



Cray Tots Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127131
Inspection date	15 September 2006
Inspector	Susan Jennifer Scott
Setting Address	Senior Citizens Club, Craylands Lane, Swanscombe, Kent, DA10 0LP
Telephone number	01322 382929
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Registered person	Cray Tots Pre-School
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?

Craytots Pre-school has sole use of a community hall in a residential area. The building is shared with a Senior Citizens' Club which operates at a different time. It is a voluntary group with a Pre-School Learning Alliance constitution, managed by a committee of parents. They are registered to care for 26 children aged from two to five years. There are currently 16 children between two and five years on the register.

The group is open from 9:15am to 11:45am, Tuesday to Friday and in addition from

12:45pm to 3:15pm on Wednesdays during term-time only. Craytots Pre-school care for children with special needs and those with English as a second language.

There are five staff, four of these including the supervisor hold NVQs at level 2 or 3. The Pre-school receive support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing their awareness of appropriate hygiene routines, they understand the need to wash their hands before eating snacks and after messy play such as gluing. Children's health is promoted by some changing routines practiced by staff, for example, they use gloves and provide clean clothes if children accidentally wet themselves.

Staff have first aid training so that they are able to administer first aid in the event of an accident. They use appropriate records for the administration of medication which provide safeguards for children and satisfactory arrangements are in place to exclude children with infectious illnesses.

Children are provided with healthy drinks and snacks as well as breakfast. However, they are not encouraged to take part in the preparation or serving of food and drink or to talk about the benefits of eating healthily regularly, which does not promote their understanding of healthy habits.

Children have frequent opportunities to enjoy outdoor play which is planned to support their topic work, although this is mainly for recreational purposes and does not always fully challenge the children. Children are encouraged to observe the effects of physical exertion sometimes during vigorous play and demonstrate that they understand these processes. They manipulate a range of small toys, resources and equipment with growing skill and confidence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from playing in a spacious and pleasant environment. They arrive happily and settle well. They enjoy their play in a secure and welcoming environment with appealing play options; staff recognise their individual needs and greet each of them, building their confidence.

Children access a range of safe and appropriate resources. These are varied so that they provide children with interesting choices which they are able to access independently. However, the children attending a morning and afternoon session do not have fresh experiences as the sessions mostly repeat what they are offered during the earlier one. Some resources such as the carpet pieces and the stage are

a little grubby but the group are about to be re-furnished and the resources are being re-organised.

Children are kept safe from hazards in the setting and play in a secure environment. A risk assessment of the premises used has been carried out and steps are taken to minimise hazards. Children cannot easily access areas or items that could be dangerous such as the kitchen, or the cleaning materials. There are clear procedures in place to ensure children are protected in emergencies, such as the fire drills and the checking of the premises and the fire fighting equipment.

Staff have an understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child. There is a system in place to refer any concerns about child protection to the appropriate agencies. This provides safeguards for the welfare of children, as does the public liability insurance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily and are eager to participate in the activities. New children are well supported by staff and as a result, settle quickly. Children have good relationships with staff who sometimes sit with them and encourage their play and learning through appropriate conversations. For example, children enjoy snack times where they sit together and talk about train travel which supports their understanding of the topic of transport.

Staff have implemented the Birth to three matters framework and the younger children are included in all the activities. They enjoy a variety of freely chosen play and support from staff who respond to their needs through their participation in a variety of activities. However, staff have not yet implemented a system that allocates clear roles and responsibilities during free play, for instance, they read stories and play games with children but there is little support for the imaginative play in the home corner or for mark making. Staff provide appropriate guidance and support when they introduce the adult led craft activity to children, enabling them to participate according to individual levels of skill and understanding. Children who attend both sessions on a Wednesday experience mostly the same toys, resources and activities which does not sustain their interest sufficiently.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and Learning is satisfactory.

Staff have an understanding of the Foundation Stage and meet regularly to plan the delivery of suitable topics and activities. Key-work staff have a good understanding of the developmental stages of the children in their group and use this knowledge to deliver the planned activities. Not all the activities are clearly linked to the topic or fully informed by what children need to do to move on to the next stage of their learning. However, children have appropriate planned learning opportunities and staff now have to further develop the system they use to assess and observe children, ensuring they experience individual support for their needs throughout the sessions.

Activities do not include sufficiently detailed differentiation for the older or more able children, resulting in occasions when children do not sustain their initial interest or enthusiasm. Staff note their observations of children's development every fortnight and ensure that they assess all their development in all areas of the curriculum so that they can provide complete assessments of children's progress. Children have planned opportunities to participate in practical experiences that promote their learning through regular activities in small, large and key work groups.

Children are developing caring relationships with each other and assist other children, for instance when fastening their shoes and when they help put the toys away. Children's independence and confidence is developing well; they enjoy the breakfast bar, where they select their own snack and pour their own drinks.

Children are encouraged to learn to recognise their own names from their name cards when placing work on the table to be collected and as they register themselves. However, they have inconsistent opportunities to develop their writing skills and understanding of links between letters and sounds.

