the setting's strengths and weaknesses, and the abilities of the staff. Strengths are realistically identified, and include working effectively with parents, and ensuring the children's emotional wellbeing. Staff meet together daily to plan the next session and day, based on the children's interests and individual needs. This ensures that all staff work consistently and are very aware of individual children's interests and progress.

All staff have an expert knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, and play an equal part in the planning of activities. Therefore children experience a balance of activities encompassing the six areas of learning. The majority of planning happens a day in advance, so staff are able to respond promptly to children's interests and needs, building on what they already know and extending their learning, rather than planning for the next week, when the moment has passed and children's interests are elsewhere.

The success of the care offered, and that of the provision of nursery education is monitored and evaluated effectively, leading to improvements and changes which benefit the children and their carers. Staff use the children's records to ensure they are taking part in activities across all the curriculum. They evaluate the success of activities daily. They seek feedback from parents, and have, for example, introduced home visits to discuss children's progress, as a result. Staff use 'wellbeing and involvement screening' to check children's levels of engagement

and enthusiasm in order to help ensure that children are gaining the most from their time in the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection it was recommended that the operational plan be made accessible to parents. Parents are well informed about the organisation of the nursery.

At the last inspection of nursery education it was recommended that the nursery consider the benefits of using a time line to provide a visual reference indoors for children to develop a sense of time. Children benefit from having a clear and appropriate routine, a photographic time line, and the security of knowing what will happen next.

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.

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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 use of the outside area.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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