



Wattisham Airfield Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251707
Inspection date	18 May 2006
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Warren
Setting Address	2 Valley Road, Wattisham Airfield, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP7 7RE
Telephone number	01449 728928
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Registered person	Wattisham Airfield Childcare Centre
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Crèche

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Wattisham Airfield Childcare centre opened in 1993 and operates from a community centre. It is situated on the base in Wattisham, Suffolk. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school (full day care) and a maximum of 16 may attend the crèche (sessional care) at any one time. The centre is open each weekday from 09:00 to 15:25 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed

outdoor play area.

There are currently 61 children from birth to 5 years on roll. Of these 25 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the immediate vicinity, as most of their parents live or work on the base, however places are available for civilian families. The setting supports children with special educational needs as well as those who speak English as an additional language

The setting employs eight staff. Over half of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children in the pre-school are kept healthy as they understand and follow basic hygiene routines. They are able to wash their hands as needed and explain why they do so. They use the toilets independently and dispose of tissues and paper towels correctly. Children are helpful in tidying up and keeping the playroom clean, using a broom to sweep the floor. They eat their meals at tables which have been sprayed and cleaned, using plates for their packed lunch items.

Any accidents and medication taken are recorded for a parent to sign. If children become poorly during a session they are kept comfortable until collected, parents know that children must not attend if they are ill or infectious. Children in the crèche are less well cared for as general hygiene routines are not always observed; for example, although staff observe hygiene routines when changing babies, the toilets and changing area are accessible to outside users, thus risking cross infection. A nappy disposal system is available but when used by non-staff this becomes a health risk. Mealtime washing up is not always cleared away promptly, again this is a potential bacterial risk as it is left in the playroom.

Children in pre-school enjoy a very healthy snack containing fruit and vegetable choices, as well as toast or bread for energy, and a choice of drink. They very competently serve themselves and sit in the café area making a relaxed and sociable time to chat with their friends and develop independence as they decide where to sit, what to eat and drink and how much they would like. Children's allergies and dietary requirements are known to staff and a list held in the main office, to ensure children are not given unsuitable foods.

Children in the crèche have a snack of either foods provided by staff or something sent from home, according to individual needs and parental preference. They sit in suitable high or low chairs and a sociable atmosphere is created as staff remain nearby to aid the children, whilst encouraging them to feed themselves if they are able. Various non-spill cups allow children to have the one they prefer. Some children are bottle fed, held close and talked to.

Pre-school children have use of the large hall for physical development and enjoy planned activities designed to promote body awareness and challenge them to develop movement skills. For example, they pretend to be spiders, moving and acting out the feeding and web-spinning habits, as part of a topic on wildlife. Pre-school children use an attached outdoor play area daily, weather permitting. Here they have freedom to move, using a variety of small equipment, changed frequently. They can paint and draw and practise mark making with large chinks. They have hoops and balls, and wheeled toys to steer and control. There is fixed climbing equipment on a grassed section, but some thistles and weeds make the area unusable at times.

Pre-school children also go for nature walks in the nearby open spaces, they are very responsive to staff and have consideration for their own safety when walking as a group. Music and movement sessions are another dimension and are lively and fun, often linked to the topic and also spontaneous, as when an action song is suggested and children join in enthusiastically and noisily. Small motor skills are encouraged and developed by use of manipulative toys, puzzles and tools for craft and mark making. Children use cutters and rollers with play dough, and scissors and glue sticks when making a collage. They pour their own drinks from a jug, and spread butter and jam on their bread.

Children in the crèche are taken for walks around the area, in buggies and with the appropriate staff ratio. They also use the outdoor area at times when it is in a suitable condition to do so. In the playroom, care has to be taken as the age group of children cared for includes very young babies as well as active toddlers, so staff make provision for the different age groups by sectioning off a messy area. All children enjoy the ball pool, where they can lay or sit and play with the balls safely. Suitable toys and craft activities help children develop hand to eye coordination and manual dexterity. They enjoy painting and their work is displayed on boards outside the room, to be admired by parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children in the pre-school have use of suitably sized furniture to meet their needs. Tables and chairs are arranged to allow them to use the toys and equipment set out. The room is decorated with children's work made into exciting, colourful and stimulating displays complementing the topic work. For example the role play area is transformed into a wood and wildlife haven, with badger's sett, rabbit warren and trees for sheltering birds and insects. Storage of toys and play materials is generally well thought out, and children can access what they want easily, or know that they can ask for things. The toilets and wash basins are accessible and allow for development of independence as children can use them unaccompanied.

