



ACS Cobham International School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY308298 |
| Inspection date | 02 May 2006 |
| Inspector | Joanne Lindsey Caswell |
| Setting Address | The American Community School, Heywood, Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 1BL |
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| Registered person | ACS International Schools |
| Type of inspection | Childcare |
| Type of care | Sessional care, Out of School 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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

ACS Cobham International School has been registered since 2005. The school serves the educational needs of the American and international community in Surrey and the surrounding area. The school is one of three ACS International schools with other campuses located in Egham and Hillingdon. The school caters for children from the age of 2 to 18 years and offers an international teaching programme. The Early Childhood Village caters for children up to the age of 5. Children aged 2 to 3 years are cared for in the Flopsy Bunnies class and attend for a half day session, from 08:30 to 12:00. A maximum of 20 children, aged from 2 to 3 years, may attend at any one time. However, a maximum of 16 children attend on a daily basis, with

appropriate staffing ratios. Children have access to classrooms and extensive school facilities, both inside and outside.

There are currently 24 children, aged from 2 to 3 years, on roll. The school supports children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of four staff work with the youngest children. Of these, two staff hold teaching qualifications and all staff have access to regular training, including first aid and child protection. Staff training opportunities include overseas training, as well as traditional early years teaching methods, to reflect the international learning programme.

ACS Activity Camps run during school holidays and offer multi-activity camps for children aged 3 to 18 years. Children are cared for in age-appropriate groups and undertake a designated programme of activities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well protected against illness and infection as the premises are very clean, bright and well-ventilated. The school nursing department offers an excellent support system in meeting children's welfare needs. This includes assisting the teaching staff in educating children on the importance of good health. For example, children understand that they must wash their hands thoroughly before eating and after using the toilet. This enables children to independently take care of their own needs and contribute towards their good health. The school nursing department ensure that all children are suitably fit and healthy to be attending school. This prevents the spread of illness and infection and offers professional support to the teaching staff in addressing each child's health and welfare needs.

There are comprehensive policies in place regarding safe and hygienic nappy change routines. Staff maintain a scrupulously clean environment and ensure that the nappy change mat is cleaned thoroughly between changes. All children have their own, clearly-labelled toiletries and nappies. These measures help to protect children against cross-infection.

Children enjoy plenty of physical play and exercise. They benefit from fresh air each day and use an extensive range of apparatus enabling them to move in a variety of ways. For example, children improve their muscle control as they ride bicycles and negotiate wheeled toys around the playground track. Children enjoy crawling through tunnels and into dens made under bushes. They competently negotiate the steps on the climbing frames and enjoy using balancing resources. This encourages children to move in a variety of ways and improves their physical development. Children develop very good co-ordination as they develop skills in throwing and catching balls. They competently handle tools such as writing materials, paintbrushes and threading resources, enabling them to develop dexterity and improve manipulation.

Children's dietary needs are very well met. All staff are extremely aware of each child's dietary requirements and these are considered carefully in the planning of all activities involving food. For example, staff are mindful in respecting children's cultural dietary needs in the organisation of cookery activities. A 'nut free' policy within the school ensures that children's food allergies and intolerances are suitably addressed.

Children enjoy sociable snack times. They access drinking water freely and easily, enabling them to help themselves to drinks when they are thirsty. Staff interact closely with children at snack time and encourage children to develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating. Children enjoy healthy, nutritious snacks, such as fresh fruit, which contributes towards their good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The premises are extremely child-orientated and offer a very secure, bright and welcoming environment. Children access all areas safely and independently, enabling them to play in a safe and secure setting. The extensive outside play areas are fully enclosed and offer a wealth of play activities. Children's security is given high priority and stringent procedures are in place to monitor visitors to the setting and prevent unauthorised personnel from gaining access.

Children play with an excellent selection of high quality play materials and toys. All equipment and furniture are of very good quality and are appropriate for the age range of children using them.

Children have very good opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They clearly understand where they can and cannot play during outside activities and benefit from very close staff supervision. This ensures that children's safety is given optimum priority at all times. Children enjoy visitors to the setting which enable them to develop their understanding of safety. For example, firefighters from Surrey Fire and Rescue Service recently visited and talked to children about fire safety.

Children benefit from comprehensive risk assessments which are carried out on all areas of the premises. This ensures that staff are vigilant in identifying and addressing potential hazards to children. There are meticulous written procedures in place to ensure that all staff are familiar with potential emergency situations. This ensures that all staff implement appropriate policies to keep children safe at all times.

Children are very well protected against harm and abuse as staff have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection. All staff regularly update their knowledge and skills and are very familiar with relevant procedures. The school Child Protection Officer offers support to all staff and ensures that children's welfare is of paramount importance at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and settled within the setting. They develop very positive attitudes towards learning as they enjoy an exciting, stimulating and rich range of play opportunities, both inside and outside. There are extensive opportunities for children to develop their interests and curiosity. For example, children show fascination in observing nature during outside play. Staff utilise all opportunities to develop and extend children's language and communication skills through effective questioning and discussion. This encourages children to increase their vocabulary and use language for reasoning and explanation.

Staff are experienced early years practitioners with an excellent understanding of the Birth to three matters framework. This enables them to plan suitably challenging and developmentally appropriate play opportunities. The curriculum incorporates rich play experiences for children enabling them to develop foundation skills in learning. For example, children develop their independence as they choose their own play materials and label their own art work with their individual photographs. Children develop very good social skills. Staff gently guide children to play co-operatively and to understand the fundamental skills of sharing, turn taking and negotiation. Children begin to form friendships and enjoy the company of their peers. They use their imagination extremely well as they use the role play equipment and initiate their own play and games. The daily routine is very well-planned and incorporates an exciting combination of adult-led activities and child-initiated play. This prepares children well for more formal learning and introduces them to schooling through a highly stimulating, fun and exciting programme of play.

All children's learning is extremely well-planned with clear learning intentions. This enables staff to closely monitor children's progress and tailor activities towards each child's personal learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are treated extremely fairly and their individual needs are clearly made known to staff. Parents provide detailed information on each child's personal needs, ensuring that staff can meet these appropriately in daily practice. Children develop a very strong sense of belonging within the setting as they see many examples of their work and photographs on display. This enables children to feel valued; feel good about themselves and feel recognised as individuals.

Children's cultural and religious needs are very well-respected. Children attending the setting represent a diverse range of social backgrounds. There is excellent support in place for children who speak English as an additional language. This support is extended to the children's families as staff are conscientious in ensuring that all written information is translated, wherever necessary, to ensure all children and their families feel valued and their individual needs are recognised.

There is strong provision in place for children with special needs. Staff utilise all support available within the main school to meet children's individual learning needs.

This enables staff to seek advice from occupational health therapists and speech and language specialists to address each child's personal needs. There are excellent systems in place for multi-agency working, ensuring that all staff work together to meet children's learning needs.

Children behave very well as staff use calm and effective strategies to maintain a busy and purposeful environment. Children clearly understand staff's expectations and recognise 'right' from 'wrong.' As a result, children develop very good skills in sharing, turn taking and negotiating. Staff reward children highly for positive behaviour and recognise and celebrate children's achievements. For example, children enjoy high praise for 'good sitting' and 'good listening'. This creates a very happy and harmonious environment for children.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff utilise all available opportunities to work together with parents to support them in the care and education of their children. Parents receive a wealth of written information on the school and the Flopsy Bunnies class routines. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in the school community and there are many opportunities for parents to share in their children's care routines. For example, staff obtain extensive information from parents when each child starts at the school, regarding each child's personal achievements, developmental progress and individual needs. This demonstrates that staff are committed to working closely with parents in meeting their children's needs. Parents are invited to many social events and take an active part in the Parent Teacher Organisation (PTO). There is detailed information provided on a daily basis, regarding the daily routine and the morning's activities. This enables parents to talk to their children about their morning at school and share in their daily achievements. Parents receive regular feedback on their children's care routines and progress through formal consultations and conference meetings, daily feedback and written email contact.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit from the excellent organisation of the school management system. The Flopsy Bunnies class is an integral part of both the Early Childhood Village and the main school community. Staff and children utilise the extensive range of additional services, such as the school nursing department; the occupational health and speech and language therapists. This enhances the care provision for all children attending the setting.

The staff team consists of qualified and experienced early years professionals, who work well together as a dedicated and supportive team. Stringent procedures are in place to ensure that all staff working on the school campus are fully vetted and cleared to work with children. Staff have access to extensive further training, including overseas training, to ensure their knowledge and skills are regularly updated. The staff's varied and combined experience enhances the care provision and ensures all children's individual needs are consistently met.

The daily routine is organised extremely well. Children benefit from an excellent

balance of adult-led activities and child-initiated play, both inside and outside. Staff have a thorough understanding of the National Standards and ensure that all staffing ratios are adhered to at all times. All staff are extremely familiar with all routines and policies, ensuring that the class runs smoothly and effectively.

Regulatory documentation is maintained in full and is stored confidentially. Staff consistently maintain thorough and accurate records and ensure that all documentation is kept secure.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk