

Children's House

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511423
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Inspector	Anne Mitchell
Setting Address	St Peter's and St Paul's Church Hall, Church Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 8PB
Telephone number	020 8296 6711
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Registered person	Judith Hedge & Kim Stanton
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?

Children's House has been registered since 1981. It operates from two rooms in St Peter and St Paul's Church in Teddington. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The setting serves the local community and follows the Montessori principles of education.

The setting is registered to provide care for a total of 30 children under five years of age. There are currently 29 children on roll. Of these, 15 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens five days a week, term time only from 09.15 to 12.15. The setting supports children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

A total of six staff work with the children, on a full time or part time basis, all of whom hold relevant qualifications in Early Years. The setting receives support from the local Early Years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted in the setting. Children are accompanied to the toilet throughout the morning to use the facilities, so they can be supervised in the lobby area of the building. They use step stools to reach the sinks to promote their personal independence. They wash their hands thoroughly and dry with paper towels to limit the spread of infection. Children are aware of the importance of good hand hygiene telling the adult 'My hands will be dirty when I've been to the toilet so I need to wash them clean'.

Children's health and wellbeing is effectively supported through the settings policies regarding health and sick children and through the clearly recorded accident and medication recording.

Children can be treated promptly in the event of an accident because three of the six staff hold current first aid certificates. There is a well stocked first aid kit available in the setting. Children have access to well maintained equipment as staff are responsible for cleaning toys and equipment on a regular basis. Children have daily opportunities to enjoy physical play and fresh air in the fully enclosed garden, where they use their physical skills to climb and balance.

Children's dietary needs are effectively supported. Specific needs are recorded and a display of food allergies or special diets is displayed in the kitchen. Children enjoy a healthy snack of fresh fruit. Children bring in a piece of fruit and this is prepared by staff and shared with all children at the setting. Children enjoy a choice of milk or water at snack time. They have access to drinking water throughout the session so they are well hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in safe and secure premises. The door is monitored closely by staff at the start of the day and then locked once all the children have arrived. Safety equipment such as socket covers are in place and supervision is good. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through discussion and reinforcement by staff. One member of staff encourages the children to sit on the floor, rather than the high adult bench seat so '...no one falls and bumps their heads'. Children take this advice on board and as they tidy up a child warns another 'Watch out. I've got a mat to put away. Mind out!'

There are effective systems in place to record children's attendance and that of visitors to the group. A member of staff is responsible for health and safety issues, but all staff work together to ensure toys and equipment are safe and suitable for use. Risk assessments are completed to make sure children are safe in the setting and garden. Planned projects about safety include a visit from the road safety unit who visit with props to enable children to act out scenarios to learn about staying safe near the road.

Children are well protected from harm and neglect. This is because there are clear procedures in place regarding safeguarding children. Information is displayed for parents so they are aware of the staff's responsibility to keep children safe. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. There is a nominated person responsible for safeguarding children, and she has a very clear understanding of her responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and settled in the setting. They come into the pre-school happily and gather together in the story circle, choosing a book to look at while they wait for their friends to arrive. Staff immediately engage them in conversation, or they sit and chat to friends. Children respond well to staff who are natural with them and engage them with interest and affection. A member of staff tells a child 'It's so good to see you again. I'm glad you're better'.

Children choose from a broad range of activities and resources throughout the session. Children choose puzzles from the shelf and complete them together, with good levels of concentration and cooperation. A child says 'There's a piece missing. Look, it goes there!' The other child searches for the missing piece saying 'Here it is. I was sitting on it all the time!'

Children enjoy creating paintings at the easel. A child puts on an apron, telling an adult 'I'm going to paint a picture'. The adult replies 'That's great. What colours are you using?' The child tells her 'I'm using green because my brother likes green but I like pink so I'll do that next'. The level of interaction between staff and children is good and this promotes children's language and vocabulary.

