

Chalk Hill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511229
Inspection date	04 October 2007
Inspector	Alison Weaver

Setting Address	St Mary's Church Hall, Church Street, Willingdon, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 9HP
Telephone number	01323 504659
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Registered person	Chalk Hill Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Chalk Hill Pre-School opened in 1985. It operates from two rooms in a church hall on the outskirts of Eastbourne. Both rooms are not available at every session. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 12.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 42 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these 21 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs six staff. All of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well as all the necessary steps are taken by staff to prevent the spread of infection. The area is kept clean and any tables used for snacks are wiped before use. The children learn about the importance of washing their hands before meals and after using the toilet. The staff teach children about germs and use very good questioning to help them think about what they are doing and why.

All of the staff are trained in first aid so that they can act in the best interest of a child in the event of an accident. Staff obtain the necessary information about children's individual health needs from parents. This helps ensure that they meet the needs of each child in their care. Sick children are cared for appropriately and parents are kept informed about any health concerns. Staff deal appropriately with any outbreaks of infection in the setting. Staff actively promote sun safety in the setting to prevent children becoming ill as a result of playing outside.

Children enjoy a wide variety of healthy snacks including fresh fruit, cheese, crackers and bread sticks. Children learn about the importance of healthy eating through the planned themes and activities. They find out about what is good to eat as they do various cooking activities. They have fun making fruit salads, pizzas, cheese straws and scones. Children are able to help themselves to a drink when they want one as they each have their own water beaker in easy reach. The children also have water or milk at snack times. This all ensures that children do not become dehydrated. When the setting operates a lunch club, the staff encourage parents to provide healthy lunches and offer them practical advice on what to include.

Staff plan and provide plenty of activities that effectively promote children's physical development. The children show good co-ordination as they play safely with a variety of games equipment. They take part in movement activities and learn to use their bodies in many different ways. They have regular opportunities to use large equipment, such as a climbing frame, balancing beams and soft play. Children begin to understand about the effect exercise has on their bodies. Their fine motor skills develop well although the daily availability and variety of small tools is sometimes limited.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a secure and safe environment. The staff are very vigilant and monitor the doors closely when children are dropped off and collected at the end of the session. The building is open to other users so staff ensure that other unauthorised adults do not have access to the children. The staff are well deployed and the children are closely supervised at all times. Staff interact very effectively with children as they play, explaining about how to use the toys and equipment safely.

The staff spend considerable time making the environment colourful, attractive and welcoming. They plan the rooms well to meet the children's needs and interests. Different safe play areas are created using screens and dividers. However, for some of the sessions there is no cosy area in one of the rooms for children to sit quietly and look at books. All the children enjoy playing with a very wide range of good quality toys and equipment that are safe and well maintained. These resources are appropriate to children's age and stage of development.

Staff carry out daily visual checks to ensure that the rooms used are safe for the children. Appropriate safety equipment is in place, including socket covers, radiator guards and a fire blanket. The setting carries out regular fire drills to ensure that all staff and children are aware of what to do in an emergency. Excellent use is made of the accident records to regularly monitor and review safety both indoors and outdoors. Any concerns identified are then addressed to ensure that the environment is safe for all the children. Effective risk assessments are carried out for outings. Children are safely escorted on outings, as there is a high staffing ratio. The staff interact well with the children so that they learn how to stay safe when out and how to cross roads.

The setting has all the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Staff have a very good awareness of signs and symptoms of child abuse as they have all attended child protection training. They are fully aware of their responsibilities to report any concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the setting happily and quickly find an activity to play with. New children soon settle in and develop their confidence. All the children enjoy their time in the setting and achieve well because staff are very caring and supportive. Younger children have their emotional needs met as they get the attention they need from the staff. Children's development is promoted as staff talk to them and extend their play. The children thrive due to the stimulating learning environment and the enthusiasm of the staff.

Children are very interested in the activities available and concentrate well at activities. Even the younger children spend long periods of time absorbed in an activity. They sit well at circle time listening to the stories and singing. All children have opportunities to take part in quiet and active play. The younger group of children benefit from playing in a calm but busy atmosphere where there are plenty of fun and interesting activities to choose from.

Staff have recently started to make good use of the Birth to three matters framework to plan appropriate activities for children under three years to help promote their development. Useful observations are carried out on each child and staff plan the next steps for them as individuals to ensure that each child makes progress. However, there is no system in place to formally record and assess the overall progress of each child. Staff are also not fully using the identified next steps for children in their future planning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals due to the staff's secure knowledge of how children learn. Staff interact very effectively with children to support and reinforce their learning. They use very good open-ended questioning to encourage children to think about what they are doing and express their own thoughts. Staff make good use of resources and activities to promote children's learning. They also use everyday activities and routines to promote incidental learning.

The staff plan a balanced curriculum that covers all areas of learning. There are clear links to the different aspects of each area of learning. The staff make good use of focus activity sheets to ensure staff are aware of what and how children should learn. Staff ensure that they challenge and move children on in their learning. Staff carry out regular observations and use these to

inform children's records of progress. This enables staff to monitor what individual children are achieving and learning. The staff use the observations and records to identify the next targets for individual children. However, they are not fully using the next targets to inform future planning to show how activities can be adapted to meet the individual needs of children.

Children are happy and confident. They play happily on their own and with others. Children begin to form friendships and show concern for others. Children's independence develops well in the setting. For example, they pour their own drinks at snack time and help to tidy up. There are some opportunities for children to self-select resources.

Children speak confidently to peers and adults. They talk openly in circle times and use good vocabulary. Staff actively promote children's communication skills at everyday activities as well as planned activities. The children listen well to staff and learn new words as they explore objects together. The children learn to recognise the link between sounds and letters. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. There are numerous opportunities for children to practise mark making and writing their names.

Children count confidently and often choose number activities during free play. They sort and match easily. Staff interact very effectively to ensure that mathematical development is promoted with the children in free play and everyday activities, such as snack and registration times. Children learn to use mathematical language correctly, for example, as they talk about 'more' and 'full'. They explore measuring and weighing as they play in the sand and do cooking activities. Water play is used very effectively to promote children's learning. They count together to see how many jugs it takes to fill a bottle. Children learn to recognise shapes and sizes as they play.

Children respond excitedly to new experiences where they explore the natural world. They enjoy using the tools and objects in the 'exploratory box'. They have fun using the magnifiers to find bugs when playing outside. They look closely at mini-beasts and then compare them with the pictures in the box. They explore the effects of wind using a variety of different items in the 'wind box'. They plant and grow flowers and beans. They have regular access to a laptop but there is not always sufficient adult help to support the children as they use it.

Children learn different skills as they use a variety of tools and equipment, such as staplers, hole punchers and scissors. They thoroughly enjoy the Tap Tap activity where they make pictures with the shapes using the hammers and nails. They enjoy constructing different models using a variety of construction materials. They learn about other ways of life as they explore topics on other countries and festivals. They find out about how different people live and eat.

Children express themselves creatively in different ways. They explore different paint techniques. Children have fun painting sheets to make into a wigwam. They enjoy acting out different scenarios, for example, as they pretend to make each other better in a hospital. They use their imagination to create a fire truck with the soft play so that they can put out fires. They explore sound and musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff work closely with parents to meet the individual needs of the children. They find out the necessary information from parents so that they can respect their wishes. The staff provide a number of ways in which they help new children and parents settle into the group. They also

plan activities to help support children transferring to school. Staff value children as individuals and acknowledge their home backgrounds.

Staff ensure that children have access to a variety of resources that represent the wider community. These resources include dressing up clothes, dolls, play figures and books. The resources and planned activities help children develop a positive attitude to others and learn about the wider world.

Although the setting has had difficulty accessing training for their special needs co-ordinator, they have good arrangements in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure that they are fully included. Staff adapt the environment to meet the children's needs and give them the necessary care. They work closely with parents and other professionals to help these children achieve and make progress. The staff have completed training in Makaton to help support children with communication difficulties. They use signing with all the children as it also helps those who are shy or less confident to communicate in the setting.

Children behave very well and respond positively to staff. They learn to play happily together, sharing and taking turns. Children's self-esteem develops as staff praise children's contributions. Staff use appropriate strategies to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. They deal calmly with any incidents and help children understand the implications of their behaviour. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. The parents of funded children receive some information about the Foundation Stage, which gives them a general overview of what children are learning. The staff display details of the plans, themes and activities for them to see. Parents are encouraged to share skills and bring in items for the themes. Parents receive regular written reports that show how their child is progressing in all six areas of learning. They have the opportunity to meet formally with staff to look at the profiles and discuss children's progress towards the early learning goals just before their child starts school. However, there are few other ongoing formal meetings with parents to discuss children's progress and for them to contribute to the assessment process. They do not receive information about how to extend activities at home so that they can contribute to their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised and space is used very effectively for the children. Staff group children appropriately and supervise them well. Children benefit from being cared for by a high level of qualified and experienced staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. All the required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in place. Some of the written policies shared with parents lack minor necessary detail.

A thorough recruitment procedure is in place, which ensures that staff are suitable to work with children. There is an effective induction system carried out to ensure that new staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The ongoing development of staff is given a high priority. All staff receive very good support as they have regular appraisals and supervision with the manager. Their practice is observed regularly and any areas of concern discussed with them. These practices ensure that staff develop their skills and knowledge of how to support children

in their play and learning. The staff keep well informed about current childcare practices through ongoing training.

Leadership and management are good. The staff are well motivated and enthusiastic, working closely together as a team. All staff are included in the planning and decision-making. The staff meet regularly to discuss children's progress and the curriculum planning. They are committed to continuous improvement and development of the nursery education provision. They put very effective development plans in place where they identify areas they want to improve. They actively seek outside support and advice when needed. Teaching is monitored through the evaluation of activities and the staff supervision. This helps ensure that the provision is helping children make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to improve the hand washing facilities. The staff now promote good hygiene more effectively with the children as, when necessary, they use a mobile hand-washing unit at messy play activities. Several staff are now trained in the use of Epipens so can care for a child with a serious allergy. Safety has been improved as the hot water is now at a suitable temperature, the ivy is regularly cut back and the hose is stored safely. These precautions have effectively minimised the safety hazards for children.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was asked to improve the assessment system and to ensure they offer a balanced curriculum. Staff use the children's profiles to check that every area of learning is being sufficiently covered for each child. They also ensure that they plan and provide activities for each area of learning.

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 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):

- develop a system for recording younger children's progress and achievements that will help staff to move them on in their learning.

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 the individual targets for children are used to inform future planning to enable all children to make progress (also applies to care)
- continue to develop opportunities for parents to contribute to children's learning and the assessment and recording of their progress.

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