



Chilton Meadows Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY217668
Inspection date	07 November 2005
Inspector	Noreen Elizabeth Appleby
Setting Address	Chilton Moor, Houghton - le - Spring, Tyne & Wear, DH4 6LX
Telephone number	0191 3854333
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Registered person	Chilton Meadows Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Chilton Meadows Nursery opened in June 2002, and operates from self-contained premises, situated in a residential area of Houghton le Spring. A maximum of 35 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 50 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these 4

children receive funding for nursery education. Most children live locally, although some come from a wider catchment area. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs ten staff to work with the children and three ancillary staff. Nine childcare practitioners, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and all are suitably experienced.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning the importance of good personal hygiene, through suitable daily routines. For example, they enjoy premises that are appropriately maintained, they see staff using antibacterial spray to wipe down tables and ensuring that toys and equipment are suitably maintained in a clean condition. Children are encouraged to wash their hands after toileting or messy play activities and before they eat lunch.

Children's health requirements are thoroughly discussed between staff and parents, who use comprehensive policy statements and suitable documentation systems to ensure any special requirements are appropriately recorded and observed. Children's first aid arrangements are well met as a result of several staff having completed first aid courses and clear procedures being in place to ensure an appropriately qualified first aider is on duty at all times. Children's accidents are appropriately recorded and communicated with parents and carers.

Children's individual dietary needs are effectively discussed with parents and carefully observed by staff, some of whom hold a relevant food hygiene certificate. Children benefit from a well planned four-week rolling menu programme that is adapted to cover summer and winter months. As a result, children receive a good range of healthy foodstuffs, including fresh meats, vegetables, fruit, cheese and fish. Staff are aware of toddler diets; for example, they do not add salt when cooking and they monitor the quantity of rich foodstuffs they provide, whilst encouraging children to try new tastes and textures. Children's packed lunches or babies' foodstuffs and formula milk are all suitably stored to ensure children's health. Babies are appropriately held when they are fed. Older children sit together to eat. As a result meal times provide good social occasions for children.

Children have regular opportunities to enjoy suitable physical activities that help them to develop new skills, whilst encouraging them to keep healthy. For example, they enjoy outdoor play, local walks, circle activities, action rhymes and using large play equipment as a means of moving around freely and developing fine and gross motor skills. They also have appropriate opportunities for quiet activities and rests, throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a suitably spacious environment where their safety is appropriately considered. For example, there is a separate baby room and the remaining play space is divided into age-related areas that are separated using low level partitioning, and the children's toilets and hand-washing facilities are directly off the area. As a result, children's movements are closely monitored within the setting.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe because staff are suitably vigilant about safety issues; they monitor arrangements regularly and report any potential hazards to the registered provider. Most issues are appropriately addressed, although an unsecured safety gate may pose a risk to children. Children are encouraged to help tidy up, thereby avoiding trips and falls and they are learning to move around carefully, especially when going out of doors.

Children's safety is given careful consideration in matters of child protection. For example, a comprehensive policy statement is in place and staff demonstrate a sound awareness of action they would take in the event of a concern being raised. Children's existing injuries are appropriately discussed with parents and recorded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's care arrangements are suitably met as a result of staff being aware of each child's individual requirements and ensuring that all children have sufficient support. All children, whether babies, toddlers or pre-school, enjoy play areas that are well set out to provide an attractive, inviting, accessible play and learning environment. They are gaining a sound sense of routine and learning what is expected of them. Many play purposefully and recognise the need to share, take turns and to have respect and consideration for each other, because staff use positive support strategies such as taking time to talk or listen to the children and encouraging them to work co-operatively with each other.

Birth to Three Matters.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning, for babies and children under three years of age, is satisfactory. Their individual play areas are appropriately set out to provide a warm, interesting and stimulating environment.

Children have sufficient play and learning opportunities that help them make progress across all areas of their development. For example, non-mobile babies are encouraged to communicate through vocal sounds and body language. They enjoy activity gyms, roll-along toys and bright tactile resources that stimulate their interest and encourage exploration. Mobile babies are learning to move around more and they use their senses to explore a range of toys, equipment and natural materials that support all areas of their development. They are beginning to vocalise more and they respond well to adult interaction. Toddlers are also progressing across all areas of their development as a result of appropriate resources and suitable learning opportunities that are available. They are improving their social skills as they begin to

play with each other or take part in large group activities, such as singing nursery rhymes or listening to stories. They move around more confidently and self-select activities that interest them. All children are learning to concentrate and to have pride in their achievements.

Some members of staff have completed Birth to three matters training. Key staff in the baby room have devised a four-monthly programme that links with the four aspects and individual components of the framework; staff working in other areas adequately plan activities and resources in line with children's developmental stages. All children's progress is adequately monitored, using developmental milestones records.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Key staff are suitably qualified and experienced. Their knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals is adequate, although training opportunities are not well used to help staff develop their knowledge and understanding of how young children learn effectively. Children enjoy interesting topics and themes that adequately link to the six areas of learning. They have a suitable mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities to choose from and staff work supportively, encouraging children to be actively involved. Most children are adequately challenged, although some adult-led activities are not sufficiently focused to take account of children's prior learning or attendance patterns and present assessment systems do not consistently ensure all children are appropriately challenged and extended.

Despite this, children are making at least satisfactory progress across all areas of learning and more able children are progressing well. All children are given sufficient time to complete their tasks because staff have devised regular, but flexible, daily routines. Most children are well behaved, as a result of staff providing enthusiasm, encouragement and purposeful praise.

Children are developing confidence and self esteem. For example, they all separate confidently from parents and most are happy to join the rest of the group. Many show increasing levels of independence as they help to tidy up or manage their personal hygiene competently. Most children explore learning opportunities enthusiastically; some sustain self-initiated activities for a considerable period of time, whilst less confident children watch with interest and join in when encouraged by staff or peers. Most children are able to concentrate and sit quietly, for example, during carpet time or story time. All are forming sound relationships with staff and peers. Some enjoy playing co-operatively; older children taking the lead and younger children happy to follow their instructions, whilst others prefer to play independently. Most children behave very well and have a sound awareness of routines. Some use speech and body language well to communicate their feelings. Some persevere with more difficult tasks and demonstrate pride in their own achievements. Children are gaining a suitable sense of community and more able children readily talk about personal experiences, such as having a family photograph taken.

Children are developing good language and communication skills. Many chat enthusiastically, with staff and peers, about things that interest them. More able

children talk descriptively, sometimes using complex vocabulary. Most enjoy stories and listen attentively, more able children passing comment or asking questions, whilst younger children listen and enjoy looking at the illustrations. Children are learning to link sounds to letters through suitable use of repetitive songs and rhymes that reinforce phonic sounds and by staff reinforcing the initial sounds of children's names. Most children can recognise their names as they select and use their name cards for registration. Many are developing good hand eye co-ordination and some are beginning to form a variety of recognisable letter shapes.

Children are beginning to develop an interest in numbers and counting, but their mathematical skills are hampered by the limited number of resources and well-planned opportunities available to them. Some can count competently to ten, or beyond, although they do not generally use numbers spontaneously during self-initiated play. They are developing a sound understanding of shape, space and measure. For example, some are able to successfully identify shapes such as circles, squares and stars, whilst others correctly use positional language or words relating to size. Children have limited opportunities to develop calculating skills, for example, by comparing number groups and identifying whether they are the same.

Children enjoy exploring their environment and using their senses. For example, some enjoy the water trough, others enjoy creative activities or listening to stories and all enjoy tasting foodstuffs at lunch time. Some children demonstrate an interest in why things happen and how things work, such as pouring water and watching it run from one container to another or watching glue trickle from a spreader onto the paper. Children have regular opportunities to select and use tools and equipment such as pencils, glue, collage materials and junk modelling. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop an interest in information and communication technology because resources are very limited and there are insufficient planned learning opportunities available. Children are developing a sound sense of routine and some talk about past or future events that interest them. They are beginning to develop an interest in the world in which they live. For example, good use is made of the weather chart to help children learn. As a result, they can identify when it is raining, cloudy and cold. More able children look outside and comment that the trees are dancing in the wind. Children are gaining an awareness of different cultures and beliefs through suitable learning opportunities linked to various festivals or celebrations, such as Chinese New Year or Christmas. They also see positive images on posters and in books.

Children are developing suitable physical skills and many demonstrate a sound sense of movement and space. For example, they move around confidently, indoors and out, managing their body movements well. More able children manoeuvre around each other competently whilst walking, running, or when using large equipment and ride-on toys. Children are gaining an awareness of their health and bodily needs and most manage personal hygiene practices competently, with little or no adult help. Children are learning to use equipment appropriately, such as using push or pulling movements when playing with cars in small world area or when using outdoor toys. All are learning to use a range of tools and materials with increasing skill and control. For example, they use pencils, pens, paintbrushes, glue spreaders, water toys and equipment successfully and some children demonstrate improving control as they successfully trace around a variety of shapes.

Children are learning to identify range of colours and some use colour names spontaneously when talking to staff or each other. They are beginning to explore what happens when they mix colours, for example, during painting activities when colours run together. They are developing an appreciation for music as a result of suitable regular opportunities that are included in daily routines. For example, most thoroughly enjoy singing songs and action rhymes, some joining in enthusiastically whilst others watch interestedly and sometimes perform the actions. Children are gaining appropriate imaginative skills. Some particularly enjoy playing mums and babies in the home corner and spontaneously imitate practices they have seen adults use, such as placing a blanket over the baby and patting him whilst encouraging him to go to sleep. Children demonstrate sensory interest in what they experience, such as water play, story time, songs and rhymes or art and craft activities. Most use appropriate body language, as well as speech, to effectively communicate their thoughts and feelings.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are suitably valued as individuals and treated with equal respect and consideration because staff fully discuss children's individual needs, including any special needs, with parents at the initial visit; relevant issues are appropriately recorded on the child's personal record and observed. There are no children who have special needs attending, at present, but staff have suitable plans and procedures in place to work closely with parents or other professionals, if required. Children who speak English as an additional language are appropriately included and supported as a result of staff discussing children's key words, and using positive body language and clear speech when communicating with them. All children are developing confidence and independence because staff are sufficiently aware of gender issues, and ensure toys and resources are accessible and include a range of non-gender-stereotypical activities. Children have adequate opportunities to learn about other cultures, religions and the wider world through suitably planned activities linked to religious festivals, and by accessing appropriate resources that promote equality of opportunity and diversity. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately fostered.

