



# Carterton Community College Play Unit

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134471
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 October 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Pamela Edna Friling
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<b>Registered person</b>	Magdalen Davies
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care, Out of School 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](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 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?

Carterton Community College Play Unit was registered in 1978. It operates from a porta cabin sited in the grounds of the college. The play unit is self-contained with a large, fenced, outdoor play area. The play unit serves the local area. The unit consists of one large room divided off into different areas for play. The provision operates for 51 weeks of each year and offers a range of day care facilities. Groups for school age children from four years of age include a breakfast club, after school club and a holiday play scheme. Groups for pre-school children include a playgroup for children aged from two years and a crèche for children from birth to five years of age. All groups run in the one building at various times throughout the day. The play unit provides care for a maximum of, 40 children in the out of school provision, 30 children in the playgroup and 24 children in the crèche, at any one time. There are currently 75 children on the roll, of these seven children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. At least half

of the staff including the manager, has a recognised childcare qualification at level 2 and above. School aged children are taken to and collected from local primary schools.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the clean and well maintained care environment. They take part in a broad range of activities which enable them to learn how to take increasing responsibility for their own personal hygiene. The staff support all children well as they strive for independent personal care. Individual hand towels and well established hygiene routines reduce the risk of the spread of infection. The children's health is well protected by the staff who demonstrate good first aid knowledge. A clear record of accidents is maintained and countersigned by parents.

Children's individual dietary and feeding needs are addressed well through discussion with parents. Staff show good understanding of special diets and the issues involved in catering for individual needs and preferences. However, snack and drink options do not fully promote healthy eating. For example, children attending the playgroup and after-school club are offered only sweet biscuits with a drink of squash or milk on most days of the week. Children remain well hydrated through independent access to drinks bottles supplied by parents. However, snack and drink time for children attending the after-school club occurs well into the session leading to some children leaving for home before they have been offered a drink or biscuit.

Children develop their physical skills in both the indoor play room and the outdoor play area. Exercise is taken on a daily basis in either or both areas. However, indoor equipment does not sufficiently challenge more able children to build on their physical skills. Children recognise the way activity affects their bodies, with rests and drinks taken as necessary. Small physical movements are well addressed through easily available resources that help develop cutting, writing, construction and computer skills.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within an environment which is both safe and secure. Risk of accidental injury is minimised by the thorough and well documented risk assessment of potential hazards within both the spacious play room and outdoor areas. Staff are vigilant in their approach to safety and supervision. Routines for child collection are well established and ensure children's safety.

Children have a good awareness of safety issues and are learning about keeping themselves safe. They are able to describe how they play safely on the climbing frame. Vigilant supervision and clear explanation extends young children's understanding of safety issues. Children play safely with good quality toys and equipment which are all stored at low-level to encourage independent choice. Children's pictures and paintings are attractively displayed around the room, creating a colourful and welcoming environment for children.

Children are kept safe because staff have a sound knowledge of the child protection procedures. Policies, procedures and documentation are in place to ensure the children's welfare is promoted.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and secure. They are becoming independent as they make choices from most available resources and activities, take care of their personal care needs and assist with daily routines. Children of all ages settle quickly on arrival, selecting their chosen activity from a range of resources set out by staff. However, children do not, as a group or individuals, receive an introduction to the days focus activity to extend their choice and awareness of what is on offer to them each day. New children are supported well by staff, and their parents, as they become familiar with both daily routines and learn to play with the other children who attend. Children enjoy their time at the play unit and are supported well by staff as they play.

Children of all ages are relaxed in the company of the attentive staff. They are encouraged to express themselves through careful staff questioning and genuine interest in individual conversation. Children attending after school have good opportunities to complete homework and discuss their day with staff. All children enjoy adult input into their play and benefit from consistent encouragement and praise. However, inconsistent use of the developmental monitoring system impacts on the effectiveness of the planning for individual developmental needs of the youngest children. The Birth to three matters framework has not yet been fully implemented in practice in the care of the youngest children.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Children benefit from staff's knowledge of them as individual's and make sound progress towards the early learning goals through interesting and well resourced topics and themes. However, staff understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning is inconsistent. Training has not been attended, limiting staff understanding of this stage of learning and how best to support individual children to reach their full potential. Staff interaction and questioning encourages children to think and solve problems as they take part in both self initiated and adult led play activities. Staff observe children as they play and learn, taking anecdotal notes of their observations. However, observational notes, assessment and evaluation are not used systematically to ensure planned activities offer sufficient challenge to individual children to build on what they already know and can do.

Children develop good relationships with staff and other children in the group. They learn to co-operate and work well together. Children show good levels of concentration for both self-selected and adult-led activities. For example, some three-year-olds sat for a significant length of time preparing glittery stars for a nursery rhyme display.

