

# Castle Hill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110024
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Lorraine Wardlaw
<b>Setting Address</b>	Fort Hill School, Kenilworth Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG23 8JQ
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Castle Hill Pre-School
<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?

Castle Hill pre school opened in 1990 and operates from two rooms; a classroom and portacabin within the site of Fort Hill Community School, in Winklebury, near Basingstoke. It is managed by a voluntary management committee. Children attend from the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is registered to provide full day care and sessional care for a maximum of 47 children aged two to five years at any one time. There are currently 39 children on roll. Of these, 29 children receive nursery education funding. Children can attend for a variety of sessions or for the whole day. The setting is able to support children with learning difficulties/disabilities and for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school is open each week day from 09:15 - 15:00 term time only. The group operates an optional lunch club everyday. The setting employs eight staff including the manager to work with the children. Of these, four staff hold an early years qualification to National Vocational Qualification level two or above. The pre-school receives support and advice from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's nutritional needs are well catered for at the pre school with staff having good regard to providing healthy snacks. Mid session the café opens and children enjoy a wide choice of snacks such as dried fruit, apples, banana and bread sticks, with water or milk to drink. Children learn about good food to eat from informal discussion with the adults when they have their lunch which is provided by parents. Younger children help to make a 'we eat healthy food at the café' board which displays pictures and names of the food. Children develop good personal hygiene practices; they learn the routines of washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Staff operate stringent cleaning procedures to minimise cross infection to children, particularly when there is a small outbreak of an illness. For example, toilets are regularly cleaned throughout the day with staff wearing rubber gloves and children are absent from the pre-school for at least 48 hours. Children have good, physical play opportunities, which occurs both inside and outside. They enjoy their time outside gaining fresh air and exercise even in damp and inclement weather. Children access a range of equipment which enables them to practise their skills to a confident level such as climbing, peddling a tricycle, using a scooter or a two wheeled bike with stabilisers. They confidently use a good range of tools and materials, such as scissors, spoons, pencils and paint brushes to develop their manipulative skills and fine motor movements. Funded nursery children are gaining a good awareness of their bodies; they can independently take care of their physical needs such as blowing their noses and visiting the toilet unsupervised. They talk about 'germs' when someone coughs during lunchtime. Documentation which supports children health is thorough, detailed and well maintained, such as accident and medication records.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is safe and secure and where staff are vigilant about keeping children and adults safe. Visitors are asked to sign in and out and are told of the fire evacuation procedure. Thorough written risk assessments are carried out yearly and every day visual checks take place to ensure the premises are safe to receive children. For example, wet leaves are swept up to ensure the outside play surface is not slippery and hazardous. Extensive written risk assessments are carried out when children make off site visits, such as to the park or shops; staff implement good procedures, such as the children holding onto a blue rope to keep safe and together whilst walking. Children themselves are learning about how to stay safe. They look out for cars, in the car park when they walk from room one to room two and know the rule of holding onto the handrail when descending the stairs. Children who stand on chairs are quietly told by staff that it is not a safe thing to do. Younger children in room one have plenty of space to play safely; they can freely select their age appropriate play resources from good quality furniture. In room two, children are able to appreciate their art work and posters which are displayed on the walls, some of which are at their eye level. Children are well protected from abuse because the designated person has a clear understanding of their role, is experienced in this area of her work and has undertaken advanced training in child protection. All staff are alert to recording any concerns they may have, have undertaken basic training and know the safeguarding children procedures.

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

The provision is good.

Children demonstrate a good attitude to learning and enjoy their time at the pre-school. They often have fun with the staff and laugh together as they play games such as hide and seek, which also involves learning positional language. Children are happy and involved as they confidently move between activities; they make choices and initiate their own play and learning. For example, a three-year-old helps to put her friend's shoes on so they can role play the story characters, Peter Pan and Wendy. Children are keen to take part in a range of play based, practical activities which captures and sustains their interest. They are secure and settled and are able to form positive relationships with each other and the staff. Younger children are provided with good adult support, in a bright and welcoming room designated for them. This enables them to take part in all activities at their own developmental level and in a quieter environment.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Children are making good progress in the six areas of learning because of the staff's consistent use of positive teaching and questioning. Staff provide an environment where children have a wide choice of child initiated and adult led activities and are learning successfully through their play. As a consequence, children can set their own challenges and progress at their own pace. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how to take the children on to the next steps in their learning. A whole group planning system is in place which covers activities and what the children will be learning each week, with all staff promoting specific stepping stones in all areas of the pre-school. For example, children learn the shape of their chosen snack, Cherrios, recognise shapes in the role play area and the paper at the writing table. The staff/key workers know the children well; they keep their assessment, key worker files generally up to date which includes observational notes and photographs of children's capabilities. Staff keep rough notes of their key children's learning objectives and weave these into their practice during open play time or in small groups. However, this key worker teaching is not very regular and the written plans which support this teaching are not evident.

Children's language skills are developing well because the staff consistently encourage children to talk in all their activities. Staff use good questioning techniques which challenges children's thinking skills and use of words, during activities such as drawing and mark making. For example, a child describes the dragon the adult draws on the wipe board as needing 'sharp' teeth, while he uses his imagination to draw a picture too. Children are learning to recognise their names; they are well supported to select their name during self registration and find their name trays independently to put their 'work' in to take home. There are lots of opportunities for them to make marks on paper and some children are beginning to write recognisable letters of their name. Children's mathematical development is good; they learn to recognise numerals incidentally in their play such as when they use the calculator and through good whole group teaching. For example, children enthusiastically sing the 'clock song', they recognise numerals on the digital clock and then are selected to 'ting' the triangle with the corresponding amount, such as eight or two. Children correctly identify two dimensional shapes and use mathematical language such as when a child says the rectangle 'has long sides' or when a child at lunch time says 'if I cut my sandwich I have two squares'. Children have opportunities to problem solve with numbers when they sing number rhymes such as five current buns, but staff are not wholly confident in promoting number problems to children in the daily routine. Children confidently use everyday technology at the pre-school; they talk about the programmes on the computer

screen, know how to use the mouse, and have the use of a digital camera, photographing the staff during role play. Children explore and experiment with the sand using cylindrical tubes, and there are opportunities to build and design with resources such as mobile or recyclable materials if they wish. They take part in world celebrations such as Diwali, eating special sweets, made by a mum of the group and make Rangoli patterns with coconut. Children's creative development is promoted well by staff who give them opportunities to use their imaginations and to use media and materials to create their own pictures. For example, children are asked to draw their pets and one draws a very life like cat, all of which are displayed on the wall for children to proudly see. Staff provide exciting, sensory activities such as play with shaving foam or cooked spaghetti; they encourage children to describe what it feels or smells like and gain good responses from the children. Children take part, enthusiastically, in ring games such as 'Farmers in his den' and songs where they have to sing and listen to instructions such as 'stand up' 'or sit down'

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

The provision is good.

Children are making strides in their personal and social development because staff put a high emphasis on developing this area of learning. Children operate very independently in the pre-school; they select their self chosen activities, access the snack café when they feel the need, pour their own drinks and put their lunch boxes on the table at midday. They are learning to take responsibility for themselves by wiping down the tables ready for snack and during tidy up time they help to put the resources away. For example, several children spontaneously work together; they hold on to the large builders tray, and move it across the room to its storage place. Children are well behaved and those who are learning the boundaries of the pre-school receive consistent, firm but sympathetic behaviour management techniques from all the staff. Parents are involved in these management strategies, because the setting works well in partnership with its' parents. This results in improvements in children's behaviour. Children's individual needs are understood and met well by the staff, who have a good insight into each child's unique personality and values every one of them. Those children from different cultural or religious backgrounds feel happy, settled and respected; staff incorporate their celebrations into the life of the pre-school because they have a good understanding of how to promote equal opportunities. Children see positive images of all people in society in their books and play resources. Parents speak and write knowingly and highly of all aspects of the pre-school. This is through an impressive questionnaire which is sent out, analysed and suggestions for improvements are swiftly looked into or acted upon. Parents are able to see the settings policies and procedures which are located in the foyer, but the complaints procedure does not fully reflect the regulation. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents of children receiving nursery education funding is good. Parents receive regular updates on children's developmental progress. They can see children's key worker assessment records once a month, have a yearly consultation with staff and receive written reports on their child twice a year. However, these reports do not outline children's progress in all areas of learning nor do they give suggestions on how the parents could further aid children's development at home. This is done on an informal, need to know basis from their child's key worker. Parents are invited into the setting to help and to take part in activities such as 'craft' sessions. Parents find the staff friendly and communicative. The welcome pack, notice board and regular newsletters inform parents of the curriculum and activities offered to children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a well organised, nurturing environment where the outcomes for children are successfully promoted by the staff. All staff are committed and enthusiastic about growing and developing the provision; they attend in house and external training and cascade to the rest of the team using their own notes. Every year staff complete annual appraisals and there is constant reflection by all of the team on the best use of available space and how improvements can be made. A robust recruitment and vetting procedure is in place to ensure that new staff are suitable and safe to work with children. Good adult to child ratios are maintained to ensure children are well supervised. Documentation is mostly up to date and available for inspection. The manager keeps Ofsted fully notified of any significant events that take place at the setting. Staff have good regard to confidentiality because they receive in house training. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The manager is a knowledgeable and competent practitioner and leads by her own good example. All the staff team work well together; they contribute to the planning which is informed by their observations and assessment notes of the children. Staff implement the knowledge and skills they have gained after they attend training such as 'tools for learning' and 'early excellence'. New members of staff and those less confident in the Foundation Stage receive good support and training to ensure their skills quickly match the rest of the team. The manager and staff team constantly evaluate and monitor nursery education, through the self evaluation toolkit pilot, through the excellent parent questionnaire and through informal observations of teaching practices.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the setting were requested to respond to three care recommendations. Since the last inspection there has been a change of manager and many new staff. The first recommendation was to ensure all areas accessed by children are safe. Regular checks and risk assessments ensure that all areas are safe and staff are vigilant with regards to children's safety. The second was to ensure the equal opportunity policy is maintained in all areas and shared with parents. Parents can access the policies at any time as they are on display in the foyer; staff implement the policy into their daily practice meeting and respecting children's individual needs. The third was to maintain adequate contact details of staff, in register and visitors book. All documentation was looked at by the new manager and now includes the required details.

At the last education inspection three recommendations were made. The first was to evaluate the structure of the day to ensure that group activities such as snack time, after lunch play, outside play and special activities allow children to gain the maximum benefit with regards to their learning and social skills and to give older children more opportunities to be independent. Organisation of snack time, lunch time, outside play has been re-evaluated to ensure there is an emphasis on independence resulting in successful outcomes for children. The second was to continue to develop the staff's knowledge of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and how children learn. Staff at the setting receive regular in house and external training, including training from the Early years teacher on how to record information in the key worker books. This training has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching offered to children. The final recommendation was to ensure that the planning shows clearly how more/less able children will be catered for and that the records kept on children's development fully evaluate their achievements. Staff training improved the records kept of children achievements and individual education plans are in place for the more able and less able child.

## 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):

- update the complaints policy to include regulatory requirements and the Ofsted contact details

### 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):

- develop the key worker/focus planning and implementation system
- expand information given to parents on children's progress to cover all areas of learning and hints and tips on how they can help at home
- increase opportunities for children to be aware of or to solve simple number problems in the routine and in their play

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)