



The Cherries Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY278288
Inspection date	16 January 2007
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	Cherry Tree County Primary School, Holt Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO2 0BG
Telephone number	01206 545671
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Registered person	Catherine House
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Cherries Nursery is privately owned and is one of three provisions run by the same owner. It opened in 2003 and operates from a demountable classroom within the grounds of Cherry Tree County Primary School situated on the outskirts of Colchester. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area and also make use of the school playgrounds and the school hall for additional physical play. A maximum of 22 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week during school term times. Session times are from 08:45 until 11:45. The facility is also available for the nursery to open in the afternoons.

There are currently 18 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs three staff, of whom two of the staff, including the team leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. Staff from the sister provisions provide cover in the event of staff sickness or holidays. The setting receives support from the local authority, Essex Day Nurseries' Association (EDNA), Springlands Cluster Group and Greenshoots.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a healthy snack menu. They eat a variety of different fresh fruit each day and help staff prepare the snack by peeling small oranges or chopping apples and bananas. While the children are busy with this task they discuss food that is good for you. They know where milk comes from and talk about how and where fruit grows. Snack time is a social occasion and children sit in a small group with staff. Independence skills are encouraged and children pour their own drinks and wash up their drinking glasses. Drinking water is readily accessible throughout each session and children help themselves when they are thirsty. Information is gathered from parents so that staff are fully aware of any allergies or special dietary requirements.

Children stay healthy because they learn about the importance of good hygiene within the daily routine. They know about the need to wash their hands after playing outside, before eating and after using the toilet. Staff talk to the children about washing the germs from their hands. Children are protected from the risk of cross-infection because there are well established routines for cleaning tables and damp-dusting equipment. There are satisfactory arrangements in place regarding nappy changing. Clearly written procedures cover the care of children who are unwell and include exclusion periods for communicable illnesses and diseases. Staff hold current first aid certificates so that they can deal with minor injuries and they record any accidents or when medication is administered. The accident and medication books have been updated to allow staff to keep legible copies. The nursery holds consent to provide medical treatment for the children. However, the staff may not always be able to act in all emergency situations, as they have not yet requested written parental permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment from medical sources outside the nursery.

Children have daily opportunities for exercise and fresh air, which contributes to their good health. The outdoor area is used in all weathers, throughout the year. Children dress appropriately during the winter months and independently put on their own coats and attempt to do up buttons and zips. They practise ball skills and throw and catch with increasing confidence. They learn to carefully balance on stepping stones and stilts. Children visit the school playground where they have the space to run freely, playing racing and chasing games. The school adventure playground encourages children to climb and balance on larger physical play apparatus.

Children have the opportunity to rest according to their needs. An area of the classroom has been organised for quieter play, where children can relax on comfortable cushions and look at a book.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe, stimulating, child-centred environment. The nursery classroom is attractively decorated with posters and examples of the children's artwork. There is an exceptional range of play materials and resources stored at the children's level so that they can easily make choices and take decisions about their play. Equipment is checked frequently for damage and cleanliness. Toys are changed regularly to provide added interest and stimulation. Resources are shared between the sister provisions and staff hold an inventory of the play equipment held at the main nursery.

Children's safety is given careful consideration. The staff are extremely vigilant about the security of the children. Both the classroom door and the gate to the outdoor area are kept securely locked to prevent unauthorised access by visitors and the children exiting unnoticed. Risk assessment is routinely undertaken and the staff also check the premises while preparing for the children's arrival each day. The management of the nursery are fully aware of the problem regarding the uneven paving slabs in the outdoor area and there is an action plan to have this issue resolved. However, potentially children's safety is compromised because in the classroom there is a shelf sited at a height where the children can bump their heads and the roller towel has an easily accessible long loop.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe. Fire drills are practised each term so that they understand the emergency evacuation procedures. Children help to pick up tripping hazards and very carefully carry their drinking glasses to the sink to wash up. Staff remind children to take care as they play and not to rush around or put small objects in their mouths. Children are supervised as they use scissors to cut paper and knives to chop apples and they adeptly learn to use these tools in safety.

Children are safeguarded because the staff are all made aware of the nursery's comprehensive child protection procedures. The staff attend safeguarding training and have access to the Local Safeguarding Children Board's new lilac child protection guidelines. Therefore, staff are aware of current information regarding child protection which ensures that they act in the best interests of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and become involved in a good range of activities that cover all areas of development. They develop confidence and self-esteem when praised and encouraged by the staff for their efforts. For example, when they persevere and complete a jigsaw puzzle or when they demonstrate good manners. Children of all ages particularly enjoy fun activities where there is no desired end result. They spent time playing with and watching melting ice or hunt for conkers in the sawdust.

Children develop their self assurance as they work and play purposefully either alone or with others. The staff are flexible and allow the use of unexpected and unforeseen experiences for children's learning as they arise. Interaction between the staff and children is good. Carefully

formed questions encourage the children to think and give interesting answers. Staff are effectively implementing the 'Birth to three matters' framework into their weekly plans to further develop and assess children's progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how young children learn. All areas of learning are covered within the planning and activities are stimulating and help to inspire children to learn. The planning system has recently been reviewed and changed to be more in tune with the children's needs and abilities. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points and capabilities. Staff find out about each child right from the start by observing them as they play. They rigorously chart their progress and achievements. Comprehensive assessment and evaluation of activities enable staff to inform future planning and prepare the next steps in learning. Sessions are well-paced and staff spent their time working directly with the children. A healthy balance of adult-led and child-selected play is offered to ensure that children learn new skills. Activities are adapted to support or challenge the individual child. The classroom is organised into four areas so that children can play purposefully and concentrate on a good variety of first-hand experiences. Good use is made of the outdoor area to extend children's learning.

