



Little Cherubs

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY281096
Inspection date	02 November 2005
Inspector	Jill Dawn Butler
Setting Address	164 Goodmayes Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9PR
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Registered person	Linda Margaret Davis
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Cherubs is a privately owned business. It opened in 2004 and operates from five rooms in a privately owned two storey converted house. It is situated in a residential area in Goodmayes, in the London borough of Redbridge.

A maximum of 24 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 34 children aged from 3 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these 5 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports no children with special educational needs, and 2 children who speak English as an additional language.

The owner is also the manager. She employs seven staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications, with the deputy manager and two of the room leaders working towards achieving a level three qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted by the implementation of satisfactory standards of hygiene. The premises and equipment are generally kept clean. Tables are wiped and floors swept after play activities have finished, however, tables are not always routinely wiped prior to snacks and lunch. Children's good health is promoted as they learn that they need to wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet. The toilet area is kept clean, and there are adequate numbers of sinks for children to wash their hands. However, children struggle to reach the sink when hand washing in one of the group rooms. Nappy changing areas are clean, and practitioners wear gloves and wash their hands after each change. Babies' individual sleep and dietary needs are well met, and practitioners take account of, and adhere to, parents' wishes. However, babies risk of picking up germs are not always fully protected when they are occasionally fed on the floor.

Children are well protected from infection as they learn to wipe their noses, and appropriate sickness and medication procedures are implemented. Children can expect to be treated appropriately if they have an accident as the majority of staff have first aid qualifications and sufficient first aid supplies are in place in the group rooms. Accidents and administration of medication are recorded appropriately, with parental signatures in place.

Children are well supported in undertaking physical activity in the spacious and well presented outdoors area. Here they can run, play with balls, climb slides, go through tunnels, and ride on a range of wheeled vehicles. Babies are able to crawl indoors, and attempt first steps, which practitioners encourage them to do.

Children receive varied, balanced and nutritious meals, and any special dietary requirements are met. An effective lunch arrangement is in place with an outside caterer. The mid morning snack and afternoon tea are provided in-house, and consist of healthy eating options, including a choice of drinks, with mixed raw vegetables like celery, carrots, tomatoes, cucumber as well as fresh fruit and yoghurt. All special dietary requirements are known and adhered to. Children can use eating utensils well, and are assisted by practitioners when required. Meal times provide good opportunities for socialisation.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop understanding of how to keep themselves safe and are successfully able to negotiate their movements within rooms and around furniture and equipment, which are effectively organised. The children are cared for in a bright, well maintained and welcoming environment. Their risk of accidental injury is minimised by the practitioners' diligent supervision of children. Children are well supported as they discover boundary limits and they learn about rules in a clear and consistent manner, for example, to pick up their puzzle pieces or popoids if they fall on the floor as they could become a potential hazard to other children. Effective use is made of space to allow the older children opportunities to work at tables and use floor space. They can gain easy access to the play and learning resources, which are stored in robust low level storage boxes.

Children's safety is promoted by risk assessment checks being routinely undertaken, both indoors and outdoors, and there are good fire safety procedures in place. However, the stair gate at the foot of the stairs is not always kept shut and the system for the storage of children's coats present potential safety hazards. Children's safety is promoted well when they use the outdoors play area, as it consists of a soft play surface and grass. Good planning and organisation keeps children safe on outings.

Children are well protected as a result of practitioners having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection, and know how to implement relevant procedures. All staff are vetted and there are effective procedures to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access, such as a password system for the collection of children, Closed Circuit Television, and an intercom system.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children interact well with each other and with practitioners. They are able to successfully contribute to positive relationships. They happily separate from their main carer. They are pleased to come to nursery, and the children greet one another when they arrive. It's one girl's birthday, and this generates discussion and enthusiasm for the birthday tea they are going to have.

Consistency of approach is promoted throughout the nursery, and children are able to engage with the current theme as it is effectively adapted to meet the range of ability levels. Children are given time to operate at their own pace. Currently the themes are colours and festivals of lights. Children sometimes initiate their own play and are able to self select resources, and sometimes participate in a good range of planned activities.

