

# The Chestnut Trees Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 133721  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 24 May 2007   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Rosemary Davies   |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Highworth Road, Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 8BL |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01793 782 550   |
| <b>E-mail</b>                  |   |
| <b>Registered person</b>       | Chestnut Trees Pre-School                               |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated  |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](http://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 Chestnut Trees Pre-school first opened in 1970. It is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents whose children attend the pre-school. It operates from the Viscountess Barrington Memorial Hall in the village of Shrivenham, on the Oxfordshire and Wiltshire border. Children use two rooms for play activities, together with a secure outdoor area. There is regular use of the adjacent main hall and playing fields.

Children come from the village of Shrivenham and other rural villages and hamlets nearby.

The pre-school opens for five week days during school terms. Sessions run from 09.00 to 12.00 with an optional lunch club for older children, which ends at 13.00. There are 33 children from two to under five years, on roll. Of these, 25 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school employs a total of nine part time staff, of whom one is qualified to Level 3. Three staff are in the process of completing their Level 3 training. Regular support is received from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's good health and physical well-being is promoted very well in this pre-school. Children use clean playrooms, cleaned effectively by staff, whilst 'parent helpers', maintain good kitchen hygiene. They do this through following clear written instructions. Parents and carers receive good guidance about when their children must not attend the pre-school, owing to illness. Children learn the basics of good hygiene, with older children washing their hands without prompting, after using the toilet. All these measures help prevent the spread of cross-infection well.

Children learn how to keep healthy in hot weather, wearing sunhats outside and drinking extra water. Staff set good examples by doing the same. Children eat healthy snacks and packed lunches. They tuck in eagerly to a variety of fresh fruit and staff encourage them to try new tastes and less familiar fruits. Older children bring packed lunches when staying for 'lunch club'. Perishable lunch items are not stored according to stipulated procedures, so placing children's health at risk. Staff sit with children to help them learn about which foods are good for them. Older children are well aware that too many sweets, 'make your teeth go bad'.

Children go outside daily for fresh air. Commendable emphasis is placed on physical exercise and acquiring new physical skills. Children begin to control their bodies well, walking backwards confidently and learning to march, for example.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe and secure environment. Staff understand the principles of risk assessment. They identify and minimise potential hazards to children's safety, well. Children are not allowed in the kitchen, for example, and parents are reminded not to send in nuts or cherries for snack owing to possible allergies and dangers of choking. Staff are very aware that the hall building is used by members of the public. They are careful to ensure that visitors cannot enter unchallenged. They supervise children closely at all times, including when outside and accompany them to the cloakrooms. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children, updating their training regularly.

Staff prepare the playrooms efficiently, ready for the children's arrival. They make full use of the accommodation, organising the space into different areas for learning. The playrooms look very inviting, offering a wealth of good quality resources and colourful displays of children's work, all at child height. Children use the outdoor area regularly.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

All children enter the playrooms eagerly, looking to see what is on offer for the session and quickly deciding what they wish to do. They settle happily to purposeful play within minutes becoming absorbed in a wide variety of worthwhile, practical activities. Even the youngest children concentrate for considerable periods because they so enjoy what they do. The activities are carefully planned by knowledgeable staff. They understand child development and make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. All children gain new skills quickly through

experimenting to make sense of the world around them. Two year olds learn how to use paint-blocks, for example, cleaning their brushes in water carefully before using new colours, with gentle guidance from staff. Older children learn new games, which test their memories and ability to take turns. Staff support children extremely well, including those with learning difficulties, so that all progress quickly.

Staff meet children's welfare needs appropriately, providing fresh air and exercise, quieter times and appropriate nutrition. Children do not make their own decisions about when they are hungry and need to eat. Some children become restless whilst queuing for hand-washing or waiting for snack. They play indoors or outside, as they wish.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make quick progress towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. This is because staff have a thorough understanding of it and plan a wide range of stimulating experiences that capture children's attention, motivating them to learn. Activities cover all areas of learning effectively. Staff plan an extremely good range of adult-led activities, although on some days there is a tendency to provide too many whole-group activities with insufficient time for children to choose their own activities. Nevertheless, such activities teach valuable new skills. Children learn to form letters of their names, for example, practising carefully in the 'light' box. They use these new skills for real purposes, such as signing their paintings. Staff question children effectively, challenging them to think about what they do. Children receive much individual support and this too helps them learn new things quickly.

Staff successfully weave all six areas of learning into topic work. Children use a wide range of media and techniques in their creative work. They make snakes as part of the, 'Down in the jungle' theme. They decide how to decorate these and name 'triangle' decorations as well as counting them accurately, showing their ability to use early mathematical language in their play. They hear stories about the jungle and respond by creating 'jungle' pictures for themselves, carefully making leaf stencils and drawing 'Tarzan' figures. They use a wide range of tools as they work, which develops their hand dexterity well. Outdoor learning is not fully extended and is not included in topic work.

Relationships are excellent throughout the pre-school. Staff clearly enjoy the children's company, whilst children readily approach staff for support and comfort if needed. Children chat eagerly with staff about their activities, discussing what they think it is like in a jungle, for example, and the animals they might see there. Staff observe children regularly and assess them accurately. They use the information gained to plan the next steps for children's learning so that their learning is progressive.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

This pre-school offers a warm welcome to all children. Children are treated as individuals. Differences are recognised and children's varying needs accommodated exceptionally well. Staff work extremely closely with parents and outside professionals to provide appropriately for children who have additional needs. Children learn about families that are different from their own, through staff highlighting and celebrating the different backgrounds of all who work and play in the pre-school.

Children's behaviour is excellent. They understand how sessions run and know what is expected from them, as staff give extremely clear directions and explanations. Most of all, however, children are far too busily engaged in their play to behave in inappropriate ways. Staff are very patient with younger children and those whose behaviour is more challenging, gently encouraging them to join in appropriately or encouraging them to do a separate activity when being part of a large group is beyond them. Children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are regularly involved in the setting in a multitude of ways, with many expressing their enjoyment of helping on the 'parent rota'. An excellent range of information is provided about the setting in the form of written policies, a prospectus and regular, highly detailed newsletters. Staff are readily available to speak with parents and carers about children's progress in learning and development. This is supplemented by a written diary system, which works extremely effectively between parents and key workers. Parents speak appreciatively about the termly parents' evenings and all that the staff do for their children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The senior management team work together closely and effectively. All are clear about their respective roles. Robust systems are in place to appoint suitable persons to work with the children. Emphasis is placed on appointing qualified staff or people willing to train. There is a clear expectation that training will continue and the pre-school supports staff well in gaining qualifications. Children benefit, therefore, from being looked after by staff who are knowledgeable about the various guidance documents. Staff take a caring, positive and enthusiastic approach to their work and it is evident that they take a pride in working in this pre-school.

Strong support is given by the committee, which plays a valuable role, not only in supporting the staff, but also in fundraising activities. Children play with a multitude of good quality resources and have a secure outside play area, as a result. All legally required documentation is in place and ready for inspection. The committee oversees the regular updating of policies. Procedures in the 'Food and Drink' policy are not followed fully. Policies underpin the smooth and efficient running of the pre-school. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Nursery Education**

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The manager provides clear leadership to the staff team. The staff team works together effectively to provide a suitable daily learning environment. They work hard to overcome many of the difficulties of shared accommodation. They organise sessions well for the most part, although sometimes children's time is wasted as they queue to wash their hands and wait for everyone to be ready before starting to eat. Staff deployment is good and all activities are covered effectively. Staff seek, take and act on advice from outside professionals to provide appropriately for the children. They meet weekly to discuss and evaluate what is offered. The pre-school's strengths and weaknesses are identified through effective use of self-evaluation, which includes seeking the views of parents and carers. There is a clear commitment to improving the quality of provision for the children.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the last inspection for care, the pre-school was required to address three recommendations relating to emergency care and the procedures relating to complaints and allegations of abuse. All three issues have been addressed successfully, with the result that children are better safeguarded.

Following the last inspection for nursery education, there were three key issues to be addressed, relating to the planning and organisation of activities and to the provision for children's learning in music. All three issues have been addressed successfully, with the result that the quality of children's learning has improved.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the 1 April 2004 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):

- ensure stipulated procedures are followed with regard to storing children's packed lunches
- re-consider the balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and the organisation of snack time (also applies to Nursery Education)

#### **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):

- provide a clear focus for learning in at least one outdoor activity each day.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)