

Choochoos Day Nursery, Canterbury

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY414930
Inspection date	19/01/2011
Inspector	Susan Scott

Setting address	50 Mill Lane, Harbledown, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 8NE
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

Choochoos Nursery in Canterbury opened with new management in 2010. It is one of two nurseries and operates from a building in Harbledown, on the outskirts of Canterbury. There is a steep path up to the setting and the baby room is situated on the first floor which has a separate entrance to the main nursery. Children have access to several outdoor play areas.

The nursery is open five days a week from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for 50 children in the early years age range and 15 of these may be under two years at any one time. There are currently 64 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 13 members of staff including the owner, manger and cook. Ten members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications varying from NVQ level 2 to degrees. One member of staff is working towards her degree in early years. The setting receives support from the local authority and provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Choochoos Day Nursery provides an interesting and welcoming environment for children. Children participate in a good range of activities that promote their learning and development successfully overall. Good tools are in place to evaluate and review the setting and to enable improvements to be targeted. All the staff are involved in evaluating the setting and targets are identified and achieved in a methodical manner. This results in a provision that is continuously developing and enhancing outcomes for children. The partnership with parents, carers and other agencies is very positive and parents are welcomed into the nursery where their comments and contributions are valued. Although the nursery is changing in order to extend facilities for babies and children, disruptions are kept to a minimum to due to effective planning. This results in the individual needs of children being met as the provision is constantly improving.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- provide dual language books to raise awareness of different scripts and to match the languages spoken by families at the setting (PG page 55 CLL)

- provide ongoing opportunities for parents to understand the setting's policies on important areas such as learning and teaching, inclusion and behaviour
- provide opportunities for children to be outside on a daily basis all year round with freedom to explore and be physically active

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children benefit from a thorough risk assessment of the premises, events and other factors that affect their activities, such as the refurbishment of certain areas. They are effectively safeguarded because the staff regularly complete a variety of training, updating their skills and knowledge to ensure they can identify children's needs and respond sensitively to these. The staff have good systems in place and have a clear understanding of how to safeguard children's welfare. Several staff members have participated in child protection training so that there is always sufficient expertise available. A system of induction, supervision and appraisal is used to enable all staff to receive feedback from the owner and manager in order to identify improvements to benefit children. Several staff hold valid first aid certificates, enabling them to provide effective first aid treatment for children. There are clear and well understood procedures covering all eventualities, including the administration of medication and recording existing injuries.

The staff deliver an enjoyable and challenging experience for all children. They work sensitively with children who have a variety of special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their families, adapting their provision to meet the needs of individuals. Children with English as an additional language benefit from warm working relationships between staff and their families. Children enjoy selecting activities for their own play and learning and benefit. However, some languages spoken by children and their families are not represented in the resources to support their developing sense of identity. Policies and procedures are in place to support children's differing needs and the nursery works closely with parents and other agencies to meet children's needs. There are for instance, clear care plans in place and staff obtain training for children with specialist medical needs. Children are building relationships with the local community as staff have taken them to a local residential home where they sang carols to residents.

Children enjoy being able to select and explore resources for themselves and staff offer a varied balance between adult led play and learning and extending children's free choices. The nursery space is used effectively and plans are under way to further develop the inside and outside areas which will provide children with extended opportunities to explore and challenge them.

The staff all contribute to evaluations of the service offered and encourage parents to feed their ideas and suggestions into this process. This enables practice to continuously develop and ensures all children benefit from the suggestions made. Very positive partnerships with parents and good procedures to share information with others promote the welfare of all the children who are cared for. The children's starting points are established through home visits and settling in procedures, enabling staff to establish the best ways of supporting individual

development. This information is used to enable children to settle well and on going systems to share information ensures children's developing needs are met. Parents are provided with a variety of information, such as the setting's policies and procedures and there is constant access to the learning and development records of their children. Not all parents have benefitted from the opportunity to become familiar with the new ethos of the nursery but the provider is making arrangements to continue invitations to workshops and presentations about the provision.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children benefit from the regular observations and assessments made by staff. These are targeted and ensure that every area of learning is well documented on. The owner oversees the records of progress and analyses these with a range of sophisticated tools which results in very clear evidence of children's development and a good understanding of where the staff need to focus their attention.

Children have 'Learning Journeys', which record their development so that parents can share these and make contributions of what they know about their children. Observations are used by staff to help them plan activities and play that will extend each child's learning and development. Children are able to select their activities and staff make suggestions or ask good questions to extend their understanding or guide their thinking. Consequently, children's opinions and interests are valued and they make good progress through the developmental stepping stones.

Children feel safe and secure in the care of staff and show this by readily communicating with adults who visit, such as the inspector. They are keen to engage in tasks such as tidying up, and enjoy playing in small self chosen groups. Babies interact positively with staff and are developing secure relationships with them as staff show great interest in them, encouraging communication and exploration well. This results in babies who are settling well, despite it being only the third day of the baby room being open. The babies benefit from carefully designed rooms and facilities, although they have not yet been taken outside.

Older children particularly enjoy the free access to the varied and interesting outside play areas and this promotes their physical development and good health. For example, two children enjoyed a game of chase starting behind the trees in the newly developed natural play area and continued until they had thoroughly exerted themselves. There are opportunities for children to go out on walks in the local environment and visit facilities such as the local park and library.

Children are beginning to understand the consequences of keeping safe, for example they are reminded not to climb or run inside. They mostly use the toilets independently and learn the importance of washing their hands at appropriate times, such as before eating and after using the toilet. Snack and lunch times are social occasions for babies and older children: they are encouraged to discuss what they are eating, independently serving themselves. Children learn how to handle

tools when they prepare snacks, for example, peeling and cutting bananas and using serving spoons. They learn about where food comes from and the benefits of eating a healthy diet by growing and eating their own produce.

Children play enthusiastically in the environment which is attractively decorated and well planned. They have easy access to most of the resources and equipment. They have opportunities to participate in a range of activities that promote their development in all areas of the curriculum and staff provide attentive support and careful suggestions to enable them to explore and extend their play experiences. Children are independent learners who learn how to share and take turns. For example, they play card games when they have to take turns and build upon their recognition of numbers, colours and shapes. Children learn to count and recognise groups of three items with confidence.

Books are easily accessible and children enjoy looking at these and listen to stories individually or in small groups; the staff promote their interest in books by providing good opportunities for children to describe the pictures and discuss the events in the story. Older children competently read their names from labels they use for self registration during the snack times. Children learn about real life through their play in role play area and they enjoy a variety of creative activities including painting, making craft items and listening to music.

Children learn to care for the birds by making bird feeders which they hang on trees and staff extend their knowledge and understanding by providing other experiences that link into this. For example, staff have planned to use a recording of 'Peter and the wolf' to enable children to hear and discuss sounds like birdsong. Children are competent users of technological equipment. Computers are available throughout the day and children enjoy using programmes that support their understanding of environments and animals which staff support by referring to the current interest in birds and asking what they might have in their homes in the trees.

The outside area is an extension of the inside and there are opportunities for children to extend their learning in all areas of play and learning when outside. For example, children enjoy making marks on the outside chalkboard using various coloured chalks. Children enjoy playing on the new rope ladder, and use apparatus such as the large new see-saw and the swings while staff provide supervision and support.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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