Planning for younger children is not guided by the Birth to three matters framework, although there is an intention to implement this. Babies sometimes get opportunities to participate in heuristic play, by being able to explore treasure baskets. They learn

how to become skilful communicators as practitioners imitate sounds, and interpret meaning to attempted words. Older babies have limited space within their environment, which restricts opportunities for them to explore and investigate.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children learn to be very caring and gentle with each other, and they rarely have disputes. They share space together very well, for example, when listening to a story, they like to sit near to each other, and sometimes hold hands. They enthusiastically greet staff members when they arrive into the room and tell them what they are doing. They show a lot of self control when they wait patiently, and listen well to each other during circle time. They willingly co-operate when it is tidy up time.

During meal times children are competent in using utensils, however, their independence is not sufficiently promoted when they are learning self care skills, for example, they do not serve themselves and pour their own drinks. Also when putting on coats to go outside, they do not expect to do up their own buttons or zips.

Conversations are routinely extended by practitioners during activities, snack and meal times. Conversations take place around the forthcoming trip to the zoo, due to take place the following day. Children are encouraged to think about what animals they expect to see. They are able to select their names, and enjoy reciting the ABC song, which they know very well. However, there are missed opportunities to explore the sounds that letters make, for example, when children try to recognize each other's names. Children enjoy looking at books, and like to share reading books with each other. Opportunities for mark making and writing are available at different times during sessions, however, children do not get sufficient opportunities to learn about writing for different purposes, which hinders their early writing skills.

Opportunities are routinely presented for counting up to 15. Children count the number of daisies in a book; during a group discussion session they practise counting; they count how many sweets they put into beakers. They think about what the date is and select the correct numeral from the range of numbers. However, there are missed opportunities for calculation when children are counting sweets in the beaker, and problem solving, mathematical language and concepts are not sufficiently pursued by practitioners.

Children go on regular outings to the local park, and library, and get to know their local environment. They enjoy routinely playing with water and sand, and notice that the water is coloured and warm, and the sand has coloured glitter in it. Children are learning about the festival of Diwali. They show interest in the display, and enjoy making Diwali cards.

Children design and construct with magnetic rods. They are competent in handling tools such as rolling pins and play dough cutters, as well as glue spreaders and collage materials when making cards. Children enjoy imaginative play. They enjoy dressing up and construct a scene of waiting for a bus. Children sing loudly during a singing session. They choose from a range of familiar songs, and there is good participation from all the children. They can gain easy access to a range of musical

instruments.

Planning takes place within the context of the early learning goals. Regular observations and assessments on individual children are undertaken. However, children's learning isn't assessed with regard to all aspects of the early learning goals and their progress through the stepping stones, and future learning intentions and targets for individual children are not given due consideration, or incorporated into curriculum planning.

Children are challenged when undertaking activities, and show good levels of engagement and concentration. Children are effectively supported at their own pace. They are given time to formulate their thinking and understanding. However, during planned activities children are sometimes not given sufficient opportunities to explore and investigate and to develop their own imaginative ideas. They sometimes have to wait very patiently until it is their turn to participate, for example, during circle time and when pursuing some arts and crafts activities.

The routine of the day is effective. It includes time for active and quiet pursuits. Children have opportunities to participate in different sized groups, as well as independently. They can change their environment through the day, as they share some activities with younger children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

An effective key worker system ensures detailed knowledge of children, and their individual needs are understood and met. Children's knowledge and understanding of cultural and religious diversity is well developed through topic work. Older children are currently learning about Diwali, with a range of images, objects and activities available for them to engage with, for example, candles and posters. This positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. However, practitioners do not routinely learn basic words of children's home language where they have English as an additional language, and this hinders communication with these children.

Children play co-operatively together. If asked to say sorry because a child may have caused another to be upset, the children willingly do this and sometimes cuddle each other. Children's contributions are valued. When making Diwali cards their efforts are praised, which promotes their self esteem and encourages them to further extend their participation by, for example, adding additional collage materials.

Children are very well behaved and generally the children are quickly comforted when distressed. Some of the older babies, however, are new to the nursery, are having difficulty settling and cry for extended periods. However, generally practitioners act as positive role models and children learn to understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and age appropriate management of behaviour. Each day a child in the older children's room is picked to be the special helper, which is a reward for being co-operative and well behaved. Close physical proximity is especially well maintained with the younger babies, and they like to

receive cuddles and happily communicate with their main carer.

The partnerships with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Effective communication is maintained through daily written reports, more in depth three monthly reports on their child's progress, regular newsletters and an annual open evening. However, parents do not get information and are not invited to contribute to discussion around children's progress towards the early learning goals, nor receive an assessment or plan about the next steps in their children's learning. Upon joining parents get a handbook, which includes information about staffing, activities and routines. They are asked to contribute to an evaluation process on a six monthly basis. Their responses are mostly favourable, and if an issue or concern is raised, then there is commitment to make changes, which happened in relation to improving lunches.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There has been a breach in the conditions of registration regarding numbers of children being cared for. The nursery applied to Ofsted for a variation to increase numbers of children and took on extra children believing this had already been approved, which was not the case. However, there is no risk or impact on children as the small increase in numbers is accommodated by existing staffing arrangements and space.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. The owner/manager has recently acquired an appropriate qualification in childcare. She is currently ill, however, and the deputy manager is temporarily managing the nursery. She is working towards an appropriate childcare qualification and has sufficient, relevant experience. She has been working in close partnership with the owner/manager since the nursery opened. This is a satisfactory temporary arrangement.

The majority of staff have recognised childcare qualifications and there is good commitment to staff training, with staff encouraged to progress their professional development. Staff appraisals are undertaken every six months, and there are weekly staff meetings to discuss planning and any matters of concern. Staff are effectively deployed and understand their roles and responsibilities. They work well as a team, and there is generally good consistency throughout the nursery, for example, with the same themes running through the nursery. However, there are weaknesses in planning, organisation and communication during lunch break periods, when there is an insufficiently co-ordinated approach to what children are doing at these times.

Ratios are effectively maintained through most of the day. During lunchtimes and at the beginning and end of the day children are grouped together in order for ratios to be maintained, and the deputy manager, currently acting up as manager, also has to provide cover sometimes.

The nursery has received two complaints from parents in the past few months, apart from those received by Ofsted. These were both internally investigated. The

registered provider spoke to members of staff and asked for reports. These matters were dealt with satisfactorily, and remedial measures were put in place. Both sets of parents were communicated with in writing and appropriate recordings are available to view.

There is a good range of continually updated written policies and procedures, which all staff and parents have access to. The nursery are participating in a quality assurance scheme, and have so far completed one module. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received two complaints. The first complaint relates to National Standard 2: Organisation, concerning there being no manager on the premises, inadequate numbers of staff, and staff always working under pressure. We asked the provider to investigate and report back to Ofsted. Ofsted was satisfied that no national standards had been breached and the provider remains qualified for registration.

The second complaint relates to National Standards 1: Suitable Person and 2: Organisation, concerning no manager in post with an appropriate qualification, inadequate numbers of staff and Ofsted not notified of staff changes. An Ofsted childcare inspector carried out an unannounced visit, following which Ofsted required the registered person to ensure the manager has appropriate qualifications, sufficient staff are deployed to meet required ratios and inform Ofsted of staff changes. The provider has carried out all the actions. She is now also the manager, and has an appropriate qualification, sufficient staff are employed and Ofsted have been informed of staff changes. 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- improve the arrangements for snack and meal times to promote children's understanding of personal hygiene
- provide sufficient space and opportunities for babies to explore and investigate
- communicate effectively with children who have English as an additional language
- comply with conditions of registration at all times
- plan and organise effective arrangements to cover lunch periods in order for children's play and learning needs to be adequately met at these times

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):

- promote children's independence when eating and drinking, and other areas of self care
- improve the systems to assess and monitor individual children's progress, involve parents in this process, and link next steps in individual children's learning to curriculum planning
- promote children's language and literacy skills by extending opportunities for them to explore the sounds that letters make, and writing for different purposes
- provide opportunities for calculation and develop children's problem solving skills
- provide additional opportunities for children to initiate activities and develop their own imaginative ideas

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk