

The Chestnut Tree Day Nursery 2004 Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY300179
Inspection date	21 November 2005
Inspector	Jeannette Waring / Sarer Marcia Tarling
Setting Address	6a Nuxley Road, Belvedere, Kent, DA17 5JF
Telephone number	01322 463626
E-mail	The Chestnut Tree @ belvedere1.freemove.co.uk
Registered person	Chatterbox House Day Nursery 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Chestnut Tree Day Nursery has been registered since January 2005, although there has been a day nursery on the site for a number of years. It operates within an open plan building but children are grouped according to age within three base rooms. The premises are situated in the Nuxley Village shopping area in Upper Belvedere. A maximum of 46 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 all year round. All children have access to the outdoor play area.

There are currently 46 children aged from 8 months to under 5 years on roll, of these, 26 children attend on a full time basis and 20 attend part-time. A total of 12 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery serves the local residential area with a few families travelling in to the nursery from further away. The nursery supports a number of children with special educational needs, there are currently no children who speak English as an additional language attending.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff, 8 of whom hold either a B'tech or NVQ 3 childcare qualification. Of the remaining 5 staff, 4 are working towards either an NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children benefit from nursery staff keeping records of all accidents which are shared with parents, and the policy on the administration of medication ensures that staff are able to give medication which has been prescribed by the child's doctor. The nursery also has a written health and safety policy. However, this is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that children's health is protected at all times. For example the policy on heating babies bottles is gives conflicting advice.

Children are not effectively protected from the risk of the spread of infection. Although general cleaning of floors and carpets in most of the nursery rooms is to a satisfactory standard, the overall cleaning and hygiene practice within the nursery is not sufficiently thorough. Staff do not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the how to maintain rigorous hygiene routines in order to protect children from the spread of infection. For example, bins, nappy disposal units, children's step stools and the bucket used for sterilising the babies bottles are not kept in a clean and hygienic condition, the toddler changing mat is split as are some of the mattresses which means that they cannot be effectively cleaned. The organisation of the bathroom in the baby room is poor with much of the space used for storage, making use of the wash hand basins and general cleaning difficult.

The nursery cook organises the kitchen well and is aware of how to provide balanced nutritious meals. However, the cook does not draw up nursery menus and, although some of the meals provided at lunchtime are prepared using fresh ingredients, many rely heavily on processed ingredients. At refreshment time children are provided with fresh and dried fruit for their snack. The organisation of both snack and mealtimes for all children does not provide good opportunities for children to learn about the food they are eating or about the importance of making healthy choices.

The health and well-being of babies is not consistently assured. Because the nursery is of open plan design and the enclosed baby sleep room is no longer used as such, it is often difficult for young babies to sleep because of the high noise levels whilst other children are playing.

Children's overall physical development is not well supported. There is an indoor area set aside for physical play and children have daily access to an outdoor area. However, children do not have free access to the indoor physical play area and it is not well used. In addition, although there are plans to develop the outdoor play space, which is currently a bleak tarmac area, staff do not plan effectively for its use. Children do not have access to a challenging range of physical play opportunities that promote their large muscle development. Children are able to use a small range of tools and small equipment but staff do not plan for the development of children's manipulative skills in any systematic way.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The general maintenance of the nursery building and of most of the equipment is satisfactory and the immediate impact on entering the nursery is warm and welcoming. Staff give high priority to security within the nursery and there are good procedures in place at the start and end of the day in order to ensure that children are safe when arriving and leaving the nursery.

In order to protect children's safety the nursery has a health and safety policy and staff carry out daily safety checks in each room. However, no overall risk assessment is in place and staff are not aware of how to carry out such a risk assessment.

The storage of toys is generally satisfactory and many toys and activities could be accessed safely by children, however, children are not encouraged to select toys and activities for themselves. The original design of the nursery, as an open plan space and the additional safeguards put in place by staff should allow older children to access many areas freely and in safety, for example the toilets, the role play area and the messy play area. However, staff are very cautious and do not allow children to move freely around the nursery. For example gates are in place across all base rooms and even the oldest children are accompanied to the toilet. Consequently children do not learn to take responsibility for their own safety even within a secure environment.

Nursery staff do not demonstrate a clear understanding of their role in protecting children and are not aware of the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures. In addition the nursery child protection policy does not ensure children's safety because it gives inappropriate advice and does not comply with the local authority procedures or with Ofsted regulations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Most children come happily into the nursery and settle, the staff are generally kind, caring and responsive towards the children. Staff plan activities making reference to either the Birth to three matters framework or to the Foundation Stage guidance. However, staff lack a clear understanding of how children learn through play. They do not plan and provide a range of interesting, stimulating activities which engage children's interest. Moreover, staff do not understand the importance of allowing children to make choices from a range of activities. They plan activities in isolation and move children as a group from one activity to the next. This is most noticeable with the older children, but even the toddlers take part in long whole group activities. For example when the whole toddler room move to the quiet room for a whole group story, or for dancing to a tape while the base of room is prepared for lunch and the after lunch nap. Consequently children's individual needs are not met and they do not make adequate progress.

The environment in the baby room is fairly barren and a bank of cots occupies a considerable space. There is, however, a nice cosy corner with rugs and cushions. Staff give babies warm and appropriately affectionate care. However, there are no comfortable chairs where staff can sit to feed and cuddle babies, consequently staff have to sit on the floor with the babies, this compromises the health, safety and well-being of the children and the staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff lack a clear understanding of how children learn through play. They do not use the Foundation Stage guidance effectively to help children make progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They plan narrow focused activities which are offered in isolation. Consequently many children are bored and do not gain from the activities provided. Staff do not encourage children to develop independence by allowing them to make choices or to move freely around the nursery.

Although a key worker system is used staff do not demonstrate a good knowledge of the children in their care. Although staff have begun to use the local authority assessment and record-keeping system this is not yet effective enough to allow them to plan for children's next steps. Because staff do not have a good knowledge of what children know and can do, they are not able to plan effectively for individual children's development.

The daily routines of the nursery involve many breaks in children's play and entail long periods of queuing, waiting and marking time for children. Children are often restless and bored. Although children's behaviour is generally good this relies heavily on adult direction. Children are compliant rather than learning to become self-disciplined. Children are not encouraged to develop independence and self-confidence by choosing from a range of activities or accessing equipment for themselves.

The organisation of the base in room does not provide a stimulating environment for children and there are long periods of time when no activities are available. The book corner is extremely poor. A small selection of old books, many of which are not age appropriate are provided in a small basket. Library books and some better quality books are stored on a shelf out of children's reach because staff say children do not treat them with respect. Although there are many examples of the written word around the room children do not have free access to a writing area and are not routinely encouraged to practise writing for a purpose, for example in the role play area. Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes that circle time but are frequently inattentive during whole group story time.

Because staff are not skilled at providing a range of purposeful practical activities, children do not have good opportunities to explore and experiment for themselves. Children are not routinely introduced to mathematical language or concepts in their play and daily routines are not used to help them to understand the importance of mathematics in daily life. However, staff do use whole group times to introduce children to simple mathematical shapes, numbers and counting.

Although children have daily access to the outdoor play the play area is not well used to promote children's physical development or to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Children benefit from having a pet rabbit to care for but they do not have good opportunities to learn about other aspects of the natural world.

Children learn about their community during local outings and from visitors to the group. They celebrate Christian festivals such as Christmas and are introduced to some aspects of other cultures and religions through topic work. However, staff do not have a good knowledge of the cultures, religions and backgrounds of the children attending. Consequently, children's understanding of their own and others cultures and beliefs is not well supported and they are not helped to develop a positive sense of themselves.

Opportunities for children to explore their own creativity and imagination are very limited. For example art and craft activities are adult directed and can only be accessed at specific times,

opportunities for role play or for small-world play are also limited and when children have access to musical instruments they are not encouraged to use them creatively for themselves.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

A diverse ethnic mix of children use the nursery. However, because staff have no knowledge of individual children's family background, ethnic origin, culture or religion and this is not acknowledged within the nursery, children's sense of self is not well supported. Staff do not clearly understand how to ensure that families beliefs and culture is valued and respected within the nursery. Some posters displayed in the nursery show positive images of a range of people but the range of books, toys and artefacts which reflect the nursery children and the wider community are limited.

The nursery has a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and provides some support for children with additional needs. The nursery SENCO liaises with the local authority area SENCO and has put in place some individual education plans for children, however, these are not fully effective in supporting all children within the group.

Because nursery routines and activities are heavily managed by staff children do not have the opportunity to take responsibility for themselves or to learn to be self-disciplined. Children are generally well behaved, however, because they have to spend considerable time in whole group activities or sitting quietly looking at a book while waiting for an activity to be set out they frequently become restless. Staff have unrealistic expectations of young children's ability to sit quietly with little to do for sustained periods. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Partnership with parents is inadequate. Parents are given information about the nursery and about the Foundation Stage and there is a parent's resource area in the lobby where they can access a range of information. Parents are able to come into the nursery and talk to staff about their child and they are given information on their child in the form of contact book. In addition they are able to access their child's records and are invited to an annual review. However, partnership with parents is not good enough to ensure that staff are aware of children's individual needs and family background. Consequently appropriate and consistent care cannot be assured for all children and the partnership does not contribute effectively in supporting children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The owner, area manager and nursery manager all have suitable childcare qualifications and a sufficient number of staff are appropriately qualified. During discussion the manager demonstrated a satisfactory awareness of the National Standards but the practice within the nursery does not reflect this. The management are aware of the new regulations regarding the appointment of staff. Although there are not yet any new procedures in place to ensure staff are suitably vetted in order to protect children, they are aware that these must be in place before any new staff are appointed.

Staffing rotas are well organised and ensure that there are always sufficient staff on site to keep children safe. The overall organisation and use of space and resources is poor and does

not allow children access to a wide range of stimulating activities or to sufficient space for the greater part of the day.

The nursery has in place a set of policies and procedures covering all the required areas. However, some of the documents are out of date or include information that is contrary to regulation; for example the child protection policy. In addition some policies such as equal opportunities and special needs do not reflect current practice.

Leadership and management are inadequate. Although regular staff meetings are held and staff report that they feel able to talk freely to management, there are no effective measures in place to supervise and support staff in their roles. There is no effective method in place to monitor practice or to evaluate the quality of either the care or education provided. The nursery does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

A complaint was made in December 2004 relating to Standard 3 Care, Learning and Play. An unannounced visit was made by an Ofsted inspector and the complaint was discussed with the provider. No action was taken and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- review the organisation of daily routines and the organisation and use of rooms and resources, in order to provide a stimulating and accessible environment which meets the needs of the range of children attending
- improve staff's knowledge of how to plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children, which are appropriate for their stage of development, based on their individual needs and includes the Birth to three matters framework
- improve the general standard of hygiene and cleanliness throughout the nursery

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice
- ensure that effective partnerships with parents are in place so that staff are able to meet the individual needs of each child within the nursery (also applies to nursery education)
- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection and ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) and with the regulations set out in the National Standards

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of how children learn through play and of how to effectively implement the Foundation Stage guidance
- develop an effective procedure to monitor and evaluate the nursery education programme in order to ensure that it is effective in helping children to make progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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