



Castle Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113417
Inspection date	29 September 2005
Inspector	Jacqueline Crawford
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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 satisfactory. 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 Day Nursery opened in 1991. It operates from 8 rooms on both floors of a large detached house, which is situated in Worthing, West Sussex. A maximum of 54 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 99 children aged from birth to under 5 years on roll. Of these 30

are under 2 years and 28 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports children with special educational needs, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 members of staff, 11 of the staff including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are 4 staff working towards a qualification.

The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Babies and children stay healthy because practitioners follow appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines and effective nursery care procedures. Children are very well protected because staff take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and all staff are first aid trained. Children are developing a good understanding of appropriate personal health and hygiene practices, such as regular hand washing before snack and mealtimes and after visiting the toilet.

Children enjoy an extremely good variety of nourishing and healthy meals, which are prepared on the premises by an experienced cook. The menu is displayed for parents and the older children are aware of the meals on the menu. Children and babies really benefit from the fresh ingredients used in cooked meals and learn the importance of healthy eating. However, fresh fruit is not provided every day or during morning snack times. Meal times are social occasions and children enjoy sitting with staff and friends. Older babies and toddlers are encouraged to feed themselves and are allowed time to finish their meal. Children receive regular drinks throughout the day, but opportunities for the older children to pour drinks for themselves is limited, because the water jugs are too large for them to handle confidently.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activity in the extremely well planned outdoor play area, which extends children's learning and provides excellent outdoor play provision throughout the year. The soft play and safety surface and extremely good equipment, enables even the youngest of children to benefit from good physical play activities, developing their control and co-ordination effectively.

The nursery is organised for the younger children and toddlers to sleep in individual beds, while the older children have opportunities to enjoy a rest period and quiet activities. Babies rest and sleep according to their needs in a quiet sleep room in the baby unit. Staff are aware of the importance of regular checks on sleeping babies and of keeping them within sight by not closing the curtains between the playroom and the sleep room.

Children have their health and dietary needs met because staff work effectively with parents and keep individual records for each child. Daily diary sheets are used to inform parents of babies and young children's food and drink intake, nappy changing

routines and their sleep times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment, in which regular risk assessments and health and safety checks are made to reduce potential hazards. Children learn to take responsibility and to keep themselves safe, through clear instructions from staff and during effective daily routines. They develop an awareness of space as they move between areas of the nursery and when they enjoy the play equipment in the garden with friends. They become aware of emergency evacuation procedures as fire drills are regularly practised. Children and babies are extremely well protected because of the effective use of safety equipment throughout the nursery. The good arrival and departure procedures ensure children are safe and secure, staff make sure children do not have direct access to the side door used by parents.

Children enjoy a wide range of good quality toys and equipment which are appropriate to the age and stage of children's development and are kept in a safe and hygienic condition. The excellent range of outdoor equipment is checked and monitored to ensure children's safety at all times. Babies have access to a range of toys and resources which are carefully selected for their age group and changed regularly.

Children are well protected because staff have a secure understanding of their role in child protection through training, and are fully aware of appropriate procedures to put into practice if necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happy and are warmly greeted by the staff. They quickly settle in their home base rooms and are eager to participate in a range of planned activities. Children have limited opportunities to independently access toys and resources, but staff make frequent changes which enable children to enjoy a wide range of activities. The planning for outdoor play is very good and extends children's learning and development extremely well, by linking different areas of learning to activities out of doors. Children frequently move around the nursery in order to maintain nursery routines, which is sometimes disruptive for the children, particularly when they are engrossed in an activity. Babies and toddlers are cared for by staff who develop warm and trusting relationships with them. They benefit from a good standard of care which ensures they are safe and their health needs are fully met. However, the environment within the baby unit and the staff's understanding of child development, provides insufficient stimulation to meet the developing needs of the babies and youngest children. Therefore toddlers and babies have limited opportunities to explore and discover through imaginative play and meaningful experiences. Staff do not refer to early years guidance, such as Birth to Three Matters to improve the

provision for babies and toddlers. Some areas of the nursery lack stimulating and positive images for children, for example, there are limited displays of children's work, interest areas or examples of activities enjoyed by the children. Staff support the children well, by providing plenty of praise and encouragement, which contributes to children's confidence and helps them to establish good relationships with staff and each other. Activities are effectively planned for the 2-year-olds, which children enjoy and provide sufficient challenges, for example, frequent story times, messy play and a range of age appropriate topics.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and provide a broad and balanced range of worthwhile activities which support children's progress across all areas of learning. The clear planning shows the intended areas of learning relating to the stepping stones, but does not record whether the learning intention has been met. Sometimes staff miss opportunities to extend the different areas of learning into the daily routines, for example by counting and problem solving at snack time. However, children's learning is successfully extended when staff use their teaching skills to link the different areas of learning to outdoor play. The nursery routines and movement of children around the setting sometimes impacts on activities the children enjoy. Children are very familiar with the routines which do enable them to develop their physical, social and listening skills effectively.

Children are developing an awareness of the needs of others, and often help each other to achieve challenging tasks. They listen attentively, show concentration and interact extremely well as they enjoy many stories and rhymes. For example, the children thoroughly enjoy 'The Gruffalo' story, they delight in joining in with the repeating rhyme and are able to answer questions and re-tell parts of the story. Children make choices in their play and learning using the planned activities and resources available. However, sometimes they lack the opportunity to freely select resources themselves or to increase their independence, for example by pouring their own drinks or laying the table at meal times. Children are beginning to link letters and sounds and understand writing is used for different purposes. They are developing an interest in reference books, which often relate to a topic and enjoy sharing books with their peers. Children are beginning to count confidently to 10 and imaginative planning and activities help children to recognise and sequence pictures and numbers. Children understand simple number operations through a wide variety of familiar songs and interactive rhymes using visual aids.

Children learn about the wider world and their own environment through a variety of topics such as 'Houses and Families'. Their natural curiosity is developed effectively as they investigate and discover more about natural world in the nursery garden. Children show a good awareness of space and others as they enjoy physical play and move between areas of the nursery. They explore a wide range of new experiences using free expression to create art and collage work. Many stimulating activities encourage children to express themselves creatively, developing their senses, however there are limited opportunities for them to enjoy the good role play area in the nursery.

Children are progressing towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. The balance of adult and child led activities allow children to develop at their own pace and to work well within their limits. Staff use assessment records effectively to identify children's starting points and observe their progress in order to move them to the next stage in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff work effectively with parents to ensure children's individual and special needs are met and they are fully included in the life of the setting. Parents receive a warm welcome into the nursery by friendly and approachable staff. Parents provide information about their children when they first start nursery, which ensures children receive continuity of care, the requested routines for babies and toddlers are followed as far as possible.

Children benefit from consistent praise and encouragement, they are well motivated and behave very well. Children understand the simple rules and boundaries and become aware of their own needs and the needs of others. The sensitive approach of staff helps the younger children to learn the importance of sharing and taking turns. Children develop a strong sense of belonging as they learn to care for their environment and understand that their contribution makes a difference, for example, by helping to tidy the garden or by making displays together. However, the toilet provision does not effectively ensure children's privacy. Children receive appropriate support from staff to enable them to develop an awareness of their own culture and diversity within a wider society. This positive approach ensures children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good quality information about the provision, and the educational programme. Parents are well informed about planned activities and topics relating to all areas of learning. Parents have opportunities to contribute to their children's learning in meaningful ways. Parents are kept fully informed about their children's wellbeing, progress and development through consultation meetings and discussions with staff, written reports and their children's development records.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The care of children is well supported by management and the organisation of the nursery. The recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected by staff who have the necessary skills, qualifications and experience to care for children. Management effectively supports staff training and development needs. However, management of the baby unit does refer to appropriate guidance, such as Birth to Three Matters, to develop activities for babies and toddlers. Policies and procedures are very well implemented and the required documentation and children's records are clearly maintained, which ensures children are secure and well cared for.

Management are aware to keep a record of concerns and complaints. Management and staff work effectively as a team and have high regard for the wellbeing of all children. However, planning does not provide a stimulating learning environment for all children.

Leadership and management is good. Management have a clear vision for nursery education and are committed to continual improvement through monitoring the provision and the educational programme. This ensures an effective use of assessment is used to observe children's progress and to plan their next steps in learning, helping children to move towards the early learning goals.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a recommendation was made to install divisions between the children's toilets. The provider has now made arrangements to have appropriate dividers installed to ensure children's privacy is respected. A further recommendation was made to ensure that policies and procedures and details of the regulator were made available to parents. The required documentation is now accessible to parents in the entrance hall of the nursery, thus informing parents of procedures in place which support their children's health and safety.

In nursery education a recommendation was made for staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum guidance to the Foundation Stage. Staff currently working with the children have good understanding of the Foundation Stage which enables them to support children effectively in nursery education. A further recommendation was made to improve children's access to equipment indoors and routines to allow more choice and independence. This recommendation has been partially met, with extremely good outdoor provision and access, but there remains limited independent access indoors.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint relating to Standard 3: Care Learning and Play, regarding the care and lack of stimulating activities offered to babies and toddlers; and to Standard 8: Food and drink, regarding the feeding routines for babies and toddlers. The complaint was investigated during the inspection. As a result of the complaint a recommendation has been made under Standard 3. The feeding routines for babies and toddlers under Standard 8 were found to be satisfactory at the time of the inspection. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- increase knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children in order to provide more stimulating care and planned activities for babies and toddlers, for example by referring to Birth to Three Matters
- improve opportunities for all children to freely select resources within a more stimulating environment

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):

- increase opportunities for children to develop their independence and extend their learning during daily routines
- improve the planning of the educational programme in order to evaluate activities effectively

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