Children are able to identify shapes, colours and learn to count as staff offer clear instructions and good support to enable them to participate in board games with confidence. Children have varied opportunities to learn about their environment and different cultures through planned topics and activities, for example, they grow flowers and vegetables, and they discuss birthday celebrations.

Children have daily opportunities to use the outside play area, where they pedal and steer tricycles and use slides confidently. However, these opportunities are mainly recreational and are not well planned. Children's understanding of the needs of their bodies is developing appropriately as they understand their bodies get hot and they need to rest after running around. Some activities successfully encourage children's independence and offer free choices such as the role play, when children enjoy using their imagination. This enables children to play in cooperation with each other most of the time but they occasionally become involved in minor conflicts because there is not adequate staff support or involvement.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a range of resources to reflect positive images and different cultures in the community; for example, books, posters and puzzles show people with disabilities and people with differing backgrounds. A range of activities help children to develop a balanced view of society and explore their own ideas and beliefs through celebrating a range of festivals.

Children with additional needs or learning disabilities are welcomed into the setting. There are secure systems in place for identifying needs and supporting children to promote inclusion. There is a named special needs coordinator, who is familiar with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the procedures for accessing external advice and support if needed.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is generally good. Staff respond to children's questions positively and are attentive to their needs. Occasionally, children become disengaged as the activities do not sustain their interest, particularly during free play. On these occasions staff intervene patiently, although they do not always model a positive response so that children can observe and learn how to manage their own behaviour. Occasionally children do not have their privacy protected if they wet themselves or if confidentiality is breached because progress records contain information about a small group.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are welcome in the group and some are represented on the management committee. Regular newsletters are provided to inform parents of the activities and events taking place. All parents are given a prospectus containing information on the Foundation Stage Curriculum, the Birth to three matters framework and all policies and procedures. All parents receive a contact diary summarising the activities and the progress their children have made during the topic and the forthcoming weeks plans. All parents are requested to read and sign acknowledgements of the information and some respond to the information which contributes to the staff's understanding of their children. Staff listen to and read parent's comments about their children's needs and interests and this provides them with knowledge about individual children so that they can plan for their progress. Parents can identify their child's key worker and feel they can approach them to discuss any concerns they may have.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from an organisation which has systems in place to support their needs. Systems for induction, training and regular staff meetings are in place and there are policies and procedures in place to meet the National Standards. Consequently, children benefit from a staff team that have a secure understanding of the procedures and policies to keep them safe and ensure their welfare. The required documentation required is all in place and staff are familiar with the procedures of the setting.

Staff update their knowledge and skills through training. They have implemented the Birth to three matters framework to ensure methods of working with children under three are appropriate. As a result, outcomes to promote children's welfare, care and learning are developing successfully. There are occasions when children do not experience sufficiently varied experiences to fully stimulate them but staff are building their expertise and have made many improvements over the past year. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager shares responsibility for planning with all the staff. This has enabled all staff to develop their understanding of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and, as a consequence, they are building on their understanding of how children learn and how to provide for children to ensure they progress. There is a system to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision although this has not been implemented for sufficient time to identify and fully

address all the issues identified in the recommendations, it has enabled staff to provide for children's development and progress at a satisfactory level.

Staff evaluate some of the routines and activities and their effect on the children although they have not identified how all children can be fully stimulated. This results in inconsistencies in children's learning as children experience appropriate and interesting learning in their keywork groups, but not always during free play opportunities. Most of the key issues raised at the previous nursery education inspection have been addressed successfully.

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting has made good progress in addressing the recommendations and actions set at the last inspection, one year ago.

Care

Staff have improved the organisation of the drop off and collection of children so that they cannot leave unaccompanied.

Staff's knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children has been extended through the use of the Birth to three matters framework which is now incorporated into planning. This has resulted in younger children participating in the activities successfully.

Staff enable children to participate in a range of play experiences, including planned small and large group opportunities, although this is still being developed as staff still have to continue to plan to support and extend free play choices. The deployment of staff also needs to be consolidated to fully achieve this.

Nursery Education

All staff are involved in the planning and have developed their understanding of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and different approaches to teaching. The activities reflect topics and observations of children's development are linked into key work activities planned by staff which supports children's progress.

Key-workers are now completing observations on each child every two weeks. This is reflected in activities planned and this ensures the assessments are used to help children move onto the next stage of learning.

Additionally, parents now have a contact book that tells them what their child will be learning next week. There is a section for them to write any comments. Parents are also invited into pre school to see their child's folder. This ensures that parents and staff share information about children that can be used to build on their learning and enable good progress to be made.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made 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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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):

- Plan sessions so that children experience varied play and learning opportunities to sustain their interest if they attend two sessions in one day
- continue to plan to support children's free play and further improve the deployment of staff to ensure all children are appropriately stimulated during these play choices (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that children's privacy, self esteem and confidentiality are protected

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):

- plan activities so that differentiation for the older or more able children is clearly noted
- review the delivery of activities, routines and teaching so that children experience opportunities to build on their recognition of letters, words and the sounds of these

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