



The Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Cilla Rachel Mullane

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Registered person Canterbury College
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 good. 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?

The Children's Centre is situated in purpose-built premises in the grounds of Canterbury College.

The nursery serves students attending the college, staff, and any remaining places are allocated to the public. There are two main play area rooms in use, one of which is dedicated to children aged from 2-years to approaching 3-years, and the other is used by pre school children. Children have access to enclosed outside play areas

adjacent to their rooms.

There are currently 39 children on roll, 19 of whom are 3 and 4 year olds in receipt of funded nursery education. There are currently no children with special educational needs attending the setting. Children who speak English as an additional language attend.

There are six staff working with children, all of whom are qualified to at least NVQ Level 3. In addition, there is a kitchen assistant and a supply member of staff. The setting receives support from a teacher from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn and play in a very clean environment. Children are learning how to keep themselves healthy through example and discussion, for example, during music and movement they think about the effect of exercise on their bodies. They are learning about personal hygiene when using the toilets and wiping their noses, when staff remind them what to do, and talk about the reasons why cleanliness is important. Two-year-old children recognise themselves in photographs brushing their teeth, reinforcing the importance of personal hygiene. Effective and rigorous cleaning procedures in the kitchen, such as checking the temperature of the fridge, and regular washing of cleaning cloths, help to prevent the spread of infection. Staff regularly update their first aid qualifications, and so have the skills to care for children effectively in an emergency. Accident records are thorough, but do not include children's surnames.

The varied three week menu provides children with a nutritious and balanced diet, and meets individual needs, for example, vegetarians are catered for. Staff's good knowledge of children's diets and allergies keeps children safe, for example, they were careful not to give a particular child additives.

Children's physical development is well promoted. Physical development is incorporated in the daily planning, ensuring children practise their physical skills regularly. They are challenged by balancing activities, and become animated during music and movement sessions. Fine motor skills are also well promoted, such as doing puzzles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The environment is very well planned, with different areas designated for various activities, such as mark making and technology, and children can move around freely and safely. Displays are changed frequently, so children see that their work is important and valued. Children can move freely and independently from indoors to

the outside area, and there are plans to develop this aspect of the provision.

Toys and equipment are plentiful, safe and age appropriate, easily accessible, and provide children with sufficient challenge. The good organisation of well maintained toys and equipment means children can independently access available resources from tables, trays and boxes at child height.

Children are kept safe in secure premises. For example, outside areas are fully enclosed with quick release handles on gates. The main door can be seen from the office, and so visitors can be monitored, keeping children safe from intruders. Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are extremely vigilant, and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Safe and clear procedures, consistently implemented by staff, such as supernumerary staff replacing staff having breaks, ensure that sufficient staff are working directly with the children. Fire safety procedures and precautions will effectively keep children safe in the event of fire. A new member of staff was clear about the contents and use of the fire bags, and aware of the fire procedure.

The child protection policy is understood by staff, helping to ensure that appropriate and prompt action would be taken to protect children if there were concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. All children arrive happy and eager to participate. Those who are new to the nursery are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust.

Two-year-olds are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other and the staff. They are interested in a good variety of activities which enable them to make choices, use their imaginations, and acquire new knowledge and skills. Children feel valued, and their confidence and self-esteem are encouraged due to staff's effective interaction. Staff ask open questions, listen, praise, and value children's contributions and achievements. Planning of activities for the 2-year-olds is currently linked to the areas of learning, and this means that children in this age range receive a varied range of activities. Staff are working hard to develop a system of assessment and planning using the Birth to three framework in accordance with current guidance. It is intended that this will help them plan for children's individual needs.

Children aged under 3 years benefit from some adult led activities, which they are free to develop as they wish. For example, a painting activity developed into hand-painting. Children really enjoyed how this felt and looked. There is time for free play, and staff snuggle up with children to chat, read and play. Staff effectively support children's play, for example, getting a washing up sponge when a child pretended to wash up.

Two-year-olds happily recalled the day's earlier activities, for example, they

discussed a song about a crocodile sung earlier, they remembered with pleasure, and did the 'snap snap' action again. A child pointed proudly to a picture he had made earlier, which was already displayed on the wall.

Children in this age range are beginning to develop self help skills and independence. For example, staff help them to pour their own drinks, and a child independently put his painting on the drier. Children's self esteem is excellent, due to staff's praise and encouragement. For example, a children eating yogurt said 'I'm doing well!'.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, they plan for each area of learning equally, and the learning intention of activities is clear.

Planning of the curriculum is led by staff's observations and assessments of the children. Information about children's individual developmental needs is used to inform planning, and children's next steps are clearly identified. Activities are then planned to help individual children to make these identified next steps.

Staff manage children's behaviour well, and have high expectations for behaviour. Boundaries are consistent, and children respond well to positive strategies, such as stickers as rewards. For example, a child proudly showed his mother his sticker, and knew it was for 'good tidying up'. Children are given opportunities to initiate and choose activities for themselves, free choice is incorporated in the planning, and they are generally self controlled and confident in self selecting toys and equipment.

Effective use is made of time and resources. Children are encouraged to be independent, as the environment is planned so that they can choose and initiate activities. Staff work directly with the children, but also give them opportunities to persevere on their own, for example, a child spent time carefully cutting playdoh with scissors, and another concentrated well on a computer game. They are also able to develop their own games, such as role play in the home corner.

Effective teaching strategies result in children making good progress in relation to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development is a strength; children are motivated to learn, are able to concentrate and persevere. They are forming positive relationships with adults and other children. They help each other, for example, a child started the computer for another. They care for others who are upset, for example, a child put her arm around a child who was crying. Children's independence and self help skills are skilfully promoted by staff at lunchtime, when children adeptly and confidently serve themselves and poured their own drinks.

Children's creativity is strongly encouraged. They use their imaginations in the well equipped role play area, and enjoy having free access to sticking and drawing

materials. Children confidently name their work; one child said her sticky picture was an elephant.

Staff show children the importance of numbers, for example, they ask questions that model and encourage the use of number language, and take opportunities to count with children, such as when doing music and movement. Children show that they understand that numbers are important when saying numbers as they pretend to dial a phone, or press a keyboard.

Children listen with enjoyment and respond to stories and songs. A child enjoyed having a joke with staff by making up his own words to 'the wheels on the bus'. Children are learning to recognise words, for example, their names, and sounds, such as the first letter of their names. Children understand that the written work has meaning, and is composed of letters, for example, a child made squiggles from left to right as I spelt a word. Children all enthusiastically joined in a discussion about train journeys, heard a related story, and accurately recalled the details of the story. The lack of cosy seating in the book corner contributes to the fact that children do not often select a book and sit and read it independently. However, seating has been ordered.

Children are challenged by large physical equipment, and enjoy music and movement sessions.

Their knowledge and understanding of the world is extended as they work and play in an interesting environment, and observe, explore and question through first hand experiences. Their IT skills are excellent and encouraged by staff, for example, children concentrated for long periods of time on the computer. Children all joined in a discussion about train journeys, talking excitedly about their own experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled within the group. They are highly valued as individuals, and learn to respect others, for example by following staff's example. The children have good opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities. Children's individual needs are generally met. For example, observations lead to planning for individual children's next steps, and staff know the children well. However, children currently move from the toddlers to the pre school as they reach 3-years-old, rather than when they are developmentally and emotionally ready, but careful accompanied visits to the next room help to make the children feel secure during this transition. Children learn to respect others for example, by following the staff's example.

There are currently no children attending with special needs. However, staff are attending training to enable them to have the knowledge to identify and assess children's special needs, and to effectively liaise with parents and other agencies.

Children's behaviour is very good due to effective behaviour management strategies carried out consistently by staff. Children respond well to positive strategies, such as

rewards. For example, a child was proud of a sticker for good tidying up, and told his mother.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is good.

Children and parents are welcomed warmly into the nursery, and parents stay for several settling in sessions, successfully easing the transition from home to the nursery, and helping children to feel supported and confident. Parents questioned were extremely happy with the care and education of their children. Parents are given relevant verbal information about the curriculum, and how the activities help children learn, on entry to the nursery. They are provided with informative policies and procedures, and children's activities are clearly displayed. They are made extremely welcome to settle their children, and gently reassured by caring staff if children are unhappy at being left. There are careful arrangements to keep parents informed about their children's progress, for example, regular parents' meetings, and frequent informal chats with keyworkers.

Parents are initially informed verbally by staff about how their child will be taught and cared for, but they do not receive written information about the curriculum. Staff chat with them to find out about their children's abilities and developmental needs, but this information is not recorded or used as a starting point for learning. Therefore, parents benefit from informal involvement in their children's learning, but opportunities are missed to work with them to plan the next steps in learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff enhance children's care by the excellent quality of organisation, and the leadership and management of nursery education.

Robust staff recruitment procedures ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff with appropriate qualifications. In addition, ongoing training means that staff are kept up-to-date with their knowledge of childcare issues, which directly benefits the children. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development.

Organisation of space and resources effectively meets the needs of the children. Children can move freely from inside to planned activities in the outdoor areas, supervised by staff. Organisation of time is good, children move smoothly from one activity to another, with no long periods of waiting around. Effective deployment of staff enables the staff ratio to be maintained during staff breaks.

Thorough induction and staff appraisals ensure that children are cared for by staff who know the nursery's policies and procedures, and are able to carry them out consistently.

All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place, regularly reviewed and used to ensure the children's

well-being, for example, staff have a thorough knowledge of children's allergies.

Overall, children's needs are met.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good.

It is considered important that all staff continue to attend training courses, and records show attendance of courses, such as 'planning play environment', 'unlocking the outdoors', 'working with parents', 'special educational needs', 'the role of the adult matters', and 'observations and planning'.

The nursery's managers and senior staff have a clear view of what needs improving within the nursery, such as making use of the Birth to three framework for children aged under 3 years and improving the outside area.

The managers ensure that staff continue to perform well and develop their skills by working with them and the children on a daily basis, and carrying out staff appraisals, leading to the provision of appropriate training.

The provision for Nursery Education is monitored and evaluated. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is assessed and monitored, and activities are planned and evaluated to make sure all areas of the curriculum are equally covered.

Feedback from parents is gathered and used informally, and parents' cards show appreciation of the nursery provision.

Ongoing change and development, for example, to methods of assessment and planning, demonstrate the setting's commitment to improving care and education for all its children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Nursery Education inspection it was agreed that the setting would provide opportunities for children to receive consistently suitable challenges. Planning now ensures that all children take part in activities encompassing all areas of learning, and use of assessments helps to ensure that children's individual developmental needs are met.

The setting also agreed to continue to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals in all six areas of the curriculum. Staff continue to attend relevant training, and have become very familiar with the stepping stones, enabling them to plan effectively for children's next steps.

Lastly, they agreed to increase children's awareness of print, the sounds of letters and words through planned practical activities. Children have regular opportunities for mark making, they confidently discuss the sounds in their names, they know that words have meaning, and play in a print rich environment.

At the last Care inspection, the provider agreed to ensure a procedure is in place to be followed in the event of a child being lost or uncollected. An appropriate procedure is now in place.

It was also recommended that they ensure confidentiality is maintained in documentation and in the display of information, and ensure that the child protection procedure for the nursery complies with local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures and includes detail about how procedures will be shared with parents. Confidentiality is now achieved when information is displayed, and the child protection procedure is satisfactory.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints to 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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On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- develop the planning of activities for children aged under three years using the Birth to three framework, and develop the use of assessments to plan for the individual developmental needs of children aged under three years.

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):

- further involve parents in assessing children's abilities and individual needs when entering the nursery or the pre-school, and provide parents with more information about the curriculum (also applies to care).

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