Children have sufficient opportunities to contribute towards the group. For example, they have suitable opportunities to talk together during small or large group activities, they are encouraged to share the responsibility of tidying up and they have appropriate opportunities to talk about things they enjoy doing or other significant events that interest them.

Children generally behave well as a result of most staff having suitable expectations for children's behaviour and positively reinforcing appropriate boundaries. Children are learning to accept responsibility for their own actions. For example, if they demonstrate negative or challenging behaviour staff generally discuss issues with them using appropriate language that the child understands, such as encouraging children to sit still and wait until it is their turn, during circle time. Most staff use purposeful praise and encouragement. They also use stickers as a means of

rewarding the children for behaving appropriately.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children's care arrangements and routines are appropriately communicated using an informative leaflet, as well as formal contracts, written agreements and consents, in line with the National Standards. Children's learning is adequately communicated to parents and they are suitably encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning at home. Children's progress is generally monitored and adequately shared with parents using their individual files. Their day to day progress is discussed informally with parents when they arrive to drop off or collect their child and recorded appropriately in their daily record. Comments received from parents are very positive; praising staff and management highly, confirming that parents are very happy with the quality of care provided and that they feel their children are making good progress, whilst enjoying coming to nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's welfare, care and learning is successfully met as a result of suitable organisation, leadership and management of children's education. For example, children are closely supervised and supported because the manager monitors day-to-day arrangements to ensure there are sufficient staff on duty and that they are suitably deployed to meet children's needs. Child care practices are clearly identified using a broad range of comprehensive policy and procedure statements that are appropriately implemented in the setting. As a result, children are suitably supported and most appear to be happy and settled within the group. Most are gaining the confidence to initiate and extend their own play and learning because systems and day-to-day arrangements contribute appropriately to their continuity of care. Children's personal records, and other associated documentation, are adequately maintained in line with the requirements of the National Standards.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. For example, comprehensive recruitment procedures ensure staff are appropriately qualified, vetted and experienced for their roles and that new staff are suitably inducted into the nursery. Staff support systems are currently being developed, as management are introducing a new supervision and appraisal system and they are improving opportunities for staff to attend relevant training. There has been a significant turnover of staff since the last inspection. However, staff and management continue to demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to their work. They are able to identify the team's strengths and areas for development. All show a strong commitment to monitoring and improving practices within the nursery.

Overall, the nursery meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last inspection, several recommendations and key issues were identified as areas for improvement.

Children's outdoor equipment and role play resources have been purchased, thereby improving play and learning opportunities in these areas.

Children are appropriately supported at meal times because staff sit with them and are attentive to their needs. Older children are sometimes encouraged to serve themselves, within the constraints of safety. They are also encouraged to help staff with setting the tables or clearing away.

Children's individual needs are appropriately met because staff are continuing to develop their knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities, particularly with regard to the inclusion of children who speak English as an additional language. They have identified equal opportunities as a training need for the coming year.

Children's care arrangements and participation in activities is recorded onto daily evaluation sheets, which are appropriately shared with parents. Children's progress is adequately monitored, using developmental records for babies and toddlers and using Flying Start assessments for pre-school children.

Children's funded nursery education is adequately planned and assessed because new staff have familiarised themselves with current nursery practices. They are continuing to develop systems and have identified planning and assessments as a training need for the coming year.

Children have regular opportunities to sing songs and finger rhymes that help them to learn mathematical skills. However, effective mathematical opportunities and resources are still very limited.

Children are learning to investigate, explore, and develop their knowledge and understanding of natural and living things as they have regular visits to the park or nearby woods. They still have limited opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology, although staff have purchased some computer programs and are currently developing activity plans in order to make the computer accessible to children.

Complaints since the last inspection

In February 2005 Ofsted received a complaint relating to staff conduct, staffing ratios and deployment. Issues were appropriately investigated and the provider remains qualified for 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 quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- ensure the unsecured safety gate does not pose a risk to children
- continue to develop staff knowledge, skills and practices, so learning for all children under 3 years of age can be improved; for example by using the Birth to three matters framework
- improve opportunities for staff to maintain their professional development, for example, through good training opportunities and effective staff supervision and appraisal systems.

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):

- continue to develop staff knowledge, skills and practices so the educational provision can be improved to ensure pre-school children receive a broad based curriculum effectively linked to the early learning goals
- develop planning and assessment systems and ensure activities are sufficiently focused, so all children are sufficiently challenged and extended. Use evaluations of focused activities effectively to monitor children's progress and to inform future planning
- improve opportunities for children to develop mathematical skills and to develop an interest in information and communication technology, for example, by using a suitable range of resources and accessing well planned learning activities.

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