

SKIPS

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127509
Inspection date	04 October 2007
Inspector	Claire, Alexandra Parnell
Setting Address	The Old Guide Hut, Oldbury Lane, Ightham, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 9DE
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Registered person	Susan Chesson
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

SKIPS opened, under the present owner, in 1998. It operates from a converted hut in Ightham, near Sevenoaks. There are kitchen and toilet facilities and the group have access to outdoor play areas, the adjoining school play ground, fields and hall. It serves families from the local community and surrounding villages.

There are currently approximately 200 children, aged from two to 14 years, on roll. This includes 20 funded three and four years olds. The setting makes provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week, from 08.00 until 18.00, for 47 weeks of the year. A breakfast club operates from 08.00 and the pre-school children attend from 09.00. During term time there is a morning and afternoon session for pre-school children followed by an out of school club. During school holidays the group are open from 08.00 until 18.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are eight members of staff who work with the children. There are six members of staff who have a recognised early years qualification and relevant staff hold a current first aid

certificate. The setting receives support from an advisor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) and four Children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean and hygienic environment due to the routine procedures followed by all staff, such as using appropriate cloths to wipe tables for eating and quickly and effectively mopping up spillages around the setting. Toilets are regularly checked to ensure children are flushing toilets and so ensure the bathroom is clean and tidy. Children are developing a good understanding for personal hygiene. They can access boxes of tissues themselves and have support from staff to ensure tissues are disposed of hygienically. Children independently use the toilets, due to their easy access and low levels. Children who are being toilet trained receive sensitive and subtle support to develop their self help skills. Older children are very aware of promoting their hygiene skills, such as washing hands before food, after toileting and after messy play. They actively talk about using soap and drying their hands well to prevent cross infection.

Children are making very healthy options of food and drink. Children staying for a cooked lunch have choices of healthy options provided by the adjoining school canteen. Meals are freshly cooked from local produce to promote healthy eating. Children's parents are encouraged by the staff to make choices for their children at the beginning of the day. Some children bring packed lunches. The staff encourage parents to provide healthy options for children. Children who attend the out of school club also choose from a range of healthy foods and drinks. At breakfast they have a range of cereals and at tea children discuss options with staff, who prepare the meals for them in the setting, such as jacket potatoes with a variety of fillings, and pasta. All children have access to drinking water at all times to ensure their thirst is quenched. Children are encouraged to bring a snack from home but the setting also provides a range of fresh and dried fruits for children. Children's documentation contains good records of any restricted food for individual children to ensure their dietary needs are met.

Children make use of excellent opportunities to promote their physical wellbeing. They experience many different environments for physical play, such as the playing fields, public playground equipment, school hall and playground, and the local woods. The setting has an outdoor area which promotes indoor activities for the outdoors, such as sand and water, allowing children to play in the fresh air throughout the session. Children have regular use of the school's reception play area, participating in activities involving new skills and movement, for example, bikes, trikes, scooters, balls, hoops and bean bags. Children also take part in structured planned physical activities throughout the week. The more able children attend a session within the school hall to extend their existing skills through music and movement. The less able children take part in informal, less structured sessions within the setting involving music, space and movement as well as group games with parachutes and other resources.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a very safe and secure environment. The setting is well maintained, clean and free from hazards due to vigilant staff and their daily checks of the environment and equipment.

Staff use effective reminders to ensure hazardous materials are kept inaccessible to children. Good security measures are in place and staff are very vigilant to ensure children do not leave the premises unattended.

Children are able to access additional equipment and resources independently because staff have made resources available at low levels and in sensibly sized containers and baskets. Children use equipment such as chairs and tables appropriately because of their size and the staff's effective risk assessments and regular discussions with children about their safe use.

Good risk assessments are carried out throughout the whole premises and the surrounding area to ensure children can play freely and safely. Evidence shows that staff act quickly when potential hazards are identified and areas of play are restricted until action is taken to make the area safe again. Good fire procedures are implemented to ensure children are safely and effectively evacuated from the building in an emergency. Fire drills are recorded and evaluated well to ensure their effectiveness. Children within the pre-school and the play scheme have many opportunities to go on outings. Effective procedures are in place to ensure these trips are safely carried out. Parents consent is sought and a full risk assessment carried out for each trip.

