

Apples Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	07/04/2011
Inspector	Jenny Kane

Setting address	Saga Pavillion, Enbrook Park, Sandgate High Street, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 3SE
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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

Apples Nursery has been registered since 1998. The nursery is owned by Saga and caters for parents working within the Saga sites in Folkestone and Sandgate. It operates from a purpose built facility. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and access to the grounds for walks. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 6pm all year round. After-school care is provided for children up to 11 years. Children are collected from several local primary schools by the Saga bus. After-school children are cared for in a separate house on the same site. There is also a holiday club.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 123 children under 8 years, of these, not more than 77 may be in the early years age group, and of these, not more than 27 may be under 2 years at any one time. There are currently 130 children on roll, some in part-time places. Of these 109 are in the early years age group and 21 in the out of school facility. The nursery provides funded early education for three and four year olds.

The setting employs 28 childcare staff, three lunch time assistants and a housekeeper. Of the childcare staff, 26 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. They receive support from the local authority's early years advisor.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in relation to their starting points. This is because the staff have a clear knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are skilled at providing a good range of activities which take into account children's individual abilities and interests. The use of the resources and the health of the children are main strengths of this nursery. Policies and procedures are of a high standard, are effective and ensure children are safeguarded and well protected. Working closely with parents and other providers, good communication and a professional approach ensure the nursery meets children's individual needs. All adults involved in the care of the children are committed to self-evaluation and are demonstrate a good capacity for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop systems to further involve parents in the next steps section of the

- assessment folders
- provide children with additional resources to help them develop their information technology skills.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Saga delegates day-to-day responsibility to the two managers who effectively job share. They are ably supported by a full time deputy. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust which ensures all adults are suitable to work with children. Children are safe, secure and well protected because all staff have completed child protection training and know the procedures well. Senior staff are aware of their responsibilities and confident about raising concerns. Safeguarding policies are effective, regularly reviewed and shared with parents. Staff give children's safety high priority. Daily risk assessments and ongoing visual checks ensure the environment is safe for children. Staff encourage children to learn about keeping themselves safe during play.

Each play area is well organised, interesting and stimulating for children, including babies. Good quality resources, the careful use of the space and the layout of the nursery help to make a very conducive learning and care environment. Children self-select from the shelves and baskets and demonstrate extremely good independence. Staff ratios are very high and their deployment and flexibility is excellent. The nursery is taking very good steps to becoming fully sustainable. All required documentation including policies are well produced. Children's records are maintained to a high standard, are confidential and shared appropriately with parents. The managers are working to reduce printing and paper costs by offering alternative options for sharing information, for example by electronic mail.

The vast majority of staff hold childcare qualifications and first aid certificates. Managers encourage staff development and are keen for staff to introduce their own ideas. Self-evaluation is effective in highlighting any improvements needed. All staff are involved in the process and parents views are taken into account. Recommendations raised at the last inspection have been addressed fully helping to improve the outcomes for children. Managers and senior staff have a clear vision and ideals. They are enthusiastic and support their staff well. As a result, staff work well as a team, are keen to develop their skills and attend training and confidently contribute their suggestions for change and improvement.

The key person system works well in practice and ensures continuity of care, especially for the younger children. Staff are fully committed to inclusion, they know children's individual backgrounds well and this along with good communication with parents and carers ensures all children are supported and their needs met. Links with other providers and external agencies are good and well established. If a child needs extra help, staff quickly identify this and access additional support. The nursery has good daily communication with several schools where the after-school-club children attend. Staff discuss any issues on collection. Children attending the nursery come from a very wide catchment area. Staff have worked hard to contact the majority of feeder schools, organising visits and

sharing information, to help children's transition into school.

Staff have established very good relationships with parents and carers. They are readily available, the manager has open door policy and staff have a professional yet friendly approach. As a result, parents are confident to share information with the staff. The parents are very happy with the care provided and when asked for feedback, make positive and complimentary comments. One area which several say they like is the access to the children's individual contact books. They enjoy looking at these, as do the children, and can take them home to share with their family. This enables parents to be involved in their children's care routines and developmental progress.

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

Children enjoy positive relationships with the staff and their key persons and this helps them feel secure and supported during their play and learning. Each group works as a small team to plan a mix and range of activities suitable for the age and ability of their children. Staff take care to provide activities which support children's progress in all the areas of learning whilst taking into account the care and welfare of the youngest children. At several times during the day the babies mix with toddlers and the toddlers with the pre-school children. They often meet in the garden area or visit other rooms, particularly when they are about to move up to another group. When children first start at nursery their key person spends time with the parent discussing what their children can already do. This is recorded in the 'all about me' section of the child's development folder/contact book and is used to ascertain individual starting points. Key persons continue to assess development using daily observational notes and photographs which are later transferred to children's books. These help to inform the planning and to identify children's next steps. Although staff give good daily feedback and parents enjoy looking at the contact books frequently, they are not fully involved in working together towards children's next steps. There is a wealth of displays and information for parents about the Early Years Foundation Stage around the nursery which helps to raise parental awareness.

Babies and toddlers explore their environment freely, moving about picking up toys, watching others and interacting with the staff. For example, when playing in the home corner staff encourage discussion about the colour and size of the plastic fruit. They thoroughly enjoy playing with water and jelly in the tray in the floor, splashing, pouring and tasting, while using their senses. Staff are very aware of the needs of this age group, babies sleep as they need to, nappies are changed straight away and although older babies eat as a group, feeding requirements are flexible.

Children's awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is supported very well. They are learning the importance of good hygiene practices, independently wash their hands before meals, use tissues for their noses and help to look after their environment by clearing up after snack and activities. All children enjoy a daily hot

meal which is prepared in the Saga kitchens using fresh ingredients. The nursery has a designated chef, menus are coordinated and shared with parents, all dietary needs and requirements are catered for well. At lunch, which is taken in the upstairs restaurant area, children eat together in small groups. They serve themselves from the dishes, pour drinks and confidently ask for more. Their table manners are good, they use the cutlery competently and this is a lovely social time for the children. Children understand where food comes from. They often walk to the local shops to buy food for snack, they have grown fruit and vegetables in the nursery garden and they enjoy cooking activities.

The opportunities for physical activities indoors and outside are wide ranging. Children use the indoor soft play room daily, they have a free-flow system into the garden and they go on regular walks. Children use the outside play area in all weathers and staff encourage this by actively joining in with their play. Children know they need to wear hats to keep safe in the sun; they frequently go to their drink bottles for water and come in for snacks during play. During play children cooperate, share and know where each other are. For example they take good care when riding about on scooters and bikes. One child puts on the crash helmet to 'keep safe'. One activity which is very popular is painting with water using large brushes. Several children in the wooden playhouse are very involved in this and others join them to paint the inside. One child works out if they climb on a small block they can reach to paint the roof.

The pre-school children show a good deal of independence. As their areas are partially open plan, a lot of mixing and socialising takes place. Children are very involved in decision making, as are the school-age children, and are involved in the setting of the nursery or the club rules. This has an impact on their behaviour which is very good. This is due to the caring and consistent attitudes of all the staff to dealing with issues of unwanted behaviour. There is plenty of visual stimulation, photographs and signs which help children to recognise the written word. Several areas are labelled as are the resources. Books are available in all areas, the seating is comfortable, books well displayed and consequently children use these areas well on their own, in small groups or for story times with staff. They have access to a good selection of sensory play materials and enjoy exploring the treasure baskets which hold a wealth of stones, little bags of herbs, wooden and found objects. One child says to another 'smell this' and they talk about which ones they like best. Children have good opportunities for problem solving and using mathematics during play indoors, in the garden, at mealtimes and at group time. They are confident in their communication because staff spend a good amount of time in conversation with the children and listen well to what they have to say.

There are wealth of daily activities in all the age groups where children can be creative, explore and use their imaginations. Children enjoy painting, make their own art and help to wash up the pots when finished. They have fun with glitter, leaves, tissue paper, pompoms, bottle tops and natural objects, sticking them to make a collage. They use the home corner props inside and in the garden to act out scenarios. In the garden a group of children have a wonderfully messy time painting with mud on a large sheet of paper. Children gain an understanding of the wider world through the good supply of resources, projects, topics and celebrating festivals. They have access to magnifying glasses, bug boxes and other items for

discovering how things work. Children have access to a computer and cameras which they use confidently, although as yet they do not learn how to print their photos. Staff have a good understanding and awareness of equality issues, treat children with respect and make inclusion a top priority. Staff and key persons offer lots of positive praise and encouragement and this helps to build children's self-esteem and confidence.

When the school age children return from school they disembark safely from the minibuses and go into the restaurant area for drinks and talk to staff to plan activities. On the day of the inspection, they elect to have a picnic and take their food and drinks out onto the grass area. Staff are friendly, have a laugh and a joke and the interaction is good. The club children are mainly over five years but a few children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend and their needs are met well. The club children also have contact diaries to record activities and progress. Many enjoy making their own contributions to these by adding artwork and notes. However, although they have a digital camera, they are unable to print out their own photographs. Children are happy and when asked readily say what like doing at the club, which in the main is playing outside, team games, outings during the holidays, using the pool table, watching videos, using the computer and relaxing with their friends after their day at school.

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	2
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	1
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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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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