Children are starting to communicate confidently. They talk to staff about their interests and current events at home. They are developing a love of stories and enjoy anticipating what is going to happen next in the book about a bear hunt. Children easily recognise their name and there are many labels of familiar words within the environment that children understand. Staff provide them with many opportunities to mark-make and practise their emergent writing through everyday fun activities. Children attempt to write their name and carefully form letters.

Children are starting to recognise numbers and count. They match and sort items according to shape, size and colour and staff revisit tasks and consolidate children's learning through extended games. For example, children play bingo with the small bears and they sort construction bricks as they build towers. They weigh and measure items or count out money in the post office and talk about capacity and volume as they pour their drinks.

Children are developing a keen knowledge and understanding of the world. Their investigative and exploratory skills are used well and they are fascinated by observing scientific changes. They talk animatedly about what they see and what is happening. For example, children are engrossed when mixing poster paint with water and observe what happens when blue is mixed with yellow. Children are enthralled when staff show them what happens when vinegar is mixed with bicarbonate of soda. They have very good opportunities to learn about technology as they use the computer or play with programmable toys. Children learn about the natural world as they hunt for leaves and twigs outdoors and then create a collage of the items they have found.

Children play imaginatively in the themed role play area. They act out scenarios such as visiting the post office. Children enjoy writing and posting letters and they put thought into how to fold the paper to fit into the envelope. Outdoors children draw a magic carpet with chalk and use their imagination as they go on adventures to the woods. Staff provide a wide range of art

and craft materials for children to design and create highly individual pictures and models. Children practise their hand-eye coordination as they use tools to manipulate dough or clay or carefully thread beads onto cords.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging in the nursery because staff effectively ensure that their individual needs are met. There are effective settling in procedures to enable children to feel at ease and separate from their main carer with increasing confidence. Most children enter the nursery cheerfully and immediately find an activity that interests them. There are opportunities during the year for children to join in activities with the Foundation Stage class within the school. This increases confidence and helps the smooth transition as children progress into the reception year. Strong systems are in place to support children with additional needs. Staff work closely with parents and professionals to ensure that children participate fully and thrive in the setting. Visual prompts and additional resources are provided to develop language skills and support children who speak English as an additional language.

Children understand the need for responsible behaviour. The staff take a calm approach and use respectful language when talking to the children. As a result the children learn about politeness and social skills such as sharing and remembering to say please and thank you. Children are starting to settle and work through minor disagreements on their own. They behave well and listen attentively when staff need to gain their attention.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children play harmoniously together and are learning to respect and take care of each other. They learn simple sign language; a new sign is introduced each week and at snack time children sign words such as milk to convey what they wish to drink. Children learn about the wider world through playing with resources or looking at books that show positive images of diversity. Traditional and community events are celebrated and activities are planned to link with cultural festivals from around the world.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The relationship between staff and parents is friendly and informative. A wealth of written information is displayed for parents to view and there is effective dialogue with parents at the start and end of each session. Parents are invited into the nursery so that they can see their child enjoy the focussed activity at the end of each session. Although staff are working hard to develop the channels of communication with parents, there is not yet a system that encourages parents and carers to become more involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways. The nursery is well aware of the need to keep a record of complaints that can be shared with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the support of a caring staff team and adult-to-child ratios are effectively maintained. Sessions run smoothly. There are very effective contingency arrangements to cover

holidays and staff sickness. Qualified and experienced staff from the sister nurseries are able to seamlessly step in and help. Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable in childcare and clearly put the needs of all children first. Recruitment and vetting procedures are rigorous and robust to ensure that children are well protected. All staff have been checked and cleared through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). Staff training needs are effectively assessed and all staff have access to ongoing training and development courses. Group size and the deployment of staff during the session contributes positively to children's care learning and play. Space and resources are organised to provide a stimulating environment where children learn effectively through play.

All the essential documentation required for the efficient management of the nursery is available. Comprehensive policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The owner and the new team leader of the nursery have a clear understanding of nursery education and are focussed on the development and achievement of all children. The owner sets clear actions leading to improvements in the organisation of nursery education and the outcomes for children. Staff are well motivated and the leader acts as a good role model and is building a committed team. Staff are involved in appraisals and staff meetings and have excellent opportunities for their own professional development through further training. The nursery is part of a group that holds the Investors in People and also recognised safety and healthy eating awards.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to develop the learning opportunities in the outdoor area in order to fully utilise the outdoor classroom. The provider has purchased a shed with a variety of outdoor physical apparatus such as ride on toys and smaller equipment, for example, balls, bats and hoops. There is also an action plan to improve this area further. The nursery is a member of 'Learning through landscapes' and they have a portfolio of imaginative ideas they wish to progress. Staff have also attended training relating to outdoor creative play and encourage children to play imaginatively and creatively outdoors. As a result children's learning in the outdoor area has been enhanced following the last inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- request written parental permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment
- assess the risks to children in relation to the shelf at child height in the classroom and the roller towel in the toilet area and take action to minimise these.

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):

- further develop the partnership with parents to encourage them to become more involved with their child's learning in meaningful ways.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk