

# Choochoos Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY349035
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Cilla Rachel Mullane
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Choochoos Nursery opened in 2005, and there was a change of ownership in 2007. It operates from the old ticket office and waiting room at Whitstable and Tankerton railway station in Kent. Children have access to three areas for work and play.

A maximum of 56 children aged from two years to under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 87 children on roll, which includes 39 funded three and four year olds.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 until 18.30 for 50 weeks a year.

All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding towns.

The nursery is in receipt of funding for nursery education.

The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 members of staff including the owner and manager, a cook, caretaker and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) assistant. Of these, 13 members of staff, including the owner and manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are currently two members of staff working towards an early years qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well-promoted. Accident and medication records are thorough, and furthermore the designated health and safety representative checks the accidents book for patterns. Nappy changing procedures are thorough, and children are protected by careful use of disposable aprons and gloves. Toys and equipment appear clean and well-maintained, but no formal check is kept regarding what was cleaned, and when. Children are learning about the importance of personal hygiene as they independently go to wash their hands before their snack.

The experienced and competent cook has appropriate training, so children receive a good variety of home cooked food. Children with allergies or special diets are catered for. Children are protected by sensible procedures such as testing and recording of fridge and food temperatures. Children are learning about the importance of healthy eating, because staff make the most of opportunities to chat with them about healthy choices. For example, a character in a story had poor teeth, and the member of staff pointed out that apples were better than fizzy drinks. Parents are informed daily as to what their children have eaten.

Physical activity is planned for on a daily basis. For example, children joined in moving to a music tape enthusiastically, laughing and looking at staff carefully for the next moves. They play in the fresh air regularly, in the newly refurbished outside area, but the layout of the building means that free flow to the outdoors is not possible, and outside play is not yet included in the planning. The use of the garden is therefore being developed. Activities such as obstacle courses challenge the children physically, but there are currently few items of large equipment such as a big climbing frame, to challenge the older and more able children.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The environment is bright and cheerful, and is thoughtfully arranged so that children can act independently, for example, pre-school children can use the toilets, put their own work in individual drawers, and there are plenty of labelled drawers for self selection, containing resources such as mirrors, magnets, and musical instruments. The newly refurbished outdoor area has a child-friendly surface, and its use is being developed.

Children are very safe within the nursery. There is a designated member of staff for health and safety, who keeps clear and thorough records, and checks that procedures are carried out consistently. For example, fire evacuation records are cross-referenced with the record of attendance, so that all children are included. Risk assessments are used to good effect to check the safety and hygiene of the premises daily: for example, fire exits are checked, and toilet paper and soap in the toilets are checked. Children are kept safe when their parents and carers are asked for their password, both at collection time, and over the telephone.

Children are safeguarded from neglect and harm because there are clear procedures in place for identifying abuse, and taking appropriate action. Staff keep careful records, and discuss concerns with parents. They are clear that they would put the welfare of the children first, they know where to seek advice and information, and are aware of procedures to make referrals.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children throughout the setting are happy and settled: staff interact with children showing warmth and sensitivity. Children are greeted warmly by staff as they arrive, and are sensitively helped to separate from their carer, and become engaged in an enjoyable activity. A keyworker system works well throughout the setting: they plan activities for their key worker children to help them progress, and management check that children's patterns of attendance coincide with when their key worker is on duty. Children are helped to feel secure when they move from the younger group to the pre-school area of the nursery. Key workers provide them with 'passports', giving details of their personalities, likes and dislikes and abilities so that staff can provide for their individual needs, and help them settle. Staff observe the small children appropriately using the Birth to three matters framework, and use the observations to plan activities which they will enjoy, and which will help them to progress.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The pre-school environment is arranged so that children can access well maintained and appropriate toys and equipment independently, and can therefore take charge of their own learning. In addition, there are specific times of day when children are asked to choose activities. They are therefore learning from activities which they enjoy. Key workers, who know the children well, regularly observe the children, plan activities based on their individual interests and intended next steps, which are then incorporated into the weekly plans. therefore each child's learning and development is supported. Staff are good at talking to children and appreciate their contributions. They show wonder when children describe something interesting that happened at home. Staff support children's play and learning well: for example, in the travel agent in the role play area, children write tickets, discuss destinations and transport, and link this to children's own holiday experiences. Children's creativity is encouraged during planned activities such as when they use play dough to create animals. There are daily planned activities where children use their imaginations playing with resources such as glue, cotton wool, glitter, junk modelling: however, there is a limited amount of resources accessible to the children for free choice, which limits their opportunities to represent their unique and individual perception of the world, unrestricted by adult ideas.

As a result of good teaching, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children's personal, social and emotional development is well promoted. They are becoming independent: they use the toilets without help, and serve their own food. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is increasing as they enjoy train outings in the local environment, and become adept at using computers through regular practise. Children are progressing in their mathematical development: staff help them count during activities, such as when making balls with play dough, or when discussing how many teeth they have, and referring to the numbers on the wall. The children love stories, and staff are skilled at holding their attention: children sat with open mouths and wide eyes as they enjoyed a scary story. They join in their favourite lines, such as 'not by the hair on my chinny chin chin' in the story

of the three pigs. Children benefit from having access to a good selection of books, but when they have enjoyed a story read by staff, these books are replaced out of children's reach, so they cannot revisit them.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

There are good systems in place to enable staff to meet children's individual needs. For example, parents complete a questionnaire about their child, and children's rest and sleep times are arranged according to parents requests. Staff visit the children at home, and this helps them to be able to talk to children about their homes and families, making them feel secure. There are regular outings into the local area, for example, parks, the library, and trips on the train, so children are learning about their local community.

Children who have learning difficulties and disabilities are cared for well. They are included in activities because staff are aware of their needs and are available to support them. An experienced Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) keeps careful confidential records of concerns from parents or staff, observes the children, devises play plans, and then their key workers incorporate activities into the planning to help them make progress. Children who need help with their speech are supported by a speech therapist, who sets up programmes to be carried out by her assistant and the child's key worker.

Children throughout the nursery behave well. They respond positively to being given stickers as rewards: a child proudly showed me her sticker, awarded for helping at lunchtime. Staff continuously praise and encourage the children, who grow in confidence and develop self esteem as a result. Staff model respectful behaviour by talking quietly and positively to the children.

Partnership with parents is good.

Parents are very satisfied with the standard of care and education. They appreciate the home visit by staff before a child starts at the nursery, where staff find out important relevant information to help them care for the child as an individual. For example, they discuss how a child expresses his/her feelings. An impressive website gives parents comprehensive information, including latest newsletters for both age groups within the nursery. The prospectus, which can also be found on the website, gives information about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning. Parents are welcome to view their children's folders at any time and add their comments on a form, and are invited to six-monthly parents evenings, when their child's progress is discussed. Parents are offered useful laminated emergency cards, stating that their child is being cared for in a nursery.

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

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

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

Children are cared for by a majority of qualified staff, and are secure and confident, because staff treat them sensitively and kindly. Staff have opportunities to attend training courses, for example, child protection training is planned.

Organisation of the nursery is good. The staff:child ratio is upheld because there is a system for plotting the numbers of children expected throughout the day, so staffing can be planned appropriately. Staff take part in a good induction programme, including receiving information about health and safety. Staff are positive about the appraisal system, which supports them and identifies training needs.

The required documentation for the smooth running of the nursery is kept to a good standard. In addition, clear and comprehensive policies and procedures guide practice. The nursery's well-presented and informative website provides parents with the prospectus and all the necessary paperwork.

The quality of leadership and management is good.

Management (the owner and the nursery manager) have several effective procedures in place to secure changes and improvements to the provision of care and education. Staff regularly contribute to a self evaluation folder, giving their views on what the nursery does well, and areas for improvement or development. Tasks are then allocated to staff members after discussion at staff meetings. As a result, all staff are consulted, and their views noted. For example, several staff indicated that they wished to improve the planning of the delivery of the nursery education curriculum. As a result, a decision was made to monitor how their planning is evolving through meetings with the early years advisor, and a meeting has been booked accordingly. The provision of nursery education is monitored: activities are linked to a main area of learning, and a record is kept of all areas of learning covered. However, this record is currently a little out of date. Management place a great deal of importance on in house training, helping to ensure that all staff work consistently. For example, the staff group met to look at health and safety within the setting, discussing relevant issues in pairs, and completing useful questionnaires.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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, include outside play in the planning of activities, and increase the range of toys and equipment which challenges older and more able children (also applies to education).

### **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):

- provide children with more opportunities, and a wider range of resources, to make their own decisions regarding what materials and tools they think they may need to complete self chosen projects in order to represent their unique and individual perception of the world.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)