

Clever Tots

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY346623
Inspection date	14 February 2008
Inspector	Lisa Paisley
Setting Address	Clever Tots, (Holy Tree Infant School) Crescent Road/Junction Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 5RY
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Registered person	Clever Tots Limited
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?

Clever Tots is privately owned. It opened in 2007 and operates from a converted school house in Brentwood, Essex. A maximum of 85 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 19.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 94 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 19 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 staff. 14 of the staff, including both managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Seven staff members are currently attending training. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment where very good hygiene practices are maintained and they learn about hygiene routines through washing their hands appropriately. For example, they wash their hands after creative activities, using the toilets and before snacks. Older children are also reminded to wipe their noses when needed and staff are vigilant in ensuring young children's noses are wiped when required. Staff consistently apply agreed health procedures which ensures the risk of cross-infection is minimised and children's health and well-being is effectively promoted. Eight staff members are first aid trained and arrangements are in place to ensure existing staff update their training. The first aid box is located in a designated area in the hallway and is inaccessible to children. Items are regularly checked and any medication is stored in a designated locked cabinet. This ensures that all children receive a good level of care if they become ill, have an accident or require prescribed medication.

Older children help themselves to easily accessible drinking water during the day. Younger children and babies are offered regular drinks as staff have a good understanding of their individual needs. Older children can pour their own drinks and they enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables. Snack and meal times are healthy and well balanced, taking into account the individual and cultural needs of all children. All meals are freshly prepared on site, using fresh ingredients that are low in salt and sugar content. Young children are beginning to learn about healthy eating as staff sit with them and provide positive support and guidance. Older children are able to talk about 'good' and 'bad' foods as they learn about healthy foods through topic work and regular discussions, contributing to children understanding about healthy lifestyles.

Children explore, test and develop good physical control in the stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences that are provided by the nursery. Staff have a good knowledge of each child's stage of development. Their secure understanding means all children are offered appropriate good physical challenges in a safe, well-planned and stimulating environment. They are given sufficient time to use a range of equipment such as the climbing frame, see-saw tricycles and balls. Children also have good opportunities to practice their finer manipulative skills as they have consistent access to a range of resources; this includes scissors, threading and tools for play dough.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure, welcoming environment. All areas of play are bright, spacious and effectively laid out with clear designated areas such as the book corner and creative and role play area. The walls are brightly decorated with good quality displays of either children's art work, posters and current themes. Children are able to freely select a range of resources and play equipment, fostering their independence and confidence in choosing their own activities. Children benefit from using toys and play equipment which are maintained to a very high standard. They enthusiastically select their own play resources which are appropriate to their ages and stages of development. Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are located throughout the nursery, ensuring that children can be protected and evacuated quickly in the event of a fire. Children learn about what to do when the fire alarm sounds and by practising monthly fire drills. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through gentle reminders from staff such as lining up sensibly, tidying away toys and playing with toys and resources

appropriately. Younger children are effectively supported by staff as they sit close by the babies helping them with their crawling, balancing and walking skills ensuring that they are safe at all times.

Children's safety is effectively promoted as staff have very good measures in place both indoors and outdoors to ensure risks to children are minimised. For example, the entrance and all exits and outdoor play areas are secure, all radiators including heating pipes and all low-level electrical sockets are protected and safety gates are securely mounted and are appropriately used within the nursery. Clear and effective arrival and departure procedures allow for the safe arrival and collection of the children to and from the nursery. Clearly written safety procedures are in place and they are consistently applied by staff, such as the lost child policy and the uncollected child policy. Staff have very good awareness of how to organise space, furniture and equipment appropriately to enable children to move freely and with independence between activities and different play areas.

Children are effectively safeguarded as staff have a secure understanding of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children. A written policy is in place and this includes a statement with regard to an allegation being made against a staff member. There is a designated person responsible for safeguarding children, who has a good understanding of their role. The nursery have received details regarding the Local Safeguarding Children Board. However, staff have not yet familiarised themselves of the new procedure to ensure the welfare of children is fully safeguarded. Parents are informed of the nursery's responsibility regarding child protection reassuring parents of their child's safety and well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages and stages enjoy their time at the nursery and they are stimulated by the planned and spontaneous activities that are offered. All children are confident, secure, curious and eager to explore the nursery environment and play activities that are offered. Staff capture children's interest by asking them questions and encouraging them to participate in activities that appeal to children's interests. They have good relationships with staff and are not afraid to ask for help, support or a cuddle. Children participate in a good and balanced range of activities such as sand, water, painting, play dough, puzzles, books and trains. Consequently, children are interested and enthusiastic in their play.

Babies enjoy the benefits of lots of cuddles and close contact with the staff and they have secure relationships with their key person. The nursery have successfully implemented the 'Birth to three matters' framework, ensuring young children participate in a broad range of planned, focused activities, ensuring they are making secure developmental progress. Staff take time to sit and play with individual children, sharing books, encouraging crawling, climbing onto the slide, sitting on the rockers and playing in the sand; this helps children to develop in confidence and ensures that they feel valued and included.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children play and learn. However, the range of teaching methods are not always fully extended limiting children's learning experiences. Planning is very detailed and comprehensive, covering all the required elements of the curriculum, including differentiation and assessments. Staff also implement daily focus activity plans ensuring children are consistently

observed and to enable staff to identify next steps in children's learning. A good 'key person' system is in place and staff use individual profiles to record children's developmental progress. Initial profiles are completed on new children, helping staff assess children's starting points in their development. The structure of the session is free-play with planned snack time, registration and circle times, however, the organisation of the daily routines hinders children's opportunity for uninterrupted free-flow play, choice and independence.

Children are developing good attitudes and dispositions towards their learning and the older and more able children are keen to complete tasks such as making construction vehicles. They enjoy participating in a good range of activities provided and are encouraged to independently select resources and initiate their own activities and games. Children show a secure sense of belonging as they greet staff and each other upon arrival. They work very well together and understand the importance of co-operation during group activities. For example, children sharing the hairdressing set and taking turns. Children are confident speakers, using words effectively and a range of vocabulary to convey their experiences both real and imaginary. The book corner is warm and welcoming for children and they are confident and enjoy looking at books with either their friends or the staff. Twice weekly phonics sessions with a teacher further extend children's learning in sound and letter recognition. Children confidently use tools and resources to make marks and they have regular opportunities to recognise and write their own names independently through daily routines, for example, at registration and snack time. Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy is suitably promoted through daily routines such as at circle time, they particularly enjoyed 'Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer' as they run energetically around the circle with their coloured alien puppet. They have good opportunities to sort objects, match patterns, sequencing and participate in matching games. Older and more able children are beginning to count up to ten and beyond confidently. Cooking, sand and water activities provide children with good experiences of weight, size and capacity.

Children have opportunities to find out about the natural world through topics such as autumn and growing seeds. They occasionally go on trips out into the community such as the local shops to buy fish. Children are developing a good awareness of the uses of information technology in everyday life and are able to operate equipment such as domestic items, torches, weighing scales and magnifying glasses. Their imaginations and free expression is effectively promoted through the range of activities such as play dough, painting, water, sand, role play, craft activities and music and movement. They enjoy music and movement, using the instruments freely to experiment rhythm and sound patterns. Children move around the room safely, they negotiate space effectively finding a space on a mat when asked and lining up sensibly. Their physical skills are effectively promoted through a variety of mediums such as the climbing frame, tricycles, balls, hoops and skipping ropes. Children's finer manipulative skills are effectively promoted through the good range of activities such as threading, puzzles, building with small bricks and mark-making tools. As a result they are making good progress in all areas of their physical development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by staff who work closely with parents to meet individual children's needs. They enjoy good relationships with staff, building on their well-being and confidence. Each child is valued and respected as an individual as staff know the children's individual personalities well. A comprehensive policy is in place regarding children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities which details how the service will be provided to children. The good

levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive a great deal of individual attention so that their needs are effectively met.

Children benefit from having access to a range of play resources which promote positive images of diversity and they participate in activities which promote their awareness of different festivals and cultures, for example, Diwali, Chinese New Year, Easter and Christmas. They also have the opportunity to taste food from other cultures such as prawn crackers and noodles. Children work harmoniously with others as staff create an environment that values positive behaviour. Staff provide very good role models for children by being calm and polite. Praise and encouragement are given freely to children, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand that they have done well. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are fully informed about the provision the nursery offers and how their children are progressing. Parents are welcomed into the nursery to help their children to settle or to talk to staff about any concerns they may have. Parents also receive a prospectus and the nursery website helps keep them up to date with activities and events. Children's learning is encouraged in the home through children bringing objects from home, linked to current topic work such as autumn. Notices on the information board and around the provision informs parents about the Curriculum for the foundation stage guidance. Regular meetings are arranged with parents to discuss their child's developmental progress, ensuring that parents are fully informed about all aspects of their child's care and development.

Parents are aware of how to make complaints about the provision and these are dealt with in a prompt and professional way. Staff listen to parents' concerns and, where appropriate, adapt their policies and procedures accordingly.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are provided with a good level of care, supported and enhanced by the clear policies developed and implemented by the nursery. These ensure that staff are consistent in their interactions with children and in their regard for safety and security. Records and details relating to staff and children are obtained, recorded and stored appropriately, ensuring that the nursery is meeting legal requirements relating to the National Standards.

Children are cared for by staff who have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and who have undergone a recruitment and induction programme. This ensures that all staff working with children are suitable and have relevant training and experience.

Staff have been successful in creating a warm and welcoming nursery environment for both children and parents. The use of available space within the nursery is very well organised, with clear designated areas for play, storage, food preparation, changing and eating. These areas are effectively managed by staff to allow children to play, eat and rest safely and securely.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The registered providers, managers and staff are committed, enthusiastic, motivated and professional in their approach to providing children with positive early years play experiences and learning. The organisation of the daily routines provides children with a good range of learning experiences throughout the day. Staff induction and appraisals ensure that new and existing staff feel fully supported and valued in their role. They have a good understanding of the importance of early childhood development

and they work hard to consistently provide good care for all children. Staff have clearly identified roles and responsibilities ensuring they carry out their roles effectively. They are deployed successfully within the nursery and good staffing ratios are maintained throughout the day ensuring children are well supervised and supported during activities and daily routines. Staff have a good awareness of the policies and procedures which are in place and they are successfully implemented. Consequently, children are cared for by knowledgeable, experienced staff and they benefit from good continuity of care.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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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 staff's knowledge and understanding of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

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 further the range of teaching methods used by staff
- review the organisation of daily routines to promote uninterrupted play and foster choice and independence.

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