



Clarence House Day Nursery & Pre-School Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY260325
Inspection date	02 November 2005
Inspector	Clare Elizabeth Pook
Setting Address	19 The Causeway, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 2HA
Telephone number	01480 386241
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Registered person	Clarence House Day Nursery & Pre School Centre
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?

Clarence House Day Nursery opened in 1997 and re-registered in March 2003 and has been operating under its present management since then. It operates from its own premises, which is a converted two-storey-detached house, located in the centre of the village of Godmanchester. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 36 children from 3 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 11 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs.

The group opens 5 days a week all year round, except for the Christmas period. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00.

The nursery employs eleven staff. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level two or three. Four staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health and safety is compromised because staff have inconsistent routines and often fail to follow basic hygiene procedures. For example children do not wash their hands under running water, partly because the hot water is extremely hot, so they wash their hands in a communal bowl of water before snacks and meals. This does not keep children safe from cross infection. Some children are not aware of the necessity to wash their hands after toileting and staff do not explain why it is important to wash hands. Children are not learning about the importance of personal hygiene. Some areas of the nursery are not cleaned sufficiently well to ensure children play in a healthy and hygienic environment. The messy play room used by the toddlers had residue food left on the floor from the previous day. Plaster also had fallen off the wall and was not cleared away again compromising children's health.

Children receive satisfactory care if they are ill or have an accident. Appropriate records are kept and necessary documentation is in place to ensure staff are informed about children's medical needs. Parental consents have been obtained so appropriate treatment can be administered as required.

Children are provided with healthy snacks and meals and their dietary needs are catered for, promoting growth and development. A cook is employed to freshly prepare food each day for the children. The menu shows a good range of healthy foods for snack and meal times. Juices are not served and cakes and biscuits are limited. Some food however is served directly onto the table which is unhygienic. Children and babies are offered drinks at snacks and mealtime, however opportunities to access drinking water throughout the day is not made accessible to them. Children are therefore not able to respond to their own thirst. Children's special dietary requirements are taken into account and allergies are known to staff.

Babies are able to feed, be active or sleep according to their individual needs as they enjoy a flexible routine where parents' and carer's wishes are taken into account. Children generally can rest or be active appropriately as staff are beginning to be aware of their individual needs.

Some children are benefiting from fresh air and exercise promoting physical

development. Most children have daily opportunities to play outside or go for walks, this is usually restricted to the summer months for the babies. Children are learning to peddle and negotiate space when using the scooters, bicycles or cars. Opportunities for children to use their climbing and co-ordination skills when playing with bats and balls are provided, although little direction and instruction is given from staff, so children are fully encouraged to develop this physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are not cared for in a secure environment. Staff are vigilant, but effective systems are not in place for managing access to the premises. Gates are not locked and doors to the pre-school room are often wide open enabling unauthorised people to gain access and therefore children are at risk. Risk assessments carried out on the premises are not effective and hazards are not always identified or acted upon compromising children's safety. The hot water is extremely hot as well as some of the radiators. This was identified by Environmental Health and has not been acted upon. Hazards such as a trailing hosepipe, odd bricks and a ladder were all accessible to the children whilst they were playing outside. Staff did not remove these or close the gate to the fire exit stairs endangering children. Regular fire practices are carried out and recorded, however signing to indicate the fire exit in the baby room upstairs is missing. A damaged sofa with exposed wood and foam is also being used in the baby room, posing a fire and choking hazard to children.

Children are learning about keeping themselves safe whilst on the equipment in the garden for example not going down slide when someone else on is it as might bump and hurt them. Staff talk to children about road safety when out on walks, however when talking about fireworks no mention was made of how to keep safe around them, so children are not learning about the dangers sufficiently.

The premises are suitable for caring for children and provide adequate space for children to play safely, however the space is not used effectively to create a stimulating and inviting environment. Children play with resources and equipment that are generally safe and suitable for the age range. However the range of accessible equipment is limited so children are not always able to exercise their ability to choose.

Children are protected because staff are generally secure in their knowledge of child protection and have a satisfactory understanding of the local Area Child Protection Procedures. Staff are vetted and have relevant experience to care for children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children's care, learning and play are not supported sufficiently because staff are not clear about the main purpose of the provision. There are limited activities set out for children each day, which means that they are under-stimulated. Activities that are

available offer insufficient challenge. There are few resources which children can access independently to enable them to follow their own interests and begin to direct their own play. Staff do not feel confident to set out a range of activities so often children have one or two activities set out for example a choice of sand or spaghetti. This limits their ability to make decisions about their play. Children are compliant with the regime and appear settled and are generally well behaved.

Children in all areas of the nursery are developing positive relationships with staff. They chat happily and interact well with each other. Staff praise the children for making models in dough and offer help and support where needed. Activities are however, often too adult directed. Children are not given opportunities to use their imagination to create their own work especially when doing art and craft. Children enjoy listening to stories, but opportunities to sit and explore books is not provided. Books are stored in boxes rather than being set out. Children happily take part in singing and playing instruments, but often have to wait to have a turn rather than all taking part together.

Staff are aware of 'Birth to three matters', but do not follow the framework for planning or effectively use it to assess children's development. The babies are given plenty of space to move about and explore . They are keen to crawl through the tunnels and play actively in the ball pit. Staff interact well with them praising them for achievements such as walking. The babies respond with smiles. Opportunities for babies to have contact with the older children is limited so social skills are not being fully encouraged. Regular access to outdoors is rarely offered, so babies are not able to gain fresh air or take part in new experiences outdoors.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff do not have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and how children learn. This lack of knowledge means that not enough activities are planned to truly interest the children. As a result children are being given too few opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills. Planning is in place, but is not clearly implemented to ensure that children learn through a range of interesting and rich experiences. Children's achievements are linked to the stepping stones. However, the assessment records have not been sufficiently developed to fully record children's achievements and planning for the next step in their learning. Parents do not have sufficient opportunities to contribute, sharing what they know about their child's abilities. This means that staff have an incomplete picture of children's attainments; consequently most of the activities lack challenge and stimulation.

Children sit well and concentrate when listening to stories. They keenly ask questions about the 'Gruffalo' and where it lives, but staff do not always answer them quashing children's enthusiasm and imagination. Children enjoy singing and parents are encouraged to continue this at home. Children's early writing skills are poorly catered for as resources are not effectively organised to encourage children to mark make and practise this skill in a variety of everyday situations.

Children are aware of numbers and are able to count to 1 to 10 , but are not

challenged enough in other areas of mathematics. As a result, children do not use their mathematical skills readily to solve problems in daily routines. The children's skills to explore and investigate materials, discover how things work, or how to construct using various resources are not well supported. They have limited opportunities to use their curiosity and develop their own designs because resources are not available for them to access. Children are interested in using the computer and are competent in playing the games. Children are beginning to learn about the world around them as they start to build an igloo and look at 'cold weather'. Some opportunities are missed for children to develop their independence skills, for example, setting the table and selecting activities.

Overall, children do not make good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children from a variety of backgrounds and cultures attend the setting. Some attention is given to introducing topics relating to the world around them. For example looking at igloos, celebrating Diwali or simple Spanish with Dora the explorer. However, little effort is made to plan and include their home life into the sessions. Therefore children's experiences and awareness of other cultures is limited. Routines for younger children and babies mostly take into account their individual needs, for example babies sleep and eat according to their home routines as discussed with parents or carers.

Relationships between staff, babies and children are developing well and children are content within the setting. Staff praise babies and children for achievements such as crawling through a tunnel or creating models in the play dough. Their self esteem within the toddler room is promoted by displaying pictures of the children in a variety of dressing up costumes. Children have individual pegs which contributes to a sense of belonging. However, staff do not always listen to older children's views and comments and do not encourage them to choose resources or make decisions, this impacts upon the children's self-esteem and confidence.

Staff demonstrate a suitable understanding of caring for children with Special Educational Needs. Staff liaise with parents and other agencies to work together to ensure that children are inclusive of activities.

Children's behaviour is satisfactory and children are generally well behaved. There are some inconsistencies in the way staff approach behaviour, so children are not given clear messages about what is acceptable. Children share and take turns well using the computer and are learning to work together for example when completing a puzzle.

Children's well-being is promoted by the friendly relationships that staff develop with parents. Parents receive a handbook containing some policies and information about the setting. They also receive regular newsletters.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is

inadequate. Parents receive limited information about the Foundation Stage. Parents receive some information in the form of monthly newsletters, but it is not always clear how this is linked to the Early Learning Goals. Insufficient opportunities are provided for parents to further contribute to their child's assessment records, so they are not fully informed about their child's progress and achievements towards the Early Learning Goals.

The provision does not foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Staff work hard and are keen to improve the outcomes for children. Some staff and management lack the knowledge and confidence to implement these changes effectively. Inadequate organisation and deployment of resources and equipment limits children's capacity to develop and progress in most areas of the nursery. Children's independence is inhibited because they have limited access to resources and have few opportunities to make choices and decisions.

Policies and procedures required by the National Standards are in place, although some staff are not fully implementing the setting's procedures, in particular inconsistent behaviour strategies. Recruitment and vetting procedures are appropriate and staff are aware of the new legislation regarding ensuring the suitability of staff.

The leadership and management of the setting are inadequate. Effective systems are not in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and children's learning and, as a result, areas for improvement and development are not fully identified. This adversely affects children's learning and, overall, the needs of all children who attend are not met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to ensure drinking water was made available at all times. This was implemented, but has since been stopped. Staff are aware this needs addressing.

A system to ensure parents are aware of Child Protection procedures prior to their child's admission to nursery was requested this has been addressed in the handbook for parents.

Staff were asked to improve systems for planning so that it more accurately identifies the learning intentions of activities and the areas of learning covered by activities. Some progress has been made but staff changes has meant that progress has been limited.

Two points relating the six areas of learning were identified.

The provision was asked to develop the programme for maths to include the identification and writing of numerals and recognition of patterns and develop creative development through regular provision of opportunities for children to participate in self-generated role play and ensure resources assist this are available. Progress in both areas has been lacking. Staff changes again have meant that progress has been limited.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

Since the last inspection there has been one concern raised.

In June 2005 Ofsted received information regarding an incident which raised concerns under standard 1: suitable person, about the suitability of a member of staff. We asked the provision to investigate the matter and to report back to Ofsted. The provider reported that the member of staff had taken suitable action following the incident and confirmed that they had rigorous vetting procedures. They are satisfied that the member of staff is suitable to care for children. Ofsted is satisfied that the registered person has taken appropriate steps to address the concern and 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that staff have adequate supervision and training to enable them to make effective use of time, space and resources to enhance the quality of care and learning
- plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's

emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities in line with 'Birth to three matters' framework

- minimise risks to children both inside and outside by ensuring the premises are secure and that health and safety and fire regulations are complied with
- ensure that positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection with particular regard to children's personal hygiene and the cleanliness of the premises.

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:

- develop planning to clearly show how the six areas of learning and the learning intentions are linked to activities as well as ensuring that effective systems are used to assess and record children's progress towards the early learning goals and inform future planning
- provide parents with clear information regarding the foundation stage
- ensure robust systems are in place to rigorously monitor and evaluate nursery education and ensure sufficient attention is given to improving the quality of teaching to make it relevant and interesting to children
- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage and 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 *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk