

Claverham Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	508991
Inspection date	04 December 2007
Inspector	Liz Margaret Caluori
Setting Address	Claverham Community College, North Trade Road, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0HT
Telephone number	01424 774 548
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Registered person	The Governing Body of Claverham Community College
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Claverham Day Nursery is situated in the grounds of Claverham Community College, Battle. It has been registered since 1993. The nursery occupies the old caretakers house and this has been adapted to provide two group rooms on the ground floor and a baby unit on the first floor. There are also kitchen and toilet facilities. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The area directly outside the main group room is covered to provide shade.

The group is open from 8:15 to 5:45 Monday to Friday all year round. It is registered to care for a maximum of 40 children at any one time and currently has 80 children on roll attending a mix of full and part time places. Of these, 21 receive funding for their nursery education and 13 attend the baby unit. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 15 staff working with the children, with at least 10 present at any one time. Of these nine, including the manager and deputy, hold appropriate childcare qualification.

The setting receives support from the local authority advisors.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are offered healthy snacks, such as fresh or dried fruit, during the morning and afternoon sessions. These meet children's individual dietary requirements although they are not generally offered any choice. Cooked lunches are available and are bought in from an outside catering company. The three weekly menu offers a varied and nutritious range of meals with a vegetarian option available each day. Written information is displayed for parents detailing the ingredients used to demonstrate suitability for a range of different dietary requirements.

Effective hygiene procedures are in place throughout the setting. Staff ensure that tables are regularly wiped and children are well supported to develop good personal hygiene practices. They routinely wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet and many independently use tissues to blow their noses. The toilet cubicles on the ground floor are not fitted with doors and are easily visible from the communal cloakroom and sink area. This arrangement does not offer sufficient privacy for the stages of development of the children.

Staff with first aid qualifications are present at all times ensuring that children can be effectively cared for in case of an accident. Similarly, appropriate procedures are in place regarding the care of sick children and the administration of medication. The setting maintains the required written records.

Children benefit from regular access to fresh air to develop their physical skills. They have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play space with a large area of lawn. This contains an extensive selection of toys to support children to practise their climbing and gross motor skills. There is also a sheltered play area accessed through double doors in the largest group room. This allows children to play outside in wet weather and on very sunny days. They happily run around with their friends, play with bats and balls and use the ride-on toys provided. The nursery also has access to the college's extensive grounds for nature walks and organised sporting events.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The setting has a clear written child protection policy in place; however the arrangements are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that correct procedures are followed should concerns be identified. As a result children's safety is not adequately promoted.

Good security measures are in place to ensure that nobody is able to enter the building without being let in by a member of staff. Regular health and safety checks are carried out and there is a range of precautions in place such as the use of socket covers and safety gates. These arrangements create a safe play environment for children. However, at times adult supervision restricts children's independence. Practices such as escorting children to the toilets and taking several minutes to line up before going outside do not support children to learn how to keep themselves safe.

Children have access to a satisfactory range of toys and resources. These are well maintained and suitable for the ages and stages of development of the children attending.

Appropriate procedures are in place to protect children from the risk of fire. Fire fighting equipment is fitted and emergency exits are clearly identified. Emergency evacuations are practised regularly and written records are maintained.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and settled in the nursery. They are cared for in three rooms and are grouped by age; the youngest being accommodated in the baby unit on the first floor. This group of children respond well to the warm and attentive care of staff. They enjoy the freedom they receive to explore their environment and the range of toys set out each day. These are competently selected by staff to extend the all round development of the children. They also have regular opportunities to take part in messy play, including a range of art and craft activities. However, the displays of children's work around the group room indicate a very high level of adult direction and intervention. This results in children spending time taking part in activities which are not appropriate for their age or stage of development.

The individual routines and care needs of the babies and youngest children are clearly understood and respected within the setting. Effective arrangements are in place regarding feeding and nappy changing. There are cots available for children to sleep, however, a number of children fall asleep in their buggies whilst in the outdoor area. These children are wheeled into the downstairs group room until they wake up. This practice does not offer the sleeping children sufficient peace and quiet and also reduces the play space available to the older children.

Children aged from 18 months to two and a half years are accommodated in one of the two group rooms on the ground floor. These children also benefit from their positive and friendly relationships with staff. They are provided with a good range of toys and resources which they are able to access freely at different times throughout the day. Staff set out a range of activities and children are also confident to select additional resources from the low level storage units. This helps to promote their independence. However, at times the amount of toys set out and the diversity of the activities taking place results in a cluttered environment. This restricts children in their play and leads to some becoming unsettled; for example, those playing with the train track on the carpet are disrupted by those choosing to push buggies or walk around the book corner. In addition to the periods of free play, children also take part in sessions of planned, focussed activities. These have a tendency to be extremely prescribed and have clearly identified end products. This is evident in the work displayed around the room which show numerous examples of children having been given pre-drawn figures to decorate. Work completed as part of the Christmas topic includes, amongst others, identical angels, holly leaves, Santa's and Christmas puddings. This indicates that children are given excessive adult direction and insufficient freedom to express themselves creatively.

The larger of the two group rooms on the ground floor accommodates the children from two and a half to five years. These children spend parts of the day playing together in sessions of child instigated play. At other times they are grouped by age for planned activities. The experiences of these children are similar to the other's in the nursery. During the sessions identified for child instigated play they are able to freely access the resources, explore and experiment independently. Staff act promptly to extend their play and take time to sit and speak with individual children or small groups. However, the focussed activities are too directed. There is separate planning for the younger children in the room and for the older children who receive funding for their nursery education. The complexity of some of the planned activities makes them inappropriate for the younger children. In addition, the excessive adult direction

and intervention eliminates any creativity or opportunities for making choices or problem solving.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate an adequate knowledge of the structure and content of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They use this to plan activities to cover each area of learning. However, there are weaknesses in the planning and implementation of focussed activities. This indicates a lack of understanding of how to support children to become independent learners. In addition, the learning intentions identified do not always match the activity. Key workers are able to discuss the developmental levels of the children in their group although the setting lacks an effective and consistent system for recording the next steps for each child. Children are generally making satisfactory progress in all areas of learning through the support and encouragement they receive in their freely chosen play.

Children's creative development is inhibited during focussed activities by rigid planning and over-direction by staff. An example of this includes the planning for an activity to make Father Christmas masks. The learning intention for the activity was identified as using colour for purpose and exploring different textures. All resources were set out by staff including red and white paint, a paper plate, cotton wool and pieces of red paper with the shape of a triangle pre-drawn. Children were instructed to cut out the triangle, paint the face and glue on the cotton wool. They were not offered a choice of activity and were given strong direction as to where to place each item to produce a product which looked extremely similar to that of their friends. The activity was not successful in supporting children to use colour for purpose as they were only provided with one option. Similarly, whilst the children were provided with a range of textures, they did not have an opportunity to explore these for themselves. The remainder of the activities planned for the Christmas topic were similarly prescriptive. This is a marked contrast to children's experiences during their free play. At these times they make very good use of the wide range of materials set out for craft activities such as paint, glitter and items for gluing and sticking. They produce very individual and expressive pieces of art, examples of which are displayed within the group room. Children also make good use of their free play time to engage in very imaginative role play games with their friends.

Children are developing an interest in books. They often choose to visit the book corner during their free play and enjoy listening to the stories read by staff. They also make good use of the well equipped mark making table to practise their writing and many are able to form recognisable letters. Children chat happily between themselves whilst they play and use expressive language to share stories with their friends and staff. However, at times staff do not sufficiently support children to develop their language skills. An example of this includes the period directly before snacks and meals when children may be waiting for several minutes for everyone wash their hands and settle down. During these times they are not routinely engaged in conversations by staff.

Children are also making satisfactory progress in their mathematical development. They practice counting on a regular basis and are beginning to understand the basic concepts of addition and subtraction. The children have regular access to a computer and confidently use the mouse and keyboard to operate a number of simple programs. They are also learning about the wider world through a range of topics such as autumn, Christmas and people who help us.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is entirely appropriate for their age and stage of development and minor disputes are settled easily. There is a clear written policy outlining the setting's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Children play with a range of toys which promote positive images of people from throughout the community and wider world.

The manager and staff team have a positive attitude towards integrating children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. One member has been trained to act as the additional needs co-ordinator. Appropriate arrangements are also in place to support children with English as an additional language.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Those whose children receive funding for their nursery education have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with staff at parent's evenings and are informed about the planned topics. However, they are not routinely provided with information to help them understand the Foundation Stage curriculum. The parents of all other children are also invited to regular meetings with their child's key worker. They are given a good range of written information about the nursery and have access to all written policies. Parents are also provided with appropriate advice on the procedure to follow should they wish to make a complaint.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

There is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place; however, the arrangements are not sufficiently robust to ensure that these are followed when needed to safeguard children.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The group maintains all required written records and these are generally clear and well ordered. The procedures for recruiting and vetting staff are entirely appropriate and the ratio of staff to children is good.

Space is generally well used to ensure that a large number of activities are able to take place at the same time. Whilst there are elements of the daily routine which do not effectively promote children's independence, time is generally managed effectively to create a good balance of strenuous as well as more restful activities.

The leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. Children throughout the nursery are generally happy and settled and are making satisfactory progress. The nursery manager meets with her line manager on a regular basis to discuss day to day issues. There are development plans in place to identify and address areas for improvement. Despite this the management team does not have an effective system in place to check the quality and appropriateness of planned activities.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection a recommendation was made to improve the maintenance of written attendance records. The setting now maintains clear registers which indicate the times

of arrival and departure of the children and staff. This contributes to the overall management of the setting.

It was also recommended that children be given more opportunities to develop their independence by choosing activities and discussing what resources are needed. The setting has attempted to address this concern. Whilst children now benefit from periods of child instigated play, weaknesses remain in this area.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to taken 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that the child protection procedure is thoroughly understood by staff and that appropriate action is taken to safeguard children.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- review the planning and implementation of focussed activities to ensure that children are supported to become independent learners.

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