Children in the crèche have suitable furniture but there is no comfortable feeding chair for staff to give a baby a bottle. The sleep area is created by using a smaller side room, adequate for two cots and with screens to encourage a quiet atmosphere to help children settle. Other children needing a nap have mats, which can be placed on the floor. The changing area and toilets are across a corridor from the playroom,

so children are accompanied by staff when using the toilet or potty.

Children in the pre-school are cared for in a safe and secure environment. They cannot leave the premises unseen and all visitors are screened before admittance. Children in the crèche are less secure as the door to their room is not always locked and members of the public using the community hall have access to the toilets and changing area; only a low gate serves to define the area used by children, and this is not locked.

Children take part in regular fire drills, which are recorded. Fire safety equipment is tested frequently and maintained by the premises staff. Care staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Children's care and welfare is considered and there is a designated staff member with responsibility for child protection. Ongoing training ensures that there is always a staff member with up to date knowledge and understanding of procedures; however, incident records are not always detailed enough to ensure that appropriate action can be taken following a concern. Parents are informed of the group's approach to safeguarding children before their child is admitted but the notice board does not hold sufficient information to enable them to be able to respond to any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children in the crèche have a variety of activities to promote their development, however staff do not always ensure they have sufficient information to be able to offer appropriate care, for example, knowing the child's first language. Activities are offered to all children with a varying degree of support according to individual needs. Children's development is not currently meaningfully recorded; a system is in place but it is out of date. Staff rely on verbal sharing of information about what children have done, their sleep and feeding patterns and do not record these details for parents. At present staff are not familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework or other sources of information regarding the care and development of children aged up to three years. Babies have no access to natural or household objects, materials or textures to develop their awareness of the world around them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children in the pre-school follow a curriculum based on the Foundation Stage. They enjoy activities designed to help them make progress through the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals. Staff plan as a team and incorporate a variety of teaching styles to deliver the activities, making them appealing and engaging for the children. Activities are evaluated and have assessment opportunities built in. Key workers understand their own group member's needs and work towards targets for individual children. Their progress is meticulously observed to build into a detailed record showing what children can do and what they need to do next. Parents are invited to view and discuss these records at informal meetings or on special open

sessions where they can also try activities for themselves.

Extra help for children learning English, or with additional needs in other areas, is very forthcoming. One to one help is in place where needed and staff work closely with parents and outside professionals to ensure that children have the best possible opportunities to develop and learn. They have individual learning plans which show their progress and enable help to be accurately targeted. These records can also be passed to the next setting when children leave, for example, to attend school.

Children listen and respond well at registration, answering their names and discussing who is present and who is absent. They talk articulately about the weather, and the date and day, reinforcing their understanding of the patterns of time and the seasons. Children enjoy books both individually and as a group, joining in with repeat sections and re-telling favourite stories such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. They have excellent opportunities for mark making as they have free access to chalks, paint, pencils and crayons at all times.

Mathematical development is promoted through everyday routines as well as planned, focused activities. For example, children count the numbers of girls and boys present, they estimate how many tadpoles they can see, and take one cup or plate each at snack time. Sand and water play introduces concepts of weight, volume and capacity, and cooking puts these into a practical context as ingredients are measured out. Puzzles and play dough help with ideas of shape and space. Children decide how many legs a spider might have and enjoy trying to move like one.

Opportunities to develop an understanding of the world around them, both natural and man made, are impressive. Children recreate an area of woodland as their role play area after a first hand experience of visiting nearby open spaces. They have full supporting props of rucksacks, magnifiers and notebooks to become explorers and extend the play value and learning. The natural world is brought closer to them as they study and care for tadpoles, grow plants and learn about bees and butterflies. They see technology in action as a digital camera is used to record their activities, and the pictures are displayed. Children are competent to use a computer with a variety of programmes to support all areas of learning. Ideas of the wider world and an understanding of the local environment are developed as children go to see the helicopters and other interesting features, and listen to speakers from outside talking about their jobs.

Creative play and learning opportunities are very good. Children freely use the craft area to paint and print, cut, stick and collage with a variety of media. They show flair in designing and completing their artwork, experimenting with the materials and having no pre-determined outcome. Their efforts are valued and displayed or taken home. Staff always incorporate children's work to good effect on group projects such as the trees and café decorations. Children are able to listen and move to music, interpreting what they hear. They have excellent, varied role play areas to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Small world items such as animals and vehicles bring another dimension to imaginative play as well as promoting language development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children's individual details are recorded and kept in a central office. This means that not all relevant details are immediately available to staff working directly with the children, particularly in the crèche, resulting in a negative effect on their everyday care and welfare. Children are introduced to ideas of cultural diversity both through celebration of world festivals and cultural events, and through planned activities such as the Fijian day, when residents share cultural features such as food and music in a festival atmosphere. Children have books and resources depicting positive images of children and families from around the world, but no key language or labelling is used in the crèche and staff here appear less secure with how they should promote non English speaking children's language skills.

Pre-school children are confident and at home in the setting, moving about and freely choosing activities. They understand the daily routines and respond well to staff, getting into groups or switching between indoor and outdoor play with no fuss. They show excellent concentration skills, persevering at an activity such as a large sheet of handprints, until satisfied they have finished. They behave with courtesy and consideration to one another and the adults around them, asking for help when needed and assisting one another. They like to help tidy up and know where equipment belongs. Self-esteem is developed as children celebrate their birthdays and they feel valued as they talk about their homes and families.

A number of children attending the pre-school have English as an additional language and this is well understood by staff to be a priority area. They work closely with parents and the children to facilitate understanding and help the children access activities at an appropriate level. Other children with additional needs are also well catered for, staff have training and understanding of their needs and work to ensure children are included in activities.

Children's behaviour is very good. They respond to staff positively and little adverse behaviour is reported. A behaviour policy clearly sets out the staff's approach and any issues are discussed with parents before they become problems. Children seem generally happy and content to be at the setting, able to benefit from their time there.

Staff in the crèche interact warmly and with care towards the children, however, they are caring for an inappropriate age range in premises which do not meet the requirements for full day care, therefore attempts to balance the needs of children do not adequately cater for any age group satisfactorily. This needs to be addressed by reorganisation.

The partnership with parents of children in the crèche is inadequate. There is insufficient exchange of information to enable children's care and welfare to be fully considered. Records are incomplete and some are held in the main office, not immediately available to staff. Systems to record the youngest children's development, ensuring they are making progress, are out of date. Some staff lack understanding of suitable play and sensory learning opportunities for the children, therefore failing to maximise opportunities to benefit their progress and development.

Nursery Education

The partnership with parents is good

The partnership with parents is generally good in pre-school. They feel welcomed and involved, and imaginative efforts to include them ensure they are well informed about their child's progress and what they have been doing. Open sessions and informal, relaxed approachability of staff mean that parents can communicate easily and air any concerns. Staff details and other important information is only displayed inside the office, so not immediately accessible to some parents.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Overall, children's needs are not met.

All children are cared for by staff who have undergone checks to ensure their suitability to be in contact with children. There are recruitment and induction procedures in place for new staff, who are selected according to their skills and experience. A system of ongoing appraisal gives all staff the opportunity to assess their own professional development and highlight training needs.

The management of the crèche team is less satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of care and general knowledge of the requirements under the National Standards is poor. Staff training needs are not addressed in such a rigorous way, with the result that children fail to have some basic play and care needs met.

Currently the organisation of some parts of the premises does not meet National Standards requirements. Children in the crèche are being looked after for over four hours, which is not acceptable under a sessional registration. The premises are not suitable in that children aged under two do not have a separate base room suited to their requirements, therefore the needs of the children are not met.

The organisation of the pre-school room is good, with separate areas for different activities and a free-flow style allowing children to choose activities indoors or outside as they wish. The hard area outside is used well, with all areas of the curriculum represented. The grassed area housing the fixed play equipment is not always maintained adequately and is unusable at times due to thistles and nettles, a potential hazard. All children benefit from being taken for walks in the extensive open spaces surrounding the setting, providing stimulation and a change of scenery.

Documentation and paperwork to support children's care and welfare needs is in place. This is only partially adequate; records in the crèche are not sufficiently detailed to enable children's care to be satisfactory. Most policies and procedures are in place and are updated as new information becomes available. An operational plan is being compiled which will indicate how different parts of the setting will be run, and raise awareness of areas for improvement and change.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

Staff in the pre-school work very well as a team. They are motivated and enthusiastic, willing to work hard to provide a good all round experience for the children. They plan well together and discuss individual children's needs, incorporating these into the activities. The quality of care and education is monitored and an outward looking approach ensures that new ideas are introduced to keep up the momentum. Staff are aware of the areas for development and strive to make progress in these. Training is valued and seen as a way to improve standards.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no recommendations arising from the last inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report since the last inspection.

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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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- demonstrate how children in the creche will attend for no longer than four hours in any one day
- ensure that all adults working in the provision are aware of the local safeguarding children procedures and are able to put the procedures into action
- ensure that all records relating to day care activities are readily accessible

and available for inspection at all times; this relates to children's details in connection with their care and welfare

- assess the risks to children (in relation to lack of security and suitability of the outside play area) in creche area and take action to minimise these

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- improve the partnership with parents to ensure that they have information relating to the setting and enabling them to be involved with their child's education

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