



Chiddingstone Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY295610
Inspection date	30 January 2006
Inspector	Joanne Lindsey Caswell
Setting Address	Chiddingstone Castle, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 7AD
Telephone number	01892 870339
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Registered person	Chiddingstone Nursery School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Chiddingstone Nursery School opened in its current location in 2004, although it has been an established nursery school for many years. It operates from converted buildings within the grounds of Chiddingstone Castle, Chiddingstone, Kent. Children have access to a large group room with adjoining toilet and hand washing facilities. A fully enclosed area provides an outside play space. The nursery is open each weekday, during term time. Sessions run from 09:00 to 12:00 on Monday and Friday

and 09:00 to 15:00 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, when children can stay for lunch.

There are currently 32 children, aged from 2 to 4 years, on roll. This includes 25 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of five staff work with the children. Of these, four hold recognised early years qualifications. The nursery school receives support from the local school and a mentor from the local authority.

The nursery is currently completing the Kent Quality Kitemark scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected against illness and infection as staff maintain a clean and hygienic environment. Parents are made aware that their children may not attend nursery if suffering from an infection, which helps to prevent the spread of illness between children. There is an enclosed outside play area available, enabling children to play outside throughout the year. This enables children to benefit from fresh air and exercise to assist their healthy development. Children use a variety of resources, enabling them to move in a variety of ways to promote their good health.

Children learn about the importance of keeping themselves healthy. They understand the need to wash their hands and begin to recognise the value of healthy eating.

Children's medical and welfare needs are made known to staff. There are procedures in place for the safe administration of children's medication and some staff have attended training in using an Epipen. This ensures that staff manage children's medical needs appropriately. However, there is no written parental consent for seeking emergency treatment or advice. This restricts staff from seeking appropriate emergency treatment if a child has a serious accident.

Children's dietary needs are met well. They enjoy healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit, and help themselves to drinking water or milk. This encourages children to develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating and enables them to respond to their body's needs. There is adequate provision in place to ensure that children's packed lunches are stored in accordance with environmental health regulations.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises provide a very warm and welcoming environment for children. The

toilets and outside play area are easily accessible, enabling children to use them safely. There is good provision for ensuring children's security. The castle grounds surrounding the nursery are secure with controlled access ensuring that visitors to the nursery are closely monitored.

Children play with a very good selection of quality toys and play materials, all of which are checked regularly to ensure they are safe for children's use. All toys and play materials are stored at a low level, enabling children to access them safely and independently.

Children learn about safety and begin to understand how to keep themselves safe. They clearly understand that they must not run around inside, as they may hurt themselves, or someone else. Staff carry out regular risk assessments to ensure any potential hazards to children are addressed and made safe. For example, the main door to the nursery is kept securely closed during sessions and a set of stairs has been made inaccessible to children, to ensure their safety.

Children are protected well against harm and abuse. Staff have completed child protection training and demonstrate a full understanding of their responsibilities. There is a comprehensive written policy, detailing staff's understanding of the designated procedures to follow, should they have any concerns about a child in their care. This ensures that children's welfare is safeguarded at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and enjoy their time at nursery. Most of the younger children arrive happily and only require minimal support from staff to separate from their parents and carers. Children have opportunities to experience a wide range of play. They undertake art and craft activities and have opportunities for imaginative and sensory play and nature activities. Children talk happily about their activities. They begin to develop their understanding of letters, sounds and colours through topic work and group discussion. Children enjoy warm relationships with staff whose interaction is mainly effective. Children's developmental progress is monitored, although staff have not implemented a planning and assessment format to record the younger children's progress.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are qualified and experienced early years practitioners who have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. All curriculum plans relate to the Foundation Stage and there are clear learning intentions linked to the early learning goals, for all daily activities. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is closely monitored and all children have individual targets to ensure their on-going progress. Curriculum plans reflect a full range of stimulating and practical activities, covering all areas of learning. Staff utilise most opportunities to extend children's learning in the daily routine, although there are some missed opportunities to extend children's mathematical skills. Staff form good relationships with the children and know them very well. Their interaction is

mainly effective, although at times the learning opportunities for some children are inhibited. There is good provision in place to support children with special needs. This enables staff and parents to work in partnership with the assistance of external agencies, where necessary, to address children's personal needs.

Most children arrive at the nursery happily and confidently. They develop good skills in independence as they choose their own activities and make their own choices. They pour their own drinks confidently at snack time and learn to take care of their own needs. Children learn to take responsibility. They proudly take turns being the 'special person', enabling them to develop a sense of pride and develop their self-esteem. Children develop caring attitudes by learning to care for the guinea pigs. They form special relationships and delight in sharing their nursery sessions with their grandparents. Children develop their sense of belonging within the nursery. They proudly contribute towards 'show and tell' sessions and confidently share their news in front of the group. Most children behave well and understand the importance of taking turns.

Children's language skills are developing well. They communicate confidently with both their peers and adults and convey their needs effectively. Staff extend children's language through open-questioning and conversation. Children see many examples of printed text on display within the nursery. This encourages them to learn that words carry meaning and enables children to develop an understanding of letters and sounds. Children explore a different letter each week and some are able to recognise initial sounds in words. Some children are competent in recognising both upper and lower case letters, enabling them to write their own names using the computer keyboard. There are good opportunities for children to develop mark making skills, as they use a range of writing resources. They develop an interest in books and stories as there is a cosy, well-presented book corner available. This enables children to access books easily and independently.

Children see many examples of numbers on display, both inside and outside. There are opportunities for children to use numbers for different purposes. For example, children enjoy matching the numbers on their wheeled toys during outside play, to the corresponding numbers fixed on the walls. However, some opportunities to extend children's counting and calculation skills during the daily routine are missed. Children use resources for sorting and matching. They explore different colours and shapes and develop their understanding of capacity through sensory play, where they discuss the concepts of 'full' and 'empty'.

Children develop their understanding of the wider world. They observe nature and seasonal change and make full use of the nursery's rural setting. For example, children regularly feed the birds and listen to bird song. They visit the castle grounds and enjoy activities exploring nature. Children undertake outings to Hever Castle and look at artefacts in Chiddingstone Castle. They learn to develop positive attitudes towards diversity as they celebrate different festivals, such as Chinese New Year. There are good opportunities for children to use the computer. They confidently select their favourite programs and handle the mouse competently.

Children show good co-ordination. They use resources such as paint brushes, scissors and writing materials competently. They undertake activities, such as

threading and pouring, to develop their hand/eye co-ordination. Children undertake regular physical play. They use a range of resources and equipment competently, enabling them to move in a variety of ways.

Children enjoy a range of creative activities. They use a variety of media and different techniques, such as modelling, hand painting, collage and marble painting. Children use their senses to develop their awareness of textures. They play with sand, water, dough and rice and express themselves freely using paints and drawing materials. Children enjoy many opportunities for imaginative play. They use a well-resourced role play area and puppet theatre with a good range of dressing up clothes. This encourages children to play creatively and develop their imagination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a sense of belonging within the nursery. They see many examples of photographs of themselves on display, enabling them to feel valued and part of the group. Information on children's individual needs is obtained, ensuring that each child's health, welfare and cultural needs are appropriately addressed. Children learn about diversity as part of topic work. They celebrate a range of different festivals and customs and learn about the wider world as part of group discussion. Children develop an understanding of the importance of equality, as they play with resources which reflect positive attitudes of diversity. As a result, children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural needs are fostered.

There is provision in place to support children with special needs. Staff are experienced in working in partnership with parents and where necessary, external agencies, to meet children's needs. Appropriate documentation is maintained to ensure that children's progress is monitored.

Children generally behave well and understand acceptable boundaries. Most children understand the importance of sharing and co-operating with one another and generally show care and consideration for one another. Staff endeavour to create a positive environment for children by recognising positive action and behaviour. This enables most children to understand 'right' from 'wrong'. The nursery manager is particularly experienced in managing children's behaviour, although not all staff have completed relevant training. This restricts some staff from implementing appropriate strategies to prevent children's behaviour inhibiting the learning needs of other children.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There is a very good range of written information provided for parents, regarding the nursery's policies, procedures and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents are very well informed of all nursery topics and themes, enabling them to extend their children's learning at home. The nursery website enables parents to access information regarding forthcoming topics and activities and informs parents of all relevant events. Staff regularly exchange information with parents regarding children's developmental progress and parents can access their children's assessment records. This ensures there is partnership between nursery staff and parents, enabling children to see their parents and staff as

equal partners in their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are qualified and experienced early years practitioners. They have a satisfactory understanding of the national standards and ensure that appropriate staffing ratios are maintained. There are satisfactory arrangements in place to cover staff absence. However, some aspects of the daily routine are not always organised effectively to meet children's care needs. The current organisation of the premises is not effective and some areas are quite cramped. Staff deployment is mainly effective, although at times, mostly during large group work, the unsettled behaviour of some children leads to a disrupted session. Regulatory documentation is maintained and stored confidentially.

The leadership and management are good. At the time of inspection, the nursery manager has only been in post since the beginning of term. She is a qualified and experienced leader who demonstrates a strong and dynamic approach to management. She is keen to address all areas for improvement and is committed to making changes to improve the learning opportunities for children. The staff team is stable and supportive of one another. They are aware of their roles and responsibilities and all duties are delegated on a daily basis. Staff training is seen as a high priority and staff identify their own areas for development through the effective use of an appraisal system. The nursery manager receives close support from the management committee, who demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting the nursery team.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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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the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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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):

- improve the organisation of the daily routine and staff deployment, to ensure the individual needs of all children are consistently met
- ensure parental consent is obtained for seeking emergency advice or treatment
- increase staff's understanding of using effective behaviour management strategies to engage all children appropriately
- consider developing a planning and assessment format to monitor the younger children's progress, such as 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):

- increase the opportunities for children to develop number and simple calculation skills during the daily routine

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