

Choochoos Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY349035

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Inspector

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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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Choochoos Nursery opened in 2005, and there was a change of ownership in 2007. It operates from the old ticket office and waiting room at Whitstable and Tankerton railway station in Kent. Children have access to three areas for work and play. A maximum of 71 children in the early years age range may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 119 children on roll, including 38 in receipt of funding for nursery education. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. No overnight care is provided.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 until 18.30 for 50 weeks a year. Children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and babies have access to their own secure, enclosed play area. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding towns. They currently support a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 30 members of staff, including the owner and manager, a cook, caretaker and Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Of these, 26 members of staff, including the owner and manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Choochoos Day Nursery provides a stimulating and welcoming environment for children. Children receive an excellent individualised service which is skilfully adapted to meet their individual needs. They participate in a good range of activities that promotes their learning and development with great success and the sensitive support they receive enables them to thrive in the nursery. The partnership with parents, carers and other agencies is very positive and their ideas and contributions are valued and acted upon. The key strength of the nursery is the excellent systems and tools which are continuously developing to evaluate and review the provision. Children's ideas and contributions are valued and all the staff continuously assist in evaluating and shaping the service. This results in a programme of improvements which are constantly enhancing outcomes for all children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continue to develop the use of systematic observations and assessments of children's achievements, interests and learning styles to plan relevant and motivating play experiences for each child.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children benefit from a thorough risk assessment of the premises, high staff ratios and the vigilance of staff. They are effectively safeguarded because the staff frequently 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. An effective 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. Staff work very hard and form a strong team providing an exceptional service that is adapted to meet the needs of all its users. Staff are familiar with the procedures covering all eventualities, including the evacuation of the premises and how to respond to emergencies so that children are protected.

The staff deliver an enjoyable and challenging experience for all children. They offer individualised support for children who have a variety of special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their families, successfully adapting the provision to meet these needs. Children with English as an additional language benefit from positive working relationships between staff and their families. Staff continually evaluate and review to ensure that children play in an environment that is suitable to their needs, as groups and as individuals, and they seek children's opinions and ideas when making changes to improve outcomes for them. Consequently, space is used effectively and children play in an environment which provides optimum opportunities for them to become independent learners making choices about their play from easily accessible resources. Children enjoy being able to extend and explore their experiences supported by staff who offer a varied balance between adult-led play and learning and extending children's free choices. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been acted on; for example, babies and children enjoy their play in an imaginative outside area where there are many learning opportunities across the whole curriculum.

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, individual care plans in place and staff participate in a range of training opportunities cascading what they have learnt to their colleagues and implementing good practice as a result. Children enjoy access to plenty of positive images around the nursery and staff encourage celebrations of differing cultures so that children learn about diversity and the wider community. Children benefit from a variety of professional relationships with specialist staff within the community which enable staff to be well informed on issues and programmes which promote children's development. The varied outings and local experiences

children have promotes their understanding of the community and features of the locality. For example, children meet teachers from their feeder schools and are able to make visits to their schools before they attend.

Parents and carers 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. The staff encourage parents to feed their ideas and suggestions into the evaluations of the provision and this enables practice to continuously develop and ensures all children benefit from the suggestions made. 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 and carers are made to feel welcome and their ideas are sought through the use of questionnaires. The suggestions made are valued by managers and staff who review provision and make changes to improve the experiences of children and their families. Several parents spoken to during the inspection said they felt the owner and staff could not be faulted and all said that they delivered an excellent quality of service.

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

Children's progress is substantially enhanced by the frequent and regular observations and assessments made by staff. Observations are used by staff to help them plan activities and play that extends children's learning and development in every area of learning. Staff successfully enable parents to make regular observations of children and add these to the children's 'Learning Journeys', sharing what they know about their children with staff. Staff are trained in noting children's schemas and screening children's progress three times yearly. The results are used to check for children's well-being and involvement which also feeds into planning. 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. This enables plans to be targeted at learning priorities for individuals and results in exceptional progress for all the children.

Children are encouraged to plan their own activities and their opinions and interests are valued. Their suggestions are acted on as the staff continually enhance their play by providing resources to stimulate them further. Children are able to freely select their activities and staff make suggestions or ask good questions to extend their understanding or guide their thinking. For example, staff join in boisterous games with older children, allowing them to get excited and hide or be energetic in their responses to imaginative games. Consequently, children's wishes and interests valued and they make good progress through the developmental stepping stones.

Children feel exceptionally safe and secure in the care of staff and show this by

readily communicating with adults who visit, such as the inspector. They settle into the setting exceptionally well and quickly integrate themselves into the routines, taking advantage of attractive play options confidently. Babies interact positively with staff and are able to develop secure relationships with them as staff get to know them well and this enables them to thrive. The babies benefit from regular and interesting trips outside in the community which enables their health and well being to flourish.

Children interact positively with staff and are keen to share things of importance with them as staff show great interest in what they say and do. They experience exceptionally interesting choices for outside play and develop a thorough awareness of keeping healthy by monitoring the weather and discussing the clothes they need outside. Children under two regularly visit the local market, park and beach where they build upon their understanding of the local community and practice their social skills as the large six-seater buggy is recognised and has its own toy number plate. The outside area for the under twos is on a slope and this has been imaginatively developed so that children can enjoy wide ranging activities. Older children are inspired by the opportunity to see the trains that pass through the adjoining station platform and delight in revisiting the photographs of occasions when the Orient Express passes through and the enjoy a brass band playing. The outside area is an extension of the inside and there are opportunities for children to extend their learning in all areas when outside.

Children are keen to discuss foods they like and learn which foods are good for them from confident conversations skilfully extended by staff who encourage discussions at snack and lunch times and during the small group discussions prompted by the books they share before lunch. Children are empowered to make choices at lunch time as children of all ages independently serve themselves and prepare food. For instance, children of as young as two cut their baked potatoes in half independently, and serve themselves with grated cheese.

Children enjoy looking at many photographs of themselves and others which are purposefully displayed in homemade books around the nursery. Children have successfully formed relationships with each other and enjoy sharing conversations, showing in interest in what others have to say. The older children accurately use name labels to find their place at lunch tables, and even those who are two years old become confident at selecting coat pegs that have name labels with photographs on. Staff actively promote numeracy, for example, a three year old is able to count accurately up to four play figures and then subtract one confidently predicting that there will be three left. Children enjoy games using numbers, words and shapes and there are highly appropriate charts and posters displayed supporting their learning in all areas.

There are well organised opportunities for children to participate in a range of activities that promote their development in all areas of learning as staff have acted on reviews of each learning area and used their findings to create enticing and practical areas for learning. As a result, children enjoy responsibilities like feeding the fish and selecting the computer programme they want. They like playing in small groups, often using role play resources such as dolls and play food, or engaging in imaginative games with small figures and cars or train

carriages. Children explore opportunities to use a range of tools and materials throughout their play, such as pencils and net scarves when singing and engaging in musical activities. They are confident and enthusiastically participate in visits to local schools which supports really smooth transitions and the home visits from key staff contribute to children's readiness to attend the setting and explore the varied play and learning opportunities offered.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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