

The Castle Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Unique Reference Number | 138239 |
| Inspection date | 02 May 2008 |
| Inspector | Linda Close |
| Setting Address | 20 Henfield Road, Wimbledon, London, SW19 3HU |
| Telephone number | 020 8544 0089 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Beverly Jane Davis & Jaqui Kelly |
| 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?

The Castle Kindergarten Pre-School opened in 1994. It is privately owned and operates from a multi-roomed single storey building located on a residential road in Wimbledon, close to Dundonald Park. The setting predominantly serves families living locally or in the surrounding areas. The local authority is Merton.

There are 91 children on roll at the time of this inspection including 63 children who are three or four years old and in receipt of nursery education grant. There is a small number of children on roll who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a small number of children who are learning English as an additional language. Several of the children on roll hear other languages spoken at home although their own first language is English. At the time of this inspection 43 children were present ranging in age from three years to four years. The group opens every weekday during school term times. The morning sessions run from 09:15 to 12:15 and the afternoon sessions run from 13:00 to 15:30. Children join the setting from the age of two years and six months.

There are four full-time and eight part-time staff working with the children in addition to the two joint providers who are supernumerary. Almost all of the staff hold early years qualifications to NNEB, NVQ Level 3, or PGCE and a small number of unqualified staff have plans to attend relevant training in the near future. There are two peripatetic specialist teachers who visit the school each week to lead dance and music activities in both the morning and the afternoon sessions.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Trained first aiders are present at every session to care for the children if they have an accident. Staff are exceptionally well informed about children's individual health needs. They have detailed information to hand to guide them and they are ready to take immediate action to safeguard children's health and wellbeing. Parents are made aware at the time of registration that children must not attend if they are unwell which prevents the unnecessary spread of infection. Parents are promptly informed if there are any infectious diseases prevalent in the setting. Children learn from the staff that they must have clean hands before handling food and hand washing is carefully supervised. All members of staff share routine cleaning tasks and together they ensure that high standards of hygiene are maintained for the children throughout the day. Staff follow hygienic routines when changing nappies to avoid cross-infection.

Children learn about making healthy food choices at the kindergarten. A recent initiative has led children to enjoy eating fresh fruit every day and parents say they are delighted that their children are tasting different fruits and fresh salad vegetables as a result. Children can take a drink of fresh water at any time. They pour out their own drinks at snack time choosing either milk or water according to their individual needs. Staff are extremely careful at snack time and when children prepare items such as 'green fruit salad'. Their vigilance ensures that children only have food and drink that suits their individual dietary requirements.

Careful timing ensures that every child enjoys outdoor play each day. They take part in energetic indoor games in the main playroom if the weather is too wet to use the outdoor area. Children use climbing equipment and balancing beams with increasing skill and confidence. All of the children enjoy their lively dance lessons. Skilled teaching ensures that the activities are made more and less complex to meet the needs of younger and older groups. Staff are kind and patient and they successfully draw less confident children into the group to take an active part in the dance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a clean, secure environment where they have ample indoor space for their activities. Children are divided into groups for age appropriate activities. Staff ensure that the playrooms are attractive to the children with suitable toys set out to attract their attention. Children can find their own named coat hook in the cloakroom area which helps to give them a sense of belonging. The nursery has a large store of good quality toys and art resources which meet children's needs in most respects. All of the toys and equipment are well maintained. Children have easy access to an extensive selection of books although these are not arranged to their best advantage. The tables and chairs are the correct height for children to play, eat and work in comfort.

Children are kept safe in the setting because they are well supervised at all times. The provider undertakes risk assessments in the nursery and in the outdoor area and she minimises risks by fitting items such as socket covers and a safety gate which prevents children from gaining access to the kitchen. Staff take a warm drink during sessions but they are careful not to place them where children can access them. Children and staff practise fire evacuation and a log is kept. Smoke alarms and fire extinguishers are strategically placed and fire exits are labelled which contributes to children's safety.

Children are carefully safeguarded in relation to child protection issues. A clear policy and procedure document is shared with parents and understood by the staff. A record is made of existing injuries and of visitors to the setting which helps to keep children safe. Staff know what steps to take if they have concerns about the welfare of the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children separate from their carers with increasing confidence and they hurry to take off their coats and choose where they will play. The staff show great kindness and sensitivity to new children and the very few who are unhappy on arrival. They soothe them and comfort them until they are settled and ready to join in with activities. Children clearly benefit from the high ratio of staff to children that is maintained in the setting. Grouping is thoughtfully organised so that children are given tasks and games that are carefully planned to meet their needs. The younger children spend most of their time in the main playroom where they move easily around the room choosing from worthwhile resources that include water play, construction toys, a doll's house and puzzles. Dance and music sessions led by visiting specialists take place in both the morning and the afternoon sessions so that younger and older children can enjoy these activities. They join in dance and movement happily and they are learning to listen to staff and to think about what they are asked to do. Staff observe the children and note their progress with care. They make good use of their observations to judge when children are ready to move on to more demanding tasks. Children are making very good progress in the development of their social skills. They happily share favourite toys and are content to take turns.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children listen to their teachers with rapt attention. They are eager to answer questions and they speak confidently in front of the group. Children get along very well together and they are forming friendships. They play happily together, they are learning to negotiate and they are very well behaved. Gifted teachers help the children to make very good progress with developing their pre-reading skills. Children are learning to recognise the letters of the alphabet by their shape and sound through a systematic programme of activities. They use their growing skills to pick out their own names and the names of their friends at circle time. Many of the older children are progressing well with their early reading using a commercial reading scheme. They begin with books without words which successfully helps them to develop skills of prediction and story telling using picture clues. They move on to books with text when they are ready and they take books home to share with their parents. However, the reading areas are not sufficiently inviting. Children do not always take full advantage of the extensive collection of story books that are arranged in boxes and on racks in all rooms.