At times younger children become restless and distracted. Following a story with the main group and a short period of free play, they move into the other room for another story and are then asked to draw a picture relating to the story they have just heard. The children lose concentration and consequently their behaviour deteriorates.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan activities that cover all areas of learning. Planning is completed by the staff team and highlights what areas of learning are covered. Activities are evaluated through discussion rather than through documentation, and therefore staff do not always adapt planned activities for more or less able children, offering appropriate support or challenges.

Children's observations are generally completed intermittently unless staff have specific concerns about a child's development. However, through discussion with key workers, they have a good understanding of children in their group and know where they are in their development. New systems have been put in place so staff can increase the level of written observations and plan for children's next steps for development to consider what will be planned to develop their skills and learning. However, these systems are at an early stage and are not yet used consistently in future planning.

The organisation of staff and resources provides children with a good balance of support and choices in their play. Children can choose activities independently from low level storage and do so with confidence. At times, some activities, such as worksheets for number and literacy, limit children's opportunities to learn through relevant and meaningful experiences. While some children enjoy this activity, others lose concentration quickly.

Children demonstrate good levels of confidence and come into the setting eager to start their day. A child is a little unsettled and a member of staff quickly engages him in discussion. 'Hey, do you want to sit here with me? I saw you yesterday didn't I?' The child is distracted and settles well, discussing what he has been doing with the member of staff. Children are warmly

welcomed by staff. They have good relationships with staff and with each other, and work in cooperation with one another at the train track, making puzzles or in the role play area. Children show developing independence as they put their coats on without adult help and select resources from the low level shelves. Children are keen to help out and tidy up together before snack.

Children enjoy stories and participate with enthusiasm. During the story of Mr. Noisy they make relevant comments such as 'He forgot to say please!' and stamp their feet to act out the character's noisy ways. They listen well during registration and respond to their name as it is called. Children use pencils and pens to make marks, writing lists and making 'maps'. However, staff tend to write children's names on their art work for them, rather than letting them try themselves. Children are beginning to link letters and sounds through the setting's 'Letter of the week'. Children are encouraged to bring things from home beginning with 'N'. They bring 'Noddy' dolls, a noughts and crosses game and a fishing net. A member of staff holds up one of the objects and asks 'What is this? Is it a nut?' The child replies 'No, it's a nutmeg'.

Children are beginning to show an interest in number. An adult asks 'How old is Postman Pat?' The child shows the adult five fingers, counting 'One, two, three, four, five!' Another child builds a space ship with Lego pieces and counts one to eight with confidence before shouting 'Blast Off!' Children complete maths worksheets, matching numbers together and joining them with a line. Some children enjoy these activities, while others lose interest and become distracted. Older children identify and colour different sized shapes. They quickly recognise and name the shapes correctly. During role play children use their maths' knowledge. A child counts the cakes she has 'made' to put in the oven. 'I made three for me and my friends, so we can have one each'.

Children learn about the natural world through discussion with staff and through planned activities such as growing plants. In discussion the children talk with an adult about where different fruit and vegetables come from. A child tells the member of staff 'I've got an apple tree in my garden and we pick the apples'. Another child talks about the tomato plant that grew in the summer. The member of staff explains 'It's winter now and tomatoes don't grow very well in this country because they need the sun'. Through projects such as 'Hot and cold' children explore climate and weather conditions around the world. Children use their designing skills to make complex three dimensional models, using plastic tops to represent 'control buttons'. Children do not have access to a computer, but have opportunities to use tape players to increase their knowledge of technology. Children explore other cultures and beliefs through projects such as 'Hot and cold' as well as having a range of multicultural toys and books.