Children's welfare is promoted well. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities for protecting children from harm and of the procedures to follow if concerns arise. Some staff have past experiences of following procedures and are aware of what to record, how to monitor and who to contact for support.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages play freely and happily within the setting's environment, both inside and outside. Younger children are given sensitive support when settling and older children, attending the out of school provision, are confident and very familiar with their setting. They confidently choose what they want to play with, who to play with and where to play. They are well known to each other and the staff, resulting in good socialising skills from all children. Staff are successfully using the Birth to three matters framework to promote younger children's ongoing development. This is linked effectively to the planning and the children's observations. Younger children receive simplified explanations and questions to build their confidence to take part in all activities. Children have access to a good range of well laid out and accessible resources, equipment and activities, promoting all areas of development. Staff interact very well with all the children, taking into consideration their individual needs and development stages.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Staff are knowledgeable within the Foundation Stage and therefore demonstrate their awareness of meeting children's individual development in practice. This is evident in some areas of the planning for children's development due to the careful link between planned activities and targeted children, providing other staff with information on who to support and extend. However, the planning is based on one stepping stone of development. Children are progressing towards different stepping stones within an activity, therefore the planning does not reflect individual children's stages of development. All areas of learning are provided for during each session to ensure children have all rounded opportunities to learn. However, the staff do not evaluate the effectiveness of the activities that are planned for.

Good levels of assessment are carried out throughout the session. Children's observations are very evaluative, demonstrating what they have learnt and how they have learnt it. The next steps of development are identified and effectively used to inform the future planning. Good systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Careful liaison takes place between parents, other professional bodies and the staff to promote continuity and support.

Most children confidently communicate with each other and the staff, using some complex explanations to describe what they are doing. Staff make good use of story time to meet children's different abilities. Less able children have short and simple stories as well as songs and discussion to reinforce the meaning of the story. More able children have a more complex and longer story with discussion to extend their thinking. Children freely use books, demonstrating how to care for them and how to use them. Children have plentiful opportunities to mark make within the creative and writing area as well as through role play.

Children are developing a good understanding for mathematical language and concepts. They actively count within practical exercises such as registration time, to associate a number with an amount. They recognise comparison of sizes, linking smaller and bigger to pieces of equipment. They have access to plentiful resources to promote their mathematical development.

Children are developing a good sense of place, time and belonging. They identify which animals live where, linking these to their experiences of visiting zoos and farms. Children have regular opportunities to explore different environment around the setting such as the playing fields, playgrounds, woods, their own outdoor play area with sand and water as well as large play equipment. Children have good support when experiencing sensory materials. Children are encouraged to feel the textures given to them, such as shaving foam, particularly when children are known to dislike getting messy. Children grow in confidence to explore other materials due to the staff's sensitive encouragement.

Children confidently act out familiar roles and stories, using accessible props and with staff's enthusiasm. Children have recently been looking at the story of the Bear Hunt and act it out along side music to support children's recall development. Children freely create with a good range of medium and media, freely expressing themselves with paint, glue and dough. Children thoroughly enjoy small world experiences, using their imagination to extend their play and learning. Children making the train talk about how long the track is and when they have been on a train.

Children are developing good dexterity skills. They adapt the use of their fingers and hands to change the use of materials, such as children using their palms and fingers to flatten dough instead of using the rolling pin. They confidently use a pincer grip to manoeuvre small equipment to change their use, such as moving the limbs of play people to make them sit down.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individuality is celebrated and promoted well within the setting. Staff have access to good written details about each child, informing them of their family backgrounds, religion, ethnicity and languages spoken at home. This information is then used to reflect children's individual needs. Children have access to plentiful resources that promote positive images of today's society. Therefore children learn to respect other children's differences.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good levels of support from staff. They are encouraged to participate in all activities, with subtle yet effective support. Staff liaise well with parents to ensure that parents, staff and other professional input has a good impact on children's welfare.

Children behave well within the setting due to their knowledge of right and wrong and of the boundaries carefully set by the staff. Children receive plentiful praise from staff regarding acceptable behaviour through cheers, sharing their achievements with their peers and other staff and cuddles. Children also receive effective explanations about unwanted behaviour and they learn about the consequences of their action, linking the effects of their action to other children. The setting has a good behaviour management statement that positively reflects staff's practices. Children are very confident and have high levels of self esteem. They confidently ask for further resources or help themselves to what they want, they talk openly to others about their home life and events in their lives. Children demonstrate very good independent and self help skills such as putting their own shoes and coats on, pouring their own drinks, making choices of who to play with and where to play as well as taking themselves to the toilet. Children are developing a good sense of their community through regular play experiences with their peers, regular and effective links with the school and children who have now moved to reception class as well as older children who attend before and after school. Children are very interested in learning, listening intently to stories, asking effective questions to make sense of the story, confidently speaking in a group about their play and effectively interacting with their peers. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive excellent information about both the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum for three and four year olds. Simple examples of children's progress is given to develop parents knowledge of how children learn through play and the stages that they achieve. Children's registration forms contain excellent details to allow staff to reflect their individual needs through the care, such as health information, special words and the names of family members. However, the setting gains limited information about children's development to enable their starting points to be recorded and used to plan for their future development. Parents are openly welcomed into the setting, particularly when children are settling in for the first time. Parents receive daily verbal feedback about their children's development and particular achievements for that day. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their children's development in details and to look at their written profiles to share ideas and future progress related to their own children. The setting offers excellent continuity of care for children. Children who leave the preschool to go to school are offered places at lunch time and in the afternoon until they attend school full-time. They also have opportunities to continue their time in the setting before and after school and during school holidays. Each parent receives a frequent informative newsletter telling them about the themes and learning objectives for the term and about past activities to allow parents to continue this theme at home. Parents have access to the settings policies and procedures as well as comprehensive details of who to contact if parents have concerns about the care of their children. Parents demonstrate their confidence in the staff who care for their children, commenting that their children settle well and are happy in their environment.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a highly motivated, qualified and experienced staff team. Good procedures are in place to ensure new staff, students and visitors do not have unsupervised access to children unless they have relevant clear checks. Robust recruitment procedures ensure

children's welfare is promoted well as only staff with relevant checks, experiences, references and skills work with the children to promote their care and education.

Most children are very settled and confident in the setting. New and less confident children receive cuddles and reassurance from all staff to build their confidence to leave their parents for the first time. Staff are deployed well within the two rooms and the outside play areas. They are very aware of their responsibilities to ensure all children are engaged in activities, having their needs met as well as building an excellent rapport between themselves and the child. Full details are kept on all children and kept effectively to show which provision they are attending, for example, pre-school, play-scheme or before and after school club. Sound systems are in place to record children's attendance. Although children are marked in and out by the staff at circle time, this does not always occur as soon as the children arrive in the setting. Parents sign children in and out as well, resulting in two sometimes conflicting registration systems within the setting.

All children's details and records are kept safe, secure and confidential. Most records are kept within the setting, with additional documents kept in the owners possession, safely in her own house. All staff are very aware of who to share children's details with, therefore promoting their welfare.

The leadership and management is good. Staff hold regular staff meetings to discuss practice and improvements for the educational programme. This has lately included the development of the planning and observation systems to ensure this meets children's individual learning needs. The group have very close links to the adjoining school. All staff including the head teacher and reception teacher liaise closely with the pre-school and out of school club to ensure continuity of care and education is promoted for all children. The group offer lunch time and afternoon sessions for children only attending morning sessions within the reception class, helping children to develop their confidence and giving reassurance and support. The group are also able to expand the learning experiences for children by using the school grounds, equipment and teacher's valued expertise. The staff and school teachers link the children's learning closely by using each other's teaching strategies to provide a continuous learning programme for children and consistency for parents. The staff in the setting individually assess their own practice as well as the group's practice as a whole to analyse what is working well and what needs improving for children's learning.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were given one recommendation to improve the quality of child care and one point to consider to improve the nursery education for children.

The setting's child protection statement did not include details of procedures for allegations made against staff. This has now been updated with clear procedures to follow if this occurs. The group are also in the process of updating the statement in line with changes regarding safeguarding committees, therefore promoting children's welfare.

The setting did not use the stepping stones as a reference towards children progress within the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is now implemented well; each child's observation of achievement is clearly related to the stepping stone of development within each area of learning, therefore clearly demonstrating children's progress.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that requires 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 how the setting records children's attendance

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):

- further develop the planning to ensure differentiation and evaluation promotes children's individual abilities

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