

Hythe Bay Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127272
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Inspector	Jenny Kane
Setting Address	Hythe Bay Church of England Primary School, Cinque Ports Avenue, Hythe, Kent, CT21 6HS
Telephone number	01303 267802
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Hythe Bay Children's Centre
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?

Hythe Bay Children's Centre has been registered since 2000. It operates from several areas within Hythe Bay Primary School in the Cinque Ports Avenue area of Hythe. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The centre is managed by a board of trustees, and has charitable status. It provides a range of services and support for children and their families who live in the local community.

A maximum of 68 children may attend the centre at any one time. There are currently 198 children on roll aged from three months to 11 years. Of these, 90 children attend the out of school facilities. Of the 108 children aged under five years, 50 receive funding for early education.

Childcare facilities comprise of a Day Nursery, which operates from a purpose built facility. A maximum of 38 children under the age of five years may attend the nursery and of these 12 places are for babies from three months to two years. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday from 07:45 to 18:00 all year round.

Puffins Pre-School and the Out of School Club operate from a separate building in the school grounds nearby which also accommodates the family support services, training facilities and parent and toddler groups. Puffins accommodates 10 children aged between two and five years and operates from 09:00 to 15:00 during term time only.

The Out of School facility comprises of a breakfast club from 07:45 to 08:45 and an after school club from 15:15 to 18:00, which operates during term time. A holiday club runs during most holidays. The out of school care accommodates up to 20 children from four to eight years. Children from the ages of eight to 11 years also attend the clubs.

The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

In addition to the nursery manager, the early years teacher, catering and cleaning staff, there are 16 childcare staff working in the nursery and Puffins. Of these, nine hold level three early years childcare qualifications and six are working towards a level three qualification. In addition to the out of school manager, there are three play workers. Of these two hold suitable qualifications and one is working towards a level 3 three qualification. Students, volunteers and teaching staff, support them. The centre receives support from the Local Authority Early Years advisor and the school's Early Years Team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in various parts of the centre. All the areas have modern facilities and hygiene levels are good. The staff promote the health of children by paying good attention to their personal hygiene. For example by wearing gloves when changing nappies, hand washing regularly and the cook wears suitable protective clothing when preparing meals. Children benefit from the positive steps taken to prevent the spread of infection by staff and this ensures their good health. Older children take themselves independently to the toilet and they are learning about hand washing and personal care. The centre has appropriate measures in place when children are ill and the sick child policy is clear. The staff hold first aid certificates, first aid resources are available in all areas and the centre maintains accident and medication records effectively. This ensures staff are able to act appropriately and further promote children's welfare.

Throughout all the groups children enjoy healthy meals and snacks. The children in the nursery benefit from meals cooked on the premises by the nursery cook. Most children take advantage of these meals, which are nutritious and comply with their individual dietary requirements. Older children sit together for lunch at tables with staff. This is a social time where they chat to friends and adults about their day and events, which have happened at home. During lunch, some children become disruptive because they sit for a long period. A lot of food goes to waste because staff portion up the meal and then give the plate to the child. Older children earlier in the day have helped to make an apple crumble. When staff show them the dish, they proudly tell others about the cooking activity. Children respond with 'that looks yummy' and 'it smells nice'. However, there is little opportunity for children to help during lunch for example by laying the tables, serving the food or pouring drinks.

Babies and toddlers sit at low tables during meals. There are suitable facilities for preparing bottles and reheating food provided by parents. Staff discuss with parents children's individual requirements and respect their wishes. The use of home link books where staff record food intake, sleep patterns and nappy changes helps keep parents informed and helps with continuity.

Both the nursery and the pre-school encourage children to help at snack time. Children have good access to drinking water. Nursery children have individual labelled water bottles, which they help themselves from when they are thirsty. In Puffins, children bring a packed lunch, which is stored suitably in the fridge until needed. During afternoon snack, they show high levels of independence. A staff member announces 'the snack bar is now open'. Children go and wash their hands before helping themselves to fruit and pouring their drinks. They choose where they sit and chat together happily. A child spills some milk, which he automatically wipes up with a cloth. When each child finishes they take their plate and cup to the bowl where they use sponges and brushes to wash up.

Older children enjoy attending the popular breakfast club where staff and volunteers supervise activities before school. At the end of the school day several children attend the after school club. When they arrive, children help themselves to a snack and a drink from the jug on the side. Most stay for a cooked tea. During the inspection, some children help to make bread and soup from a variety of vegetables, which they enjoy eating later.

Children engage in a good range of activities, which contribute to their physical development. Babies and toddlers have their own separate outside play area with safety surfacing and secure fencing. Nursery children have easy access to the shared outside area adjoining their playroom. They use this several times each day and make choices for themselves about how long they stay outside before coming back indoors. Some parts of the outside area are muddy but nursery children wear boots for protection. There is some equipment and structures, which children can use for imaginative play. There is a gazebo where children sit and chat with friends. However, the space lacks activity areas and visual stimulation. The children enjoy moving about and choosing where they play. They use the climbing structure and scrambling net confidently. They ride cars and bikes about the playground negotiating others. When playing on the double bikes children realise they need to cooperate. Two children work together one steering and the other pushing to make the bike go.

Sometimes the outside area is quite crowded because the reception class, the Puffins and another pre-school, which runs from the premises, also use it. As an alternative, staff make use of the school hall for physical play sessions. Children also benefit from walks and trips out in the local community. For example, they visit the library, shops, park and the beach. There are good opportunities for physical play indoors and all areas have sufficient space to support this. During the inspection, the big indoor climbing structure in the nursery is a garage with a variety of tools and equipment. Out of school age children benefit from being able to access the newly built sports centre where there are very good facilities for team games.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in an environment, which is bright, cheerful and child friendly. Each area is well maintained and secure. Visitors sign in at reception and again in each of the group areas. This ensures children's safety. The centre pays a high regard to children's safety throughout the facility. Staff carry out risk assessments of all areas used by children. There are good levels of supervision during activities and when moving about the centre. Fire fighting equipment is in

place and each group joins in with the school's fire drills. This helps children to learn about their own and other children's safety. When children go on outings some of them enjoy riding in the turtle bus. Staff ensure they risk assess all venues and check the route beforehand to ensure suitability and safety.

Children have access to a good range of toys and equipment, which promotes the development of all age groups. There is some sharing of resources amongst the groups. Play materials and furniture are in good condition, well maintained and covered by the daily risk assessments. The under two's play area is bright and has a lot of natural light. Babies and toddlers have sufficient space to move about and discover their environment. However, there is a lack of adult seating for staff when feeding babies. In addition, due to the layout of the windows and doors there is limited room for low displays.

The play area for the nursery children is organised with different activity areas and work displayed. Children make choices for themselves and confidently select what they play with from the wooden storage units and shelves around all the play areas. The clear labelling of many of the resources helps children's literacy. Puffins and the out of school group have a good amount of space available for activities. Their building also accommodates the children's centre where there is additional space for training and parental activities.

Managers and staff have a good knowledge of child protection procedures approved by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff work closely with the head of the school to safeguard the welfare of all the groups of children in their care. The clear written policy reflects the recent changes to procedures and is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident. When they arrive, staff greet them and their parents in a friendly way. In both nursery and the pre-school the older children self-register. They do this by finding their individual laminated name card and in the pre-school putting it on the board and in the nursery using it as a drinking mat. The routine in all areas is planned to be flexible. The emphasis is on children choosing activities, which interest them, and for older children to have a say about what they do. For example in the out of school club, staff consult with children about if they want to go to the sports centre. During the course of the day children have the opportunity to mix with other groups of children. For example at outdoor playtime, they mix with the reception class. At other times older children in the nursery visit younger siblings in the baby area. During the inspection, the older children partake in a joint French lesson in the pre-school building. This flexible use of space and resources ensures that children are familiar and settled in their surroundings.

The staff plan activities which are stimulating and age appropriate. These activities support the developing needs of the range of children attending the centre. Staff who work with the children under three years of age have a good knowledge of child development and the Birth to three matters framework. The settling is proactive and committed to putting it into place and this benefits the younger children. The nursery manager takes overall responsibility for the implementation of the framework along with the supervisor of the baby room and the two pre-school supervisors. They meet regularly to plan how they are going to interpret the overall curriculum plan, which includes all ages of children. Children enjoy topics, themes and activities working alongside their older peers. Staff plan and assess activities using the four elements of the Birth to three framework. They record progress in the children's individual portfolios and

share this information with parents on a regular basis. This ensures parents are fully involved in their children's care.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress across the six areas of learning. Staff are confident and have a sound knowledge of how to implement the Foundation Stage. Staff are very well supported by the school's Early Years team and benefit from a qualified teacher who works part time in the centre and takes the lead for planning the curriculum. She has recently made changes to the curriculum planning and is working with staff to ensure they have the skills needed to implement it. The planning is detailed and shows clearly the aspect of learning, learning intentions, differentiation and the resources needed. Regular, detailed observations help staff to offer challenging activities and plan the children's next steps in their learning. Detailed portfolios hold a good amount of information for parents including assessments, photographs and samples of work.

Children are achieving well in their personal, social and emotional development. They demonstrate high levels of independence regarding their personal self-care for example they take themselves to the toilet, put on coats, hats and boots before going into the garden and make independent choices about the activities they engage in. However, staff in the nursery miss the opportunity to encourage children to be independent during lunchtime. Children are forming good relationships with their peers and work together harmoniously sharing resources and expressing opinions.

Children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing well. They speak confidently to adults and peers during play and talk about events which have happened at home. Staff extend language by using open-ended questioning and discussion throughout the day. Children talk openly in small groups and circle time. They enjoy stories and looking at books. The book areas have good displays of books and are comfortable with space to relax. Children enjoy a story about animals and are able to identify various animals and they have fun making corresponding animal noises.

Children have good opportunities to discuss number, shape, size and measure during daily activities and routines. They count the cups at snack, measure and pour during sand and water play and identify shapes and colours during play. For example, during a game of floor dominoes children spend a great deal of time concentrating on lining up and matching the symbols. They enjoy working together to find the corresponding shapes and colours and this results in good cooperation.

Children demonstrate their creativity through a good mix of experiences. They have access to good quality musical instruments enjoying using tambourines, shakers, drums and bells. Children gain an understanding of how each instrument works as they decide if they need to bang or shake to make a noise. Staff encourage children to listen to the various sounds and then they sing along choosing popular song like 'Rudolph the red nosed reindeer' and 'if you're happy and you know it'. Children use their imagination freely and act out scenarios during play. For example, a group of children playing with the plastic animals extend the game by using the plants. Other children join in and together they create a jungle and enjoy making various animal noises. Children experience feel and texture during daily art and craft activities using the well-resourced art area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff throughout the centre treat children with respect using praise and encouragement. Key workers work closely with the nursery and pre-school children. This individual attention and support ensures continuity of care. As a result, children have formed close relationships with the staff that care for them. They share and cooperate during play, the routine is planned flexibly and children have opportunities to make decisions about their play activities. Consequently, the atmosphere is generally calm with children actively involved in activities. Therefore children's behaviour is good. Staff have a good commitment to enforcing the equalities policy and work together to provide an inclusive service for local families. Children with additional needs are supported by staff who are confident and aware of meeting their individual needs.

Children gain a knowledge and understanding of the world through participation in a variety of festivals, topics and themed activities. They have access to a good range of resources and play materials that reflect diversity. Posters and positive visual images around the environment help children to understand difference. Children use various mediums with which to discover their senses. They use sand, water, gloop, foam and dough frequently. Children are confident with the information technology equipment and use the computer to support their learning. They enjoy finding out how things work and using programmable toys and gadgets. One child during the inspection pretends to take photographs with a camera. Other children join in the game posing and smiling. Children enjoy using shells and pebbles in the water tray, they help to grow plants in the garden and join in cooking activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children and their families receive clear information about the service both written and verbal. Before children start at the centre parents work with staff on an initial assessment of their child. Many benefit from a home visit, which helps staff to provide continuity and meet each child's individual needs. Key workers discuss progress and achievements with parents on a regular basis. Information is backed up by the written information in the home link books and the development folders. This positive two-way sharing of information ensures parents are involved in their children's development and care.

Parents of children receiving funding for nursery education have good quality information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about children's education. They make time to discuss with parents how their children are progressing and provide detailed information in each child's portfolio. In addition, there are photographic displays that show examples children's activities and how they link to the areas of learning. This helps parents understand about what their children are doing and how they learn. The centre provides newsletters and holds regular parents meetings. These, along with taking home their child's portfolio enables parents to continue their children's education at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a well-organised environment. The indoor areas provide good opportunities to support children's care and learning needs. Staff plan to extend and improve the outdoor area. Staff work together to plan resources so they are accessible and provide a stimulating play environment. They organise their time appropriately and work well as a team. All mandatory records and documents are in place and kept confidentially. The centre is fortunate to have a good amount of administrative support, which enables childcare staff to

concentrate fully on working with the children. Parents have good access to the centre's policies and procedures, which are clear and regularly updated.

Leadership and management are good. Staff receive good support from the school's Early Years team. They have a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum, which they use well to support children's development and learning. There is a good commitment to staff development and training. Most staff are qualified with several currently updating their qualifications. Staff meet in their groups with the senior staff to discuss planning and evaluation of activities on a weekly basis. Although they have an appraisal system in place, staff do not have the opportunity to discuss their individual training needs on a regular basis. Management and senior staff work proactively in monitoring the provision and identifying areas for improvement. This is beneficial to children and their families who use the centre and ensures the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the setting has taken into account previous recommendations, considerations and actions. They have improved the registration system and these now clearly show when children, staff and visitors are present. Staff are deployed effectively so that required staffing levels are maintained at all times throughout the day. The complaints policy has been updated and now reflects the current legislation and staff have improved their knowledge of the subject. Children are now able to access the outside play area independently.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 2: Organisation and National Standard 12: Partnership with parents. Concerns raised were regarding the accuracy of registers and staff communication with parents.

Ofsted carried out an unannounced inspection, which resulted in two actions under National Standard 2 and one action under National Standard 12. The provider responded by taking the required action. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation closed.

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 provider has recorded all complaints made to Ofsted by parents.

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):

- consider how to improve the environment for babies and toddlers by the provision of comfortable seating for adults and increased visual images at children's eye level
- introduce a formal supervision system for all childcare staff

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):

- continue to develop the outside play area to provide a stimulating environment for children's play
- increase nursery children's opportunities to be independent during lunchtime

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