

The inspection of educational provision for children before compulsory school age

Nursery report on: Chuckles Nursery

Registered Nursery Education Inspector: Mary Dyas

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Contract number: T/130/08N

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Report on the inspection of nursery settings in the non-maintained sector

Name of nursery: Chuckles Nursery

Address: Pentwyn House

Post code: Pentwyn Lane
Bettws
Newport
NP20 7AE

Telephone: 01633 852373

Person responsible for day-to-day management: Amy Baugh

Position Manager

About the inspection

This inspection took place as part of a national programme of inspections of the educational provision for children before compulsory school age in Wales. It was commissioned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that providers can improve the quality of education offered and help children achieve their full potential. Another purpose is to inform parents and the public about the quality of nursery education. A copy of the inspection report must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the nursery and should be available on request to other people.

Inspectors have used a five point scale to record all judgements. Grade definitions are:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

1.0 Context of the setting

Context of the nursery setting

Chuckles Nursery is a privately owned nursery which opened in November 1999 in the house and grounds of a former public house. The owner of the nursery is also the director and is responsible for the strategic running of the nursery. The day to day management is carried out by the nursery manager. The nursery is open for 52 weeks a year from 6am to 6pm, closes only on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day and is registered for up to 53 children. In the pre-school group there are currently 35 children on roll of which 22 are three year olds and 16 are 4 year olds. Ten three year olds and eleven four year olds are in receipt of funded educational provision.

The nursery also runs a Flying Start nursery within a local primary school for two to three year olds and a holiday club for children between five and eight years. The pre-school group takes children who come for private nursery care alongside children who attend an eight place state nursery session either in the morning or afternoon during school terms.

Children attending Chuckles come from the local area while others travel considerable distances to be near their parent and carers' place of work. They come from a mixed range of socio-economic backgrounds with 95% of the pre-school group speaking English as their main home language. There are currently no children with additional learning needs but appropriate policies and procedures are in place for their welcome and inclusion.

The nursery occupies a large building and the pre-school group has sole use of two rooms upstairs with free access to purpose built toilets and a hatch to the nursery kitchen. Downstairs is a large 'messy' room used by the whole nursery which opens out onto the outdoor play area. These grounds extend over an acre and include a paved area for planned activities and continuous provision linked to indoor activities, a slide, willow arbours and a recent purpose built track for riding and scooting wheeled vehicles.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in July 2008 and by Estyn in April 2003.

2.0 Main findings of the report

2.1 The overall quality and standards of educational provision and whether or not the provision successfully promotes the goals for children's learning

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase Outcomes for children's learning.

2.2 Standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Six areas of learning	Grade for under-fives
Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity	2
Language, literacy and communication skills	2
Mathematical development	2
Welsh language development	2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	2
Physical development	2
Creative development	2

2.3 Inspection judgement on the quality of education provided by the setting

Quality of education	Grade for under-fives
Quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
Quality of planning for children's learning	1
Quality of teaching	2
Quality of assessment and recording of children's progress, and reports for parents and carers	2
Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community	1
The contribution made by the setting to children's well-being	2
Quality of the leadership and management of the setting	1
The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report	2

3.0 The standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Standards achieved by 3-4 year-olds

3.1 Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity

Children's standards in personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

Relationships in the pre-school group are good. Most children relate well to one another and they play together in a positive fashion. Most also understand the need for, and practice, sharing and taking turns and are developing an understanding of the need to treat everyone with respect regardless of gender or culture. All children are confident within the setting both indoors and outside. Most are eager to take their turn at new experiences which they approach with interest and eagerness.

Many children are already quite independent. They are able to use the toilet and to wash and dry their hands themselves and are developing appropriately their skills of using scissors and glue independently and putting on and taking off their outdoor clothes.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

3.2 Language, literacy and communication skills

Children's standards in language, literacy and communication skills are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

All children are able to make themselves understood and to express preferences. Most children respond positively to questions and instructions and many speak very clearly, explain events in great detail, listen to one another, respond appropriately and are happy to talk to visitors. At circle time they understand that they must only speak when they are holding Sally the teddy and most try to say something and listen to what others have to tell.

All children in the group sit and listen attentively to a story and most join in with repetition and predict what will happen next. Most recognise and join in with familiar songs and rhymes. Many children enjoy quiet moments with books in the book corner. All children are learning to recognise their written name when they self-register and a few older children are able to write their own name on their pieces of work.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

3.3 Mathematical development

Children's standards in mathematical development are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

Many children use mathematical language in the course of their play and talk about more, big, bigger, heavy and light. All children join in counting together to ten and follow a number line on the wall. A majority of the older children are able to count independently to ten and are also beginning to recognise and name numbers to ten on the number line. Many of these children are able to restore numbers to their right position from a jumbled line. Most four-year-olds and older three-year-olds can identify up to three objects reliably without counting and many are able to count objects accurately to at least five.

All children join in with simple number songs and rhymes and are able to hold up the correct number of fingers as they sing.

Most children recognise simple two dimensional shapes and can identify them in objects they play with. Around half are able to identify two or three different three dimensional shapes with confidence.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

3.4 Welsh language development

Children's standards in Welsh language development are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The children know and join in with singing and reciting a number of Welsh songs. They all show enjoyment of their Welsh sessions and join in with reading books about doli, bwni and tedi. They are learning the names of colours and sometimes use these in conversation as they play. They count together in Welsh to ten and when asked many are able to do this independently. Children respond appropriately to simple Welsh greetings and commands.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

3.5 Knowledge and understanding of the world

Children's standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

Most children are confident in the setting and eagerly explore new activities and situations both indoors and outdoors.

The children spend a large part of the day outdoors and through this they are developing at first hand an understanding of the changing seasons and, in particular, the changing weather. The understanding of many of the children of the passing of time is developing well through their familiarity with the daily routines of the nursery and their discussions about the things they have done at home and will be doing in the future.

Most children demonstrate an understanding of the senses. They know that we see with our eyes, hear with our ears and smell with our noses.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

3.6 Physical development

Children's standards in physical development are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

Most children enjoy large physical activity and are developing appropriate control of their bodies when bending, stretching, climbing and jumping and are able to follow instructions to move in different ways and in different directions. Children enjoy playing games together and follow simple rules to play 'frogs and ducks' with the parachute.

Most children use small tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and pastry cutters with a good degree of control and accuracy.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

3.7 Creative development

Children's standards in creative development are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

All children play a range of untuned percussion instruments with enthusiasm and are able to respond to commands to stop and start and to play loudly or quietly with increasing levels of control. The children know a variety of songs and they sing them with confidence.

There is a good selection of children's colourful work on display on the walls showing examples of painting, printing, cutting and sticking.

Children play imaginatively in the role play area and with small world settings both together and independently taking on different roles and giving life to dolls and play figures

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

4.0 The quality of educational provision

The quality of educational provision for 3-4 year-olds

4.1 The quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The nursery has very clear aims regarding values and principles that are supported by clear policies which layout the behaviour and attitudes expected from it's practitioners.

Practitioners provide many exciting opportunities to promote respect for a diversity of beliefs and social and cultural traditions. Children are given opportunities to taste different foods, to dress up and to make items relating to the topics they are learning about. The setting has celebrated a wide range of festivals including Divali, Chinese New Year, St George's Day, St Patrick's Day and St Andrew's Day in addition to the traditional Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter.

The policies and routines of the group successfully promote positive behaviour. Practitioners are good role models and support the children through the use of praise. Children work and play well together. Day to day activities promote equality of opportunity and respect for each child as an individual.

Children are introduced to the Welsh language through daily use of basic greetings, commands and phrases and the introduction of simple Welsh language books. St David's Day is well used to introduce the children to some of the culture and traditions of Wales.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

4.2 The quality of planning for children's learning

The quality of planning for children's learning is good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

Medium term plans take into account children's ideas and suggestions. Any new interests and ideas are quickly incorporated into short term plans.

Evaluations of teaching and learning are focussed and concise and clearly identify the next steps for children's learning.

Good features

Planning follows practice recommended by the local authority and is centred on topics following the children's interests and suggestions and covers the seven areas of learning of the Foundation Phase. Plans clearly identify learning intentions and activities for the outdoor area. Staff discuss together the medium term plans and then each week share any ideas for the following week. These are then collated with identified learning intentions and specific focus activities.

Irrespective of background, gender, needs or ability the children have equal access and opportunity to learn and achieve

Shortcomings

No shortcomings were identified.

4.3 The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The pre-school team has had some recent changes and is currently overseen by the nursery manager who holds a level 4 qualification in Early Years Care and Education. The pre-school team leader holds a level 3 qualification in Children's Care, Learning and Development and the other members of the team are suitably qualified. In addition the group enjoys support from a qualified teacher from a local primary school.

New members of the pre-school team are gaining knowledge about the areas of learning of the Foundation Phase and support the children in their learning with praise and appropriate intervention. All make use of open questioning to challenge and develop children's thinking and to reinforce their learning. They have a good knowledge of the needs of individual children and direct their teaching and questioning to suit individual needs and personalities.

The group is well resourced to fulfil the needs of the Foundation Phase and good use is made of the indoor and outdoor spaces.

Shortcomings

While there are no important shortcomings sometimes the organisation of sessions means that children do not always have enough time to see through an activity in which they are involved.

4.4 The quality of assessment and recording of children's progress and reports to parents and carers

The quality of assessment and recording of children's progress and reports to parents and carers is good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

On entry to the group children are assessed using both the baseline assessment and a language screening assessment required by the local authority. Each week three skills are identified and every child's progress assessed during focused tasks in order to identify skills which need reinforcing.

Each child in the pre-school group has an individual record book which records development and progress in the seven areas of learning of the Foundation Phase using skills lists and observation notes. These books are copied each term and sent home to parents and carers. While there is no specific identification of the next steps for each child parents and carers would be aware of skills still to be achieved. Parents meetings are also arranged every term

When children leave to move on to primary school assessment books are passed on to parents and carers together with a written report which notes the next steps in their child's learning.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

4.5 The quality of relationships with parents, carers and the community

The quality of relationships with parents and the community is good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

Parents and carers of children in the pre-school group are well informed about the learning experiences provided for the children. Monthly information sheets give a general idea of what will be happening in the group, the main learning skills to be highlighted, ideas for things they can do with their children at home and the rhymes and songs to be linked with the topic. Weekly plans listing activities under the seven areas of learning are also shared. This information is emailed wherever possible and displayed in the 'messy' room for parents who are not able to receive information via a computer.

As part of the local authority's Parents as Learners scheme practitioners have led parent workshops giving them different tasks and activities for them to do with their children.

Good features

Parents report that they are happy with the provision and know where to find information about what the children are learning

Children are taken for walks to the local library and also visit both nearby primary schools. Links with these schools are strong and children from the nursery are invited to attend Christmas plays, Teddy Bears' picnics etc.

Visitors to the group such as the community constable and a Sure Start representative from the health authority help the children to learn more about the world around them and about different types of work. A local authority sports development officer also visits to work with the children on exercise and skill development.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

4.6 The extent to which the setting contributes to children's wellbeing

The extent to which the setting contributes to children's wellbeing is good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The nursery has a comprehensive set of policies in place covering all areas of keeping children safe and these are freely available to all parents, carers and visitors. Procedures are in place to ensure that all new staff have enhanced checks by the Criminal Records Bureau and an induction process ensures that new staff are made aware of policies. The owner is the responsible person for child protection and all staff have been trained in child protection procedures.

Meals and snacks provided for the children are carefully planned to ensure a balanced and healthy diet and children have daily opportunities to take strenuous exercise.

Staff show care and affection for the children and are very supportive of their individual needs. There are few behaviour problems.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

4.7 The quality of the leadership and management of the setting

The quality of the leadership and management of the setting is good with outstanding features.

Good features

The nursery has a strong culture of self-evaluation. This has been achieved through the work necessary for their Investors In People award which was reviewed in June 2008, their newly acquired IIP Leadership and Management award awarded in June 2008 and the Wales Pre-School Playgroup Association's Quality Mark which they gained in March 2007. The owner also produces an annual business plan which includes a SWOT analysis and identifies objectives for the year ahead.

A programme of monthly staff training sessions ensures that all staff in the nursery are kept up to date with information about different areas of caring for children. Staff appraisals are in place and targets are agreed and reviewed. The manager makes termly observations of all practitioners leading activities and interacting with the children. These include points for action where relevant. Children's ideas are sought each term through a questionnaire asking about their favourite areas of play, what they would like to do and what they would like to see displayed: for example following comments from the children that they would like to dress up as princes and princesses the role play corner was changed into a castle.

Very good use is made of the outdoor area to provide a wide range of learning experiences including a sensory area, a den, planting and planned structured activities.

Shortcomings

No important shortcomings were identified.

4.8 The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for inspection identified in the last inspection report

Good progress has been made by the nursery in implementing the key issues for inspection identified in the last inspection report.

5.0 Recommendations

The setting needs to:

Continue to build on the positive start that has been made to introduce children to the Welsh language and culture.

Ensure that the organisation of sessions in the pre-school group enables children to have enough time to follow through their play and investigations.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days, or 45 working days if the plan needs to be translated to or from Welsh, showing how the issues identified above will be addressed. The action plan must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the setting. A copy of the action plan must be sent to the Chair of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership or Children and Young Peoples' Partnership, as appropriate, and to the Local Authority. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.