

Apples Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	126975
Inspection date	02 April 2008
Inspector	Jane Rea
Setting Address	Saga Pavillion, Enbrook Park, Sandgate High Street, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 3SE
Telephone number	01303 776300
E-mail	nurserymanager@saga.co.uk
Registered person	SAGA Group Ltd
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Apples Nursery is a privately run setting which first opened in 1998. The nursery is owned by Saga and caters only for parents working within the Saga sites in Folkestone and Sandgate.

The nursery occupies purpose built facilities, which include a baby unit, over twos' open-plan area and 'soft play' room. The children have constant access to outside play in fine weather. After-school care is provided for children up to 11 years. Children are collected from five local primary schools by the Saga bus. After-school children are cared for in a separate house on the same site.

The provision is registered for children from birth to eight years of age and is open each weekday from 08.30 to 18.00, throughout the year for nursery and after-school children. There is also a holiday club. There are currently 163 children on roll, of whom 32 receive nursery education funding. The nursery has experience in providing for children who speak English as an additional language and for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are 27 staff who work directly with the children on a rota basis plus three supernumerary staff. Of these 28 hold, or are working towards, appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy healthy, nutritious meals and snacks which are prepared on the premises. Snacks often comprise fruit such as melon, and meals always include fresh vegetables. Older children eat their meals in a designated part of the staff dining room and learn useful life-skills such as serving themselves with food and pouring their own drinks. Some staff eat with the children providing a valuable role model for healthy eating. Children with particular dietary needs are catered for; for example, the nursery provides dairy free yoghourts. Babies eat the same food as the older children, pureed if required. All children have access to drinking water whenever they want it in their own cups which are readily accessible. Children know when they are thirsty and will ask for their drinks when they come in from playing outside.

Children play in a clean and hygienic environment. The nursery benefits from the presence of a housekeeper who ensures that toilet areas are kept clean and any spills are quickly cleaned up whilst allowing nursery staff to remain with the children. There is a no-shoe policy in the baby rooms. Good procedures are followed for nappy changing. Staff use disposable gloves and aprons and nappies are disposed of by a contractor.

Children are well-cared for in the event of an accident. Most staff hold current first aid qualifications and the nursery has permission to seek medical treatment in the event of an emergency. All necessary documentation to underpin the care of the children and ensure continuity is in place. Parents are informed if their child has an accident, and give their written consent for the administration of medication. Appropriate procedures are followed when children are ill.

Children's health is well-promoted as they have regular opportunities to play outside. Babies use suitable equipment to push and pull and crawl through a tunnel, whilst older children climb, balance and learn to use other equipment which encourages them to develop their large muscles. All children benefit from walks in the grounds ensuring they have fresh air, including babies who are taken out in double buggies. Children also use their physical skills in the ball pool/soft play room where they climb and slide as well as taking part in more structured movement activities which develop their co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in purpose-built premises where thoughtful attention has been given to meeting the needs of young children. For example, doors used by children have windows at child height for their benefit, ceilings in the baby rooms have murals and toilets and changing facilities are close enough to play areas for children to use them independently. After-school children have sole use of a separate building which is well-organised to meet their needs; for example, there is a designated games room and a quiet room where they can chat or do their homework. The environment is excellent, with all children having direct access to the outdoor play areas which are used very effectively to promote all areas of children's learning. Outdoor areas comprise all-weather safety surfaces and also extensive lawns and a wooded area.

Children play with a wide range of good quality resources, many made from natural materials. For example, babies explore baskets of natural materials collected for heuristic play and

three-year-old children investigate the properties of metallic and non-metallic buttons as they experiment with magnetic wands. All children enjoy playing with sand and water and older children also explore natural objects such as pebbles and pine cones. Children build with a wide range of construction resources and four-year-olds use a computer with appropriate software. Children can easily access resources which are stored in labelled boxes in all play areas. There are sufficient good quality resources to meet the children's care needs; for example, tables, chairs and high chairs. Most children are content to sleep on mattresses on the floor, but cots are available if parents request them.

Children's safety is given a high priority. Security is good. There is a key pad entry system supported by CCTV monitoring. Children's safety is ensured when they are in the grounds as the nursery alerts the site security staff who are vigilant in monitoring their safety. Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out for all areas of the nursery and daily, weekly, termly and annual checks ensure children's safety.

Children's welfare is ensured as all staff receive regular child protection training and know the nursery procedure if they have concerns about individual children or the conduct of a member of staff. The designated member of staff has access to information detailing local safeguarding procedures, ensuring that appropriate measures are taken to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to plan for the youngest children, evaluating their progress in the activities against aspects of the framework. Babies enjoy painting and sensory activities with materials such as sand and water, and walks in the grounds. They enjoy heuristic play which allows them to explore the properties of a range of natural materials. Good use is made of the outdoor play areas to develop all children's learning in all areas of development; for example, construction, drawing, music and story time all take place outside, alongside physical and imaginative play. All children in the nursery enjoy a varied range of activities over the course of the day. However, some activities quite appropriately raise the noise levels, for example singing, but the routines of individual groups do not take account of this. The result is that sometimes an activity in one area impacts on the concentration of children engaged in a quiet activity, such as story time, elsewhere. After-school and holiday club children choose from a range of age-appropriate activities, some structured, for example craft activities, and some which they initiate themselves. They are able to relax whilst watching a video or listening to music and there is a quiet area where they can do their homework if they choose.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children's interests and ideas are used as the starting points in planning their education which ensures that children actively engage with the activities provided. Observations of the children inform the planning process. When planning for individuals staff identify those activities which will build on children's interests. However, they do not identify the learning intentions of the activity. For example, role play may have been identified to promote communication, language and literacy, but the planning does not make clear if the learning objective is to encourage the naming of objects, begin to use complex sentences or to make up stories. As a result, staff do not fully support children's learning.

Adult-led group activities are planned each week, with the same activity repeated daily throughout the week. Consideration is given to the support required by less able children.

However, plans do not identify how the more able children will be challenged through the activities.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is given good priority. Children develop independence and learn how to work in a group. They choose many of the daily activities such as which resources they will have with the sand and what colour the water should be. They are familiar with nursery routines and know they must wash their hands before snack, put on aprons to paint and put finished drawings in their trays. Children are confident to speak in front of the group and there is a good emphasis on songs and rhymes. Children see familiar words all around the nursery and there are clear labels on resources to help them recognise that written words have a meaning. Children know how to handle books and enjoy stories, although the high level of background noise sometimes impacts on their concentration.

Children learn mathematical ideas through activities in the normal daily routine such as counting how many cups are needed at lunch time, how many boys and girls are present and how many altogether. Number rhymes are used well to introduce the idea of subtraction and 'how many left' with the three-year-olds using props to support their understanding.

Developing knowledge and understanding of the world is a strong area. Children learn about their immediate environment when they explore a range of natural materials both in the nursery and on nature walks. Their awareness of the wider world is effectively promoted through visitors to the nursery and celebrating festivals such as Chinese New Year. Children learn about change as they mix different colours of paint and predict what the resulting colour will be. Four-year-olds are competent in the use of the computer and they use everyday technology in the form of a timer to limit the time they spend there.

Children have free access to a wide range of creative resources for drawing, painting, modelling and role play. They know where the resources are and four-year-olds are very independent at finding the resources they need in order to express their ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are treated as individuals in the nursery and their particular needs are met well; for example, different dietary needs are catered for and babies' own routines are followed with regard to sleep and meal times. Children's awareness of cultural difference is extended through activities such as role play; for example, four-year-olds know how to use Chinese utensils, and they use many resources depicting positive images in their play. Bilingual children are able to communicate in both home languages at the nursery.

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

Appropriate procedures are in place for the identification and support of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The nursery has good relationships with outside agencies from whom they can seek advice on how to meet children's particular needs.

Children behave well in the nursery. Their personal, social and emotional development is given good priority and children's self-esteem is evident as they proudly show visitors the photographs in their 'contact books'. Effective strategies are used to encourage children to develop their social skills, particularly at meal times when they serve their own food and pour their own drinks. After-school children are reminded of the 'Golden Rules' for their time together and

nursery children know the reasons for the 'rules' of the ball pool; for example, they must not climb on the netting because they might tear it. Staff are sensitive to the children's stage of development and aware of age-appropriate strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour.

Continuity of care for the children is ensured through the good relationships and effective communication channels between the nursery and home. Baby routines are recorded and sent home daily so that parents are aware of how much their child has eaten or slept. Older children have contact books with photographs of the children involved in activities in the nursery. Informative notice boards provide parents with a wealth of information about the nursery, what the children learn and their welfare.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. The nursery displays information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum on notice boards which also detail the children's current areas of interest. Parents are informed about their children's progress through the Foundation Stage at biannual parents' evenings and they can access their child's progress records at other times if they wish. However, not all parents are aware of the progress their children are making. Children's individual plans include space for ideas to support children's learning at home, but this not used effectively; for example, to discuss preferred writing styles if parents teach children to write their names at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in small groups which allows for their needs to be well-met by consistent staff. Continuity for children is given a high priority and their individual needs are met well. When they join the nursery children typically go into one of the four, mixed-age under-twos' rooms. They stay here until they are ready to move to the two-year-old area. Before moving group, children 'visit' the new room allowing them to familiarise themselves with the new environment, staff and routine. Staff complete a profile of the child so that the new staff team are well-informed about the child's development, interests and needs as they move rooms. Routines are varied and interesting as children spend time in different areas over the course of the day, such as their base room, the ball pool, the cafeteria and outside. Transitions between areas run smoothly, but sometimes impact on other groups of children.

Children are cared for by a stable core staff team. The majority of staff are qualified or undergoing training. In-service training is given good emphasis; for example, staff are currently developing their knowledge of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Staffing levels are very good with three supernumerary staff. This means that children are always cared for by someone familiar to them as there are sufficient staff within the nursery to cover for sickness and holidays.

The nursery has good recruitment practices and new staff receive a thorough induction including health and safety and child protection procedures. Good priority is given to staff training, with a training log ensuring that all staff update qualifications such as first aid and food hygiene at the required time.

Detailed policies and procedures support the practice in the nursery. Managers have recently started to self-evaluate the practices in the nursery in order to identify areas for improvement. All documentation required to underpin the care of the children is in place and most is completed with due attention to detail. However, whilst room registers record the times of arrival and

departure of children and the key staff who cared for them, they do not include lunch time cover staff.

The nursery meets the needs of the children for whom it provides care.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are supported by the local authority and as many staff as are able attend external training to develop their knowledge, for example of the new EYFS. There are suitable systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the nursery education. Room leaders meet with management to discuss plans for the delivery of nursery education. However, these meetings have not identified weaknesses in the implementation of the new planning system or that more-able children are not being challenged sufficiently.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection identified four recommendations. These related to health and safety policy, the location of fire extinguishers, practices for the administration of medication and group sizes. The nursery has introduced comprehensive risk assessments for all areas and activities in order to ensure the safety of the children. The Health and Safety Executive poster is displayed. Fire extinguishers are now located in a position where they are readily accessible in the event of an emergency. The procedure for the administration of medication has been revised to ensure that children are only given medicines which have been provided for their use. The nursery has re-organised the grouping of children so that they are cared for in small groups with no more than 18 children.

Three recommendations were raised at the last nursery education inspection. These related to the programmes for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and the provision of in-service training for the staff. The nursery has provided additional resources to support the teaching of language and literacy and mathematics. Children now have more opportunities to use writing materials in their play and use mathematical ideas in everyday situations. Advice has been sought from the local authority advisor to support the staff and develop how they plan for the children's development.

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 satisfactory.

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):

- ensure that registers record the names of all staff who work with individual groups of children
- review routines to minimise occasions when activities in one group impact on the concentration of children engaged in a quiet activity in another area.

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 planning for individual children includes intended learning objectives
- develop the partnership with parents
- plan challenges for the more able children

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