

Clowns Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY283267
Inspection date	30 November 2007
Inspector	Karen Ann Byfleet
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Registered person	Clowns Early Years Centres Ltd
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 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?

Clowns Early Years Centre (5) was registered in May 2004. It operates from three rooms in a purpose built nursery unit which is attached to a Sure Start children's centre and is situated on the outskirts of Chesterfield in Derbyshire. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 30 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Children from the local area use this setting. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs.

The nursery employs five full time staff. Four of the staff hold relevant Level 3 childcare qualifications and one member of staff is currently working towards this. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. There are good procedures in place which help children to learn about their personal hygiene. For example, they follow daily hand washing routines before eating and after using the toilet and they are encouraged to clean their teeth after lunch. Children are protected from any cross-infection and their health is further promoted through the use of individual face cloths, which are freshly laundered on a daily basis and the implementation of a sound policy for sick children which is shared with parents. Good procedures are followed by all the staff to prevent the spread of any infection. For example, when changing nappies, they ensure that aprons are worn, hands are washed, the changing mat cleaned after each use and all soiled nappies are disposed of appropriately. All staff hold current first aid certificates and update their training regularly to ensure they are able to manage any minor accidents which occur. All accidents are recorded, well maintained and confidential. Parents are informed of any accidents and are requested to sign the accident record book. Medication records are also well maintained. Prior written permission is obtained from parents for staff to administer any medication to children and all medicines are stored appropriately. The policy includes all medication both prescribed and non-prescribed and children are given non-prescribed medication at parents' written request. Written consent for staff to seek any emergency medical advice or treatment for children is in place.

Children's dietary needs are met well. Their individual needs and requirements are discussed with parents and recorded well. A list of special dietary needs is displayed where all staff have sight of it. This ensures all staff working with the children at any given time can see at a glance which children have special dietary needs or requirements. All snacks and meals are provided by the setting and are balanced, healthy and nutritious. children enjoy a wide variety of snacks such as fresh fruit, bread sticks, dried fruit, cheese and occasionally the children bake their own buns and biscuits to have as afternoon snacks. Lunches are freshly cooked on the premises by the setting's own cook. Menus are devised by both the staff and the cook and they take children's likes and dislikes into account. Lunches consist of healthy foods such as shepherds pie, cabbage and cauliflower. Pasta meals are also popular with the children. For desserts they enjoy yoghurts, fresh fruit and milk puddings. Alternative menus are always available for children with special dietary requirements such as vegetarian options and these are highlighted on the menu which is displayed for parents. Records of babies' and toddlers' food intake is recorded onto their daily sheets which are given to parents at the end of the day, along with other information such as their nappy changes and sleep times.

Physical development is promoted well. Children have daily opportunities to play outside and engage in activities inside to encourage a positive attitude to healthy exercise. For example, they enjoy climbing and balancing outdoors, manoeuvring around obstacles as they ride the sit-on toys and play throwing and catching games with balls. All the children enjoy ring games both indoors and outside. Outdoor play is well planned by the staff who utilise the area well. However, the outdoor space limits the opportunities for children to engage in activities which allow the socialisation of mixed age groups. Rest periods are provided after lunch for the babies and toddlers. The babies have cots within the baby room and the toddlers use sleep mats. All are provided with individual bedding which is laundered daily and staff monitor their sleep regularly. The older children enjoy a quiet time after lunch as they sit with a staff member and enjoy a group story time. Consequently, children are developing a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is well maintained. The environment is warm and welcoming to children, parents and visitors and the premises are clean and well maintained. Staff undertake daily risk assessments of the premises and resources to ensure children's safety. There is good security of the building as all doors are kept locked and the outdoor play area is safely enclosed. All interior doors within the building are fitted with high locks, helping to keep children safe. Toys and resources in each area are clean, well maintained and well organised. They are set out effectively to enable children to move in safety and comfort. Babies, toddlers and the older children are able to self-select from the pre-planned activities which are creatively set out by the staff prior to children's arrival. Pre-school children help with the setting-up of some activities such as messy play. For example, they help staff put food colouring into the water tray and are able to see and talk about how it works. Equipment for babies and toddlers meets their needs well. High and low chairs are fitted with safety harnesses, cots and sleep mats are provided with individual linen which is laundered daily and child-height furniture allows for flexible use for groups of children to play and eat together.

Fire safety is well promoted. Staff regularly practise emergency evacuation with the children to ensure they develop an understanding of the procedure. A written evacuation procedure is well displayed throughout all areas of the setting. Good operational procedures are in place for the safe conduct of any outings undertaken. Staff ensure written parental permission is obtained to take the children for short walks within the local community and to transport them in a vehicle.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the staff and management have a good awareness and understanding of child protection. They are familiar with signs of abuse and how to ensure any concerns are dealt with confidentially and the procedures to follow. All staff have attended training and are fully aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and they have a sound understanding of the procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a staff member.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive at the setting with enthusiasm. They separate confidently from their parents and carers and immediately seek out their friends to engage in the activities which are well set out prior to them arriving. There is a daily routine which the children know well and they look forward to their day. The team of dedicated staff plan activities very well as they link into themes and topics. They ensure all children are involved in a wide range of interesting and exciting activities both inside and outside. Staff within the baby and toddler rooms have attended training in 'Birth to three matters' and incorporate this well into their planning. They ensure all aspects and components are covered and they use observations and the children's development records extremely well. This helps them to plan effectively and use differentiation in children's abilities. The staff have excellent relationships with the children. They spend time with them, in small groups or on a one to one basis. They listen with interest to what the children have to say and they ask age-appropriate questions, encouraging young children to recall information and enhance their learning. For example, the current topic is Christmas and the toddlers have been making parcels in collage for a wall display and learning Christmas songs. Staff ask the small group which songs they can remember and which they would like to sing. Other stimulating and fun activities involve the babies and toddlers engaging in activities which

promote their sensory experiences, such as playing in the tuff spot with flour, pasta and blancmange. All children within the setting gain good levels of self-esteem and confidence as they enjoy receiving praise and attention. For example, the babies enjoy staff clapping and saying 'hurray' when they achieve something such as building a tower and knocking it over or saying animal sounds and making noise with the musical instruments.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are very proactive in their planning, with all areas of learning clearly identified. Focussed activities clearly show differentiation in children's ages and abilities to ensure their individual learning objectives are addressed and good use of observations made by the staff are undertaken and incorporated into the planning. Assessments of children's development and progress is of a good standard and through staff's dedicated practice and the full range of worthwhile activities on offer each day, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are consistently engaged in an extensive range of developmentally appropriate activities both indoors and out which provide them with suitable, age-appropriate challenges.

Children have a good attitude to learning as they show lots of interest in group time and in their individual activities. They are confident and have high levels of self-esteem as they clearly enjoy showing off their work which is attractively displayed. The children behave well as they respond to boundaries and they form solid relationships with their peers and the adults caring for them. The children manage their personal care well. They are independent in hand washing and show a good understanding of why they need to wash their hands before eating and they put on their own coats for outdoor play, seeking support from adults if they need help in fastening them. Staff are deployed very well. They ensure children are supervised and they encourage concentration and turn taking. Staff engage with the children and constantly talk to them and ask age-appropriate questions. For example, in a role play activity, the hairdresser's staff ask children questions like, 'have you ever been to a hairdresser's?', 'what did you have done?', 'did you have to sit in a special chair?'. A print rich environment, children's use of writing for a purpose, their access to a good range of writing and mark-making resources and their access to a good range of books, both story and reference, enhances their language and literacy skills. For example, they have many opportunities to practise writing for a purpose in the role play area as they write shopping lists, use appointment books and write letters to 'Santa'. They are actively encouraged to extend their vocabulary and explore different sounds through games and as staff interact with them in their play, such as talking about the food colouring and how it changes as it is added to the water. Children are also developing other communication skills. For example, they have been learning to count in sign language and during snack time, the staff talk to them about this and they confidently count up to ten using sign language.

Children say and use number in familiar contexts. Through activities such as, sorting, matching and balancing activities they are developing good mathematical concepts. In the sand and water play they use language such as full and empty. Children enjoy activities such as peg boards which enables them to make up patterns and follow the ones set out by staff. They know about shape and size as they confidently manage jigsaws when they match pieces of the puzzles. In construction play they use different sized bricks to build a range of objects and constructions. the children also enjoy board games which enables them to share, take turns and recognise and use number through the use of dice. Children participate in a diverse range of activities which enables them to develop their awareness and understanding of the world around them

and their local community. They show awareness of others and their feelings, listening to each other during group activities. They undertake a full range of activities which look at different cultures and beliefs. There is a good array of posters and books around the setting which display positive images of diversity, for example, pictures of ethnicity, disability and gender. Through the well-planned topics and themes children investigate objects using their senses, for example, food tasting. However, opportunities for them to investigate the natural world such as planting and nurturing flowers and plants outdoors are limited. Children confidently build and construct with a variety of materials and objects. They make models in three dimensions as they build with construction bricks and junk modelling. For example, to celebrate the Chinese New Year, the children made a large dragon from boxes which they proudly displayed in the reception area. They have regular daily access to technology as they independently access the computer and they enjoy taking items apart to see how they work. For example, they took a telephone to pieces to find out how it works and what it is made up of. They are able to independently operate programmable equipment such as a CD player. Visitors into the setting have included the police, the fire brigade and guide dogs. The children also make visits within their local community. For example, they visit the local shops to buy fruit and vegetables and the local library to choose books for the nursery, extending their knowledge of the wider world. Staff plan outdoor activities and are flexible in their approach to take account of the weather conditions and children's individual interests. The children actively participate in group games of singing and dancing which increases their knowledge and understanding of exercise and the effect it has on their bodies. Staff talk to the children about feeling cold and what items of clothing they need to keep warm. Many opportunities are presented for the children to explore texture, shape and form in two and three dimensions and they explore sound through musical activities and having independent access to a good range of musical instruments. Good planning of role play activities and their access to dressing-up, enables children to engage in play which develops their imagination, knowledge and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children have equal access to the setting's good range of resources and activities. They are treated as individuals by all staff, who ensure activities are suited to children's specific levels of understanding and that they are appropriately challenged. Staff within the baby and toddler areas provide detailed written information for parents on a daily basis as they record sleep times, food intakes and nappy changes. Positive relationships are formed as children work well together. Staff talk to the children about their behaviour and are consistent in their approach helping children to feel secure. The children know and understand the setting's boundaries well and as a consequence, they are well behaved. This is recognised by staff as they offer lots of praise to the children for their efforts and achievements, for example, when they put on, or fasten their own coats, helping to raise their self-esteem. Through the well-planned topics and access to free play materials, children have many opportunities to engage in activities which enhance their learning and understanding of the wider community and the world around them. For example, food tasting, dressing-up and planning topics around different cultures, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Visitors to the setting have included the fire brigade, the police and guide dogs and staff take children on walks within the local community to shops and to the local library. These activities contribute further to help children develop an understanding and acceptance of the wider community. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They have good systems in place for the inclusion of all children and staff have a sound knowledge of how to liaise with the outside agencies and the parents to ensure consistency of care. A designated staff member is in place and is fully aware of how to ensure individual education plans are incorporated into the overall planning process.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Staff identify all children's individual needs and their personalities through forming good strong relationships with both the children and their parents. They exchange information at both ends of the day and through a key worker system which enables individual staff to monitor children through each stage of their development. An information booklet, provided to all parents, includes detailed information about the setting, early learning goals, staffing and Ofsted details. Through good home links parents are able to become actively involved in their children's learning. For example, staff provide parents with ideas for activities parents can do at home. They provide recipes for play dough and allow them to borrow resources such as scissors to help with children's fine manipulative development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust and comprehensive policies support the consistent and professional practice. Staff share and receive information with parents regularly, maintaining excellent records in a professional and systematic manner to ensure they are up to date. All relevant documentation is in place and supports the good quality practice. Children are very happy, relaxed and self-motivated within the well-organised and inviting environment. They are confident and relish their time in the group. The setting has sound systems in place to support their working practices and promote the children's care and well-being. Daily registers of attendance for the children and staff are well maintained and include times of arrival and departure.

Leadership and management of early education is good. Management and staff are proactive in their approach. The staff team are deployed very well to ensure children are well supported. Comprehensive and flexible planning systems allow children to make choices. Staff adapt plans of activities to effectively support and guide children to extend their play and learning. However, limited opportunities are available for children to investigate the natural world more fully. Management ensure staff maintain and update their professional skills and attitudes through annual appraisals and ongoing training.

The management of the company and staff within the setting have a sound vision for the future and are working well towards this through the ongoing use of the setting's self-evaluation process. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to: ensure that all accidents were recorded and that parents are informed and sign the accident book; ensure that nappy changing routines were structured in a way that uses children's time effectively.

Within each play room of the setting staff have access to accident record books. These are well maintained with details of accidents, staff present and action taken. At the end of each day parents are asked to sign an acknowledgement of the accident being recorded and are given copies of the report. This ensures staff continue to work in partnership with parents and

children's welfare is promoted. Nappy changing routines are structured with routine nappy changing times. However, they do not interfere with children's time and are individual to their needs.

Nursery Education: Not applicable.

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):

- further develop the outdoor play area to enable more socialisation of mixed age groups.

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 outdoor area to enable children to experience more opportunities to explore and investigate the natural world.

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