



Caterpillars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220007
Inspection date	21 July 2006
Inspector	Diane Mary O'Neill

Setting Address	Church House, St. Botolphs Road, Barton Seagrave, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN15 6SR
Telephone number	07890 561853
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Registered person	Caterpillars Pre-School
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Caterpillars Pre-school opened over 30 years ago. It operates from Church House next to the Parish Church in the village of Barton Seagrave, Northamptonshire. The pre-school serves the local area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open three days a week during term time. Sessions are from 09:30 to 13:00 Monday, Wednesday and Friday. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 23 children aged from two years six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the surrounding area. The pre-school currently does not support any children with learning difficulties or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs three staff. Of these, all the staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and from the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. Children have supervised access to the toilet area to ensure their safety in a building that is used by others. Children's independence skills are encouraged through them being able to wash and dry their own hands, there is good staff support available if needed. The children have an awareness of how and why we wash our hands and that it is important to do so, for example, before snacks and after messy activities and after using the toilet, this is further expanded in discussions.

Children's health and hygiene is suitably maintained through procedures of exclusion for certain forms of illness. If children are taken ill, staff ensure they are made comfortable until they are collected. There is a reasonably good awareness of practice and procedures to ensure any accidents are dealt with appropriately ensuring the best interests of the children are maintained at all times. However, written parental consent for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment is not in place. This potentially compromises children's welfare. Most of the staff hold first aid certificates, so they ensure all incidents are dealt with effectively to maintain children's safety and well-being. Children have a good awareness of where to locate tissues and dispose of them accordingly to prevent spread of infection.

Children are nourished because staff ensure there is a variety of healthy snacks prepared each day. For example, bread sticks, fruit and cheese on crackers. Children's independence is enhanced by the use of a snack bar system which allows children to choose when they are ready for their snack, as well as helping themselves to the drink and snack available. This and lunch time are very social occasions where the children have good opportunities to tell the staff and each other about things they may have been doing.

Children enjoy a stimulating range of equipment to promote a healthy life and their physical development that incorporates indoor and outdoor play. This includes good opportunities for children to explore, experiment and develop their physical skills such as running around, playing and making up various games. Children are given very good support from staff that are on hand to guide and assist when required, such as helping them on the climbing frame and playing catch with a ball. When playing indoors the children confidentially use the equipment available to them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety and well-being is suitably maintained by the pre-school. Staff are vigilant and they recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. However, children's safety may at times be compromised as clear risk assessments are not in operation and there is no system of evaluation. Staff practice evacuation procedures with all the children on a regular basis so they learn the importance of the emergency procedures.

Children use a satisfactory range of developmentally appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are organised throughout the setting on tables or the floor within in easy reach for the children. The inside play space is spacious, bright and airy due to the staff making it a happy and relaxed environment for the children. They have good access to outdoor facilities which enable the children to come and go freely between the activities. All play areas are monitored at all times by staff.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through current policies and procedures for the protection of children. Staff have a fairly clear understanding of child protection and procedures are in place and implemented. However, there is no guidance in place if allegations were made against a staff member. This could leave children in a vulnerable position.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, contented and secure throughout the pre-school. They confidently access the range of activities and are forming secure relationships with staff and other children. They enjoy various activities such as climbing on the climbing frame, pretending to chase monsters in the garden, dressing up and joining in with picture lotto. Children have good communication skills as they speak to each other and the staff members. Their use of verbal and non-verbal language to make their needs known to staff who are adept at interpreting these needs. Children learn about responsibilities and are allowed to make errors, decisions and choices as they select activities and share their play with others.

Staff make the experiences enjoyable and meaningful for the children which in turn aids their confidence to participate. Children are receptive to the constant praise and encouragement that is provided by staff. This has a clear impact on their self-esteem and encourages them to try new tasks and participate in activities. Staff are in the process of introducing 'Birth to three matters' for the younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Children benefit from effective interaction by the staff enabling them to feel confident in their play. Plans are in place but lack detail and do not clearly show how children will learn. Children

have their assessment files and regular observations are carried out by staff, however, these do not link into the stepping stones and are not used to inform planning or show how they can further challenge children's learning.

Children are confident at using numbers in their play, such as counting and matching the numbers on the clock puzzle. They are able to look at and match shapes of number by using a poster to help them match the shapes. Children enjoy looking at books and joining in with the story. Children have suitable opportunities to recognise their names when they pick their name card for snack time. They also have access to different tools for mark making such as pencils, crayons and paint brushes.

Children are able to develop some understanding of the world as they take part in activities such as talking about different holiday destinations children are going on and covering topics about different festivals. They have suitable opportunities to develop their information technology skills by using the mouse and keyboard of the computer and during role play with telephones, keyboards and shop till. Children have regular opportunities to use a wide range of different messy materials such as play dough, paint, sand, sticking and gluing. They also have plenty of suitable role play opportunities that help them to develop several areas of their learning and imagination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children attend from a variety of backgrounds and all children are warmly welcomed into the pre-school. They have access to a range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity.

Staff have very positive attitudes and work well as a dedicated team. They present themselves as sensitive role models. This helps children to relate to them and others as well as gaining a secure understanding of the needs of others.

Children's behaviour is good in the pre-school. They have good role models as well as staff support, which ensures any incident is dealt with calmly and with consideration for all involved. There is a good team spirit throughout the pre-school with children getting on with one another most of the time and playing happily together, being respectful of each other and sharing resources. All children are valued and respected as individuals and all their needs are well met. Staff recognise that some children may need extra care and by using the detailed registration forms gain full information from parents about each child in order to fully meet their needs. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and careers is satisfactory. Parents are warmly welcomed into the pre-school where staff are on hand to discuss any issues and share information. Staff's friendly and open attitude promotes the positive relationships which impacts on the children's sense of well-being and security within the setting. The availability of informative documentation and notice boards extends the playgroups effectiveness in keeping parents well informed and to carry on any further learning at home with their children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Regular staff meetings and on going training courses enable staff to develop their practice and work effectively as a team. Staff act as good role models for the children and provide a variety of learning opportunities for them. However, their planning and observation are not fully evaluated to enable them to further challenge children's learning.

Most of the required documents are in place, however, there are some that need to be incorporated to ensure staff can fully protect the welfare of the children in their care. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that the child protection policy for the playgroup complies with local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures and to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. Staff have a policy in place and have an understanding of procedures to follow. However, they still need to obtain some up-to-date guidance.

After the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to develop planning which consistently uses the stepping stones to prevent gaps in the range of activities covering the six areas of learning. This is something the playgroup still need to do some work on, to ensure they are covering the stepping stones. They also had to challenge the older more able children particularly in solving simple mathematical problems. The playgroup has suitable equipment to enhance learning, and through staff asking suitable questions they are able to challenge children's learning. They were asked to develop systems for evaluating and assessing the settings strengths and weaknesses. Although they have done some work on this a more formal system would enable further planning and evaluation to take place, which would enable them to clearly assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 written procedure for the allegations of abuse made against a staff member or a volunteer is in place
- obtain a copy of What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused- Summery
- ensure a through risk assessment is available
- ensure written parental permission for the seeking of any emergency medical advice or treatment is available

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 improve systems of recording, planning and evaluation to further challenge children's learning
- further expand planning to clearly show how the stepping stones and six areas of learning will be addressed within the range of activities available to children.

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