Children explore colour and texture through planned activities such as collage and painting. Children are free to create using their own imaginations and select from a range of resources to create models from boxes, tubes and cartons. Children use their imaginations well in the role play area, working together to create a make believe story and acting it out, extending their game into different directions. A small group of children decide to make a surprise birthday party for Postman Pat. They lay the table with food and crockery, telling the adult, 'Don't tell him. It's a surprise!' They pretend to wrap presents and hide them away. They extend their play around the room. They make a map to follow to find Postman Pat, and one child, holding a doctor's bag tells the adult, 'Look. He's on the beach, but he has a headache'. Children enjoy listening to music as they sit to eat their snack and participate in singing favourite songs, such as 'Five currant buns'.

Children use the low wall in the outdoor area to balance as they walk around it, either alone or with guidance from staff. They are confident as they climb up the large climbing frame and

show skill in their large muscle control. There is limited suitable space in the garden area for children to use bikes and trikes to develop pedalling skills. Children's small muscle control is well promoted through a range of planned activities and play. They use scissors with increasing confidence and complete complex patterns on pegboards. Children learn about healthy lifestyles through planned projects. During the current theme of 'Hot and cold' children talk about what to wear in hot and cold weather to keep their bodies healthy and safe.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their families enjoy a warm welcome from staff who greet them personally on arrival. Staff work hard to provide an inviting and child orientated environment with bright displays and children's art work on show for them to see. Staff have a secure knowledge of individual children's needs and meet them effectively. For example, one member of staff knows that one child needs support when separating from their carer and quickly engages him in discussion and helps him choose a favourite book to look at together. Consequently children demonstrate a clear sense of belonging. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children learn about the wider community through the broad range of resources that positively reflect diversity. There are dolls, puzzles and books that provide positive images of people from a range of cultural backgrounds and with disabilities, and staff plan activities linked to exploring festivals and other cultures. An equal opportunities policy is available and is reviewed and updated annually. Children who have specific requirements are well supported by staff, who liaise appropriately with parents and other professionals to ensure all children are included.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff are good role models, thanking children with their help as they tidy up and using praise when children have achieved. Children show good manners at snack time as they say please and thank you spontaneously. Staff are positive in their approach and have consistently high expectations for children's behaviour.

Partnership with parents is good. They are provided with a good range of information about the setting and regular newsletters inform them of current projects and themes. Parents are encouraged to help their children look for objects around the house that begin with the letter of the week. This enables parents to take part in their child's learning. Parents are familiar with their child's key worker and are happy with level of care and education they receive. Annual parents evenings enable parents to speak with their child's key worker in a more formal setting, but most state they talk to staff informally at the start or the end of each session. Parents state that their children have '...gained in confidence' since being at the setting. One child told their parent 'I love school'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care and education. Children benefit from being cared for by qualified and experienced staff. There are secure systems in place to ensure adults are suitable to be with children. Staff are committed to developing their personal and professional knowledge and understanding of child care and education through attending ongoing training events.

There are high staff ratios in place and staff are deployed effectively so children are well supported in their play and learning. Space is organised well to meet the needs of the children effectively and allow sufficient space to play. Children are able to choose independently during most of the session. However, at times the organisation of activities for younger children inhibits their play. There is a good balance of indoor and outdoor play, which increases during milder weather. The setting have a comprehensive range of written policies and procedures in place which supports children's health and welfare.

Leadership and management is good. The staff team work well as a team and regular informal discussions with management highlight training needs and personal development issues. Regular staff meetings are minuted and are used to plan for children's learning. The leadership team are able to monitor the provision for nursery education as they work directly with the staff and children. Regular visits from the Early Years advisory teacher also provides the management with ideas and areas for improvement. Staff are currently looking at ways to improve the use of the outdoor area and are developing their written observations on children's progress to inform planning more effectively.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to develop a risk assessment procedure identifying action to be taken to minimize risks and which is signed and dated. There is now a written risk assessment system in place to ensure children can play safely inside and out.

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.

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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):

- ensure that the organisation of planned activities for younger children effectively supports their development at all times

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):

- make sure that activities are effectively evaluated to promote opportunities for challenging or supporting children of differing abilities
- improve observations on children to ensure all areas of their development are covered and are used effectively to plan the next steps of their learning

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