



Cherubs Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100503
Inspection date	27 January 2006
Inspector	Anne Mitchell

Setting Address	St. Albans Church Hall, Linwood Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH9 1DW
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Registered person	Heather House
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 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?

Cherubs Pre-School has been registered since 1995. The group operates from St Alban's Church hall, which is approximately two miles from Bournemouth town centre. The setting is open from 09:00 until 13:00, Monday to Friday, and from 13.30 until 17:30 for two afternoons per week. The group operates all year round, except for bank holidays and approximately ten days over the Christmas holiday period.

Children have access to a large hall, for play activities, and a smaller hall for stories

and quiet times. There is an enclosed garden area for outdoor play.

The group is registered to care for 26 children aged from 2 to under 5 years at each session. There are currently 51 children on roll. Of these, 41 children are in receipt of government funding for nursery education. The group supports children with special needs and children for whom English is an additional language.

A total of nine staff, including the manager, work directly with the children. Of these, seven staff hold relevant early years qualifications. One member of staff is currently on a training course. The setting is supported by Bournemouth Early Years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children's health is promoted. They are encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating and cooking activities and after using the toilet. They learn why this is important, as the staff explain the importance of good hygiene. The children dry their hands on disposable paper towels, to further limit the spread of infection. They are accompanied to the toilet facilities for their own security. However, once there, opportunities for them to be independent in their personal care is limited, as the staff squeeze the liquid soap on their hands for them and give them a paper towel. There are suitable procedures in place for nappy changing, such as a record of changes and staff using disposable gloves. The children are not always supported when they have colds. The staff do not always notice that the children's noses are running and the children are not familiar with independently finding tissues to wipe them.

The children's dietary health is promoted through healthy snacks and drinks, such as a choice of fruit, and milk or water. The children learn about the benefits of healthy eating through projects. This has promoted a positive response from parents, as all lunch boxes contain many healthy options. Drinking water is not freely available for the children to choose. They are able to ask at any time, but the staff are not pro-active in reminding them, either verbally or through illustrated prompts.

The children have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise and enjoy outdoor games. They have varied opportunities to develop their small muscle control, through activities such as threading and the use of tools, such as scissors and knives during planned activities, such as preparing vegetables for a stir fry.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children's safety is well promoted. The premises are very secure and effectively monitored. There are good systems in place to sign children and visitors in and out. The children are well supervised inside and out in the garden, to prevent accidents. They learn about keeping themselves safe through reinforcement from the staff, for example sitting on chairs carefully and not pushing on the climbing frame.

All required safety equipment is in place, such as socket covers and fire equipment and the children are excluded from unsafe areas, such as the kitchen. The children are familiar with the setting's emergency evacuation procedures, which are practiced regularly over the course of a week, to ensure all children are included. The children can be treated immediately for minor injuries, as all staff hold a relevant first aid certificate and first aid kits are checked and re-stocked regularly. The staff conduct effective risk assessments to ensure the environment is safe for the children.

The children are protected from harm and neglect through the staff's clear understanding of child protection procedures. All staff have attended child protection training and have a secure understanding of signs and symptoms. This helps them in their responsibility to protect children effectively.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children come into the setting with confidence and settle quickly to a chosen activity. The staff set out a varied selection of activities on floor and tables for children to select. Resources are rotated on a weekly basis, to broaden the choice available. However, the children do not have the opportunity to independently select resources, particularly for creative play.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and are aware of the areas of learning. Plans and projects cover all areas. Organisation of specific activities, however, is inconsistent. Key workers use written observations to highlight any areas of development and this is recorded in the children's records to inform their next steps. Children with English as an additional language are supported through close liaison with parents; the staff use picture prompts and signs to help them settle. Children with special needs have appropriate support through one to one assistance on most days.

The children's progress in many aspects of their personal, social and emotional development is well supported. The children are very confident and approach visitors and staff to ask questions, tell them their news or involve them in their play. For instance, a 4 year old approaches an adult in the home corner and says 'You look hungry, here's a Chinese take away'. The children have good relationships with their peers and play co-operatively with one another.

The children's behaviour is generally good. The older children help younger ones, for example to dress for outdoor play. They are encouraged to resolve their differences amicably. On occasions, however, activities are not effectively organised, the children's behaviour begins to deteriorate and adult responses are not always appropriate. The children's opportunities to be independent are not always encouraged, as many creative activities are adult led.

The children are confident speakers and communicate well with adults and with each

other. An activity with clay prompts lots of vocabulary, such as 'cold, wet and sticky'. The children access books from a comfortable book area. They enjoy listening to stories in small groups with a member of staff. On arrival, the children find their name card. Many independently write their own names on their own work and most make an effort to do so. This is actively encouraged by the staff and the children are praised. Each day the setting has letter of the day and some planned activities focus on this. The older children are encouraged to use their writing books regularly, to draw something that begins with the letter of the day, and then write over the pre-written letter. Many of the older children enjoy this activity. However, the staff do not provide practical prompts to consolidate the children's understanding or offer age appropriate alternatives for the younger children. The children have regular access to writing materials and write, make marks and draw independently.

The children count confidently. A 3 year old counted the pieces of play fruit in the role play area. She pretended to eat a piece of fruit and re-counted the remaining pieces correctly, to see how many were left. The children count the eyes and ears to stick on the dog, but this lacks challenge for the the older children. The staff miss opportunities to help the children count in meaningful and practical activities, such as counting cups for snack time. Some children are confident in using and understanding positional language.

The children enjoy exploring clay, making tunnels and holes with their fingers. A boy investigated how cogs and gears fitted together with handles and observed how the model moved. The children have regular opportunities to construct with manufactured toys. However, there are few opportunities for the children to use junk materials, glue and tape to create their own imaginative constructions. The children are beginning to learn about the natural world, through planned activities surrounding the theme of winter, such as looking at the weather and making bird feeders. The children have access to a computer and gain confidence in mouse control during educational programmes. The children are developing a sense of time and place. They talk to the staff with confidence about what has happened in the past and things that will happen. A 4 year old boy told an adult: 'My mummy has a baby in her tummy'.

The children's physical development is well fostered. They have daily opportunities for exercise and fresh air, in the pre-school garden, as well as indoor physical play opportunities, such as a tunnel, cargo net, climbing frame and slide. The children enjoy circle games and activities in the garden and jump and hop. A 3 year old girl told an adult: 'We jumped up and down and made ourselves warm' as they learned how their bodies work. The children have opportunities to promote their small muscle development through the use of tools such as scissors, knives and threading.

The children have daily opportunities to participate in creative activities. However, many are adult led with a specific end product in mind. The children have few opportunities to independently create pictures, models or collage using their own imaginative skills and choices of resources. The children enjoy planned music sessions on a daily basis. They use their imagination in the role play area. They make pretend food and drink for each other and for adults. A 4 year old placed the dolls house family in different rooms in the dolls house, 'because they don't want be disturbed'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children arrive happily at the setting, where the staff have set out a range of activities. However, there are limited opportunities for the children to see their own work, as it cannot be displayed on walls in the shared hall. The staff discuss children's needs with parents, before they start at the setting. The children learn about the wider world through occasional planned activities. They explore festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. There is an appropriate range of resources that provide positive images of cultural diversity and disability. However, these are not always available on a daily basis. Children and adults develop appropriate relationships with one another, and children from a range of backgrounds are welcomed to the group. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Behaviour is satisfactory. The children are polite and well mannered and are keen to help one another. The staff use lots of praise at times. However, due to the organisation of some activities, the children occasionally become restless.

Partnership with parents is good. They are provided with a broad range of information on the well stocked notice board. The pre-school's prospectus leaflet provides information about the setting. Policies and procedures are provided for parents to read and are displayed and available on a daily basis. There is an effective settling in procedure, to ensure children and parents are happy. Parents are kept well informed of children's daily routines and progress through individual record books. Parents are happy with the level of care and education provided.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The staff are familiar with the range of policies and procedures in place and these are shared effectively with parents. Documentation supports the health and welfare of the children attending. There are appropriate procedures for staff recruitment and vetting, to ensure children are cared for by suitable adults.

The pre-school routine is generally well organised with opportunities for free play and planned activities. However, much emphasis is placed on formal writing activities in workbooks for younger children, who are not always developmentally ready or able to understand what is expected of them. Children and adults have developed appropriate relationships with one another and children from a range of backgrounds are welcomed to the group.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff meetings are held regularly to plan activities and discuss any arising issues. Annual staff appraisals are conducted to identify training needs. However, the systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching, or the strengths and weaknesses of the setting do not always work well.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care and education.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last care inspection, the provider has implemented an effective key working system to support children's learning and ensure their developmental progress is monitored. Staff now work together to plan a range of activities for children, although these are not always appropriate to the children's stage of development.

Since the last educational inspection, the provider and the staff have developed plans that show children's progress through the stepping stones. However, plans to extend activities for older children do not always challenge them effectively. Children have been organised into ability groups for some activities, with the intention of providing age appropriate activities for each group. However, this is not always successful, as both groups are provided with similar challenges and these are not appropriate for younger children.

Opportunities for children to explore, investigate and use their imagination throughout the curriculum have been increased, to improve children's imaginative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. The provider also agreed to review the system for introducing children to letters and sounds and to ensure this is appropriate to their level of understanding. Children learn a letter sound daily; however, the teaching methods used for the youngest children are not always appropriate.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints about the provider received by Ofsted 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.

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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):

- ensure there are effective procedures in place to limit the spread of infection, and to encourage children to be independent in their personal care
- develop a suitable range of activities for younger children, for example, by using the Birth to three framework

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):

- develop the systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, and the strengths and weaknesses of the setting
- provide regular opportunities for children to freely access resources to enable them to produce individual creative work, using their own imaginations

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