Children are involved in many valuable counting activities at circle time and when they are playing. They show that they understand the terms more and less and they count accurately

up to 10 and beyond. Staff are skilled in their teaching of early mathematics and the children are making very good progress. They learn about numbers, length and shape through purposeful play activities. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is nurtured through well planned topics. Adults visit the group to share information about their work. Children learn about life in other countries and about a range of cultures. Parents are very helpful in this respect and they come to the group to share their national dress, their languages and their knowledge of special celebrations. Children play freely with a good range of battery operated toys and resources including magnets, magnifying glasses and binoculars and they enjoy using them. However, no record is made of their interest in these resources or of how they use them and what they learn from them. Children's manipulative skills are developing well through using equipment which includes puzzles, construction toys and scissors. They demonstrate their growing control over their hands when they hold their pencils correctly and make bold strokes. Many children can write their names clearly using well formed letters and they label their own work without assistance.

Children's creativity is nurtured appropriately. They take part in music making with a specialist teacher and they join in stimulating dance activities with great pleasure. Children paint pictures and they use a range of art materials for collage although these activities are mostly led by adults. Imaginative play is encouraged when children play in areas which include the kitchen and the garden centre. The nursery has a very good range of toys but there are few available resources that children can use in their own way to make up imaginative games of their own invention. The lack of transformable resources means that children cannot fully extend their creativity in play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are treated with the greatest care and respect in the nursery. Staff spend a considerable amount of time talking to parents to find out about children's individual needs before they join the setting. They offer home visits if parents feel this is desirable and they adjust settling in procedures to meet the needs of each child and their family. Children with specific health issues are warmly welcomed into the setting. The provider and staff are exceptionally well informed about offering special care for individual children and they liaise very effectively with therapists and other health and education professionals. The provider and senior staff have extensive experience and knowledge of child development. They observe children and carefully note their progress. Any concerns are sensitively shared with parents and the adults work very well together to plan and implement ways to help the children to move forward in their learning.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents say that they have every confidence in the providers and the staff. They also say that their children love coming to the setting and they are very excited by their activities. Parents are kept fully informed about their child's learning and development through written reports, formal and informal meetings with staff and through sharing records of progress. Regular, informative newsletters are sent home to parents and they have easy access to further notes and useful documents that are displayed in the entrance area. Parents are very involved in their child's learning. They liaise closely with the staff about early reading matters and other aspects of learning and they give their full support to the children.

Children benefit from the excellent behaviour management strategies employed by all members of staff. Any minor disagreements between the children are used as a tool for learning. Staff

calmly explain why children must share and take turns. Clear boundaries are set so that the children know what is expected of them. The children's behaviour is exemplary. Members of staff who work with the younger children in the afternoon session are charming, brisk and highly effective in helping children to be co-operative. They praise the children warmly and nurture their self confidence. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Every member of staff is checked for their suitability at the time of their employment including the visiting staff which helps to keep the children safe. Children are carefully supervised at all times to ensure that they are safe in the setting and in the outdoor play area. The providers ensure that the ratio of adults to children in the setting exceeds requirements. This ensures that a member of staff can offer additional support to individual children if there is a need and also that everyday chores do not distract staff from their work. A well planned timetable of activities, and careful grouping of the children, helps to ensure that planned activities are developmentally appropriate. The youngest children benefit from the security of playing in the same large group room each day with staff that they get to know well. The activities are thoughtfully adjusted when the older children go home so that the younger group attending the shorter afternoon sessions have suitable resources to choose from including puzzles with larger pieces and less complex construction toys. All of the required documents and records are correctly maintained and held ready for inspection at any time.

Leadership and management is good. The providers set high standards in the setting. They are committed to helping children to prepare academically and emotionally for their move to primary school. They monitor the educational provision and work with the staff to ensure that the children are given tasks and activities that meet their needs. The providers are fully committed to ensuring that all children are included in all activities. The staff team works well together. A plan is devised and displayed that shows staff clearly what each group will do over the sessions which promotes smooth transitions from one activity to the next. Staff keep each other informed if one of them must leave the room for any reason which contributes to children's safety. The providers and the staff help the children to learn through well planned purposeful play with a balance of more formal activities leading successfully to early reading. Most activities successfully help children to achieve well in their learning. Some aspects of creative play and art work have minor limitations which have not been identified. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection staff were asked to ensure that the kitchen is clear of obstructions. The provider has cleared the kitchen of obstructions and installed a safety gate to make the kitchen inaccessible to the children which contributes to children's safety.

In connection with the last inspection of Nursery Education two points for consideration were made. Staff were asked to think about ways to improve children's opportunities to access information and communication technology. Children now have easy access to several battery operated toys which they use enthusiastically. Their opportunities for learning have improved as a result.

Staff were also asked to use everyday routines to promote children's independence. Children now pour out their own drinks of water or milk at snack time. They wash their own cups after

having drinks. Children dress for outdoor play with minimal support. These developments provide children with good opportunities to gain independence.

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):

- extend the range of open-ended play resources that are available to children to enrich their imaginative play (also applies to Nursery Education)

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):

- provide children with easy access to a wide range of art and craft materials for free exploration and experiment (also applies to care inspection)

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