The most able children are confident speakers. They are happy to talk in small groups, to friends and to familiar adults. Children benefit from opportunities to make marks, paint, draw and crayon as part of their free play experiences, with writing resources available throughout the room. More able children are forming recognisable letters and some are beginning to write

their own names. However, staff do not consolidate these name writing skills. They mark children's work with their name rather than allowing children to make marks representing their name. Children are beginning to link initial sounds with simple objects and their own names through staff supported worksheet activities. Children demonstrate an interest in numbers and counting. They count confidently, with more able children challenged appropriately through one to one practical activities to extend their understanding of calculation. For example, counting rhymes are used to introduce the concept of subtraction. The lack of a display of numbers within the room limits extension of numeral recognition skills for more able children. Children do not have sufficient independent access to mathematics resources to allow them to explore concepts such as pattern recreation, shape, size, weight and measure as part of their free play.

Children engage well in imaginative play. For example taking a trip to 'Winchcombe' for a picnic with friends and a 'baby'. Care is taken to ensure that they have sufficient play food and changes of clothes for the baby before they set out on their journey. Children safely and competently use a range of tools and equipment, for example pencils, scissors and glue spreaders. They enjoy exploring and investigating many different media as they play with water and sand, stamp with ink and apply glitter and glue to card. Children confidently operate simple equipment such as electronic toys and a digital camera. They show sufficient skills when using the computer as they negotiate the screen using a mouse. Children are introduced to different cultures and festivals through themed activities. Children's knowledge of their world is enhanced through planned topics and opportunities over time to grow vegetables and observe nature. However, children are not able to independently explore science as they play. Natural objects within the room are limited. Children do not have independent access to resources such as magnifiers to allow exploration of science concepts as part of their free choice activities.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children within the playgroup and after-school club behave well and are co-operative with both staff and each other. Older children behave very well and respect the premises, equipment and each other. Staff form calm role models for the children. Well thought through written policies for behaviour management and special needs ensure consistency of approach to individual needs. Older children are able to discuss the boundaries for acceptable behaviour and offer explanation as to why some behaviour is inappropriate and the consequences of any misbehaviour. Children are developing confidence and self-esteem through regular praise and recognition of effort. They are enthusiastic and engrossed with their own play. Some of the youngest children require additional adult input during their first days at play group to ensure they understand what is acceptable at the setting.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have use of good books and resources reflecting culture, race and disability. They share well and are encouraged to be kind and thoughtful to others. Children show kindness and consideration for each other as they offer comfort to friends who are upset. Young children take part in a range of activities in the playgroup to maximise their understanding of the wider world. For example, celebration of world festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.

Children's individual needs are addressed by the play unit. The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Information is exchanged to ensure children's individual care needs are noted. Children's educational and developmental progress is shared through daily verbal exchange of information. However, progress records are not completed systematically enough to form a firm basis for discussion of progress with parents. Information is offered regarding the use of stepping stones towards the early learning goals during initial visits to the play group. However, parents of funded children do receive additional information regarding the Foundation Stage to ensure they are able to become fully involved in their child's learning. general information on planned topics and play unit events are shared effectively through regular newsletters and informative notice boards. Parents are actively involved with encouraging their children's love of books through weekly book loans with detailed instructions on how to help their children enjoy stories and discuss pictures.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children settle very well to familiar surroundings and show very good understanding of well-established daily routines. Space and equipment are successfully arranged to allow children to use all areas and most resources independently. Safety and security of the setting is good. Systems are in place to ensure staff are appropriately qualified and cleared for work with the children. Children's welfare is promoted through the recording systems and written operating procedures which mostly meet the requirements of registration. Staff are able to describe procedures that would be followed if a child was lost or uncollected or if there was an allegation of abuse against a staff member. However, these procedures are not yet included in writing within the group operating procedure document. The ratio of adults to children is maintained at a good level allowing high levels of individual attention. Staff value and respect the children.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Staff are very attentive to the children and respond quickly to their requests for support or direction. Staff induction is effective in ensuring that staff understand and consistently apply the group policies in practice. Training opportunities are offered to all staff to extend their understanding of the needs of the full range of children attending the setting.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Input is welcomed from the Local Authority to improve and refine methods employed in the care and education of the children. The educational programme provides a wide range of experiences to enable children to make sound progress towards the early learning goals, but does not systematically monitor children's educational progress against the system of stepping stones. Regular staff meetings ensure that all staff are able to contribute positively to future planning and development. However, some staff have limited understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and this in turn limits the effective use of observation and assessment in planning for individual children's and the ability to provide information for parents on progress.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At their last care inspection the play unit was asked to provide a clear operational plan to ensure staff can follow correct procedures in caring for the children. They were also asked to implement

a confidential procedure for recording accidents and to develop a recording procedure to be followed for the protection of children. Children's care is now enhanced through implementation of an operational plan document to ensure staff follow a consistent approach to their care. The document does, however, lack sufficient detail as to procedures that would be followed if a child was lost or uncollected or if allegations of child abuse were made against a staff member. Accident records now preserve children's confidentiality by offering single page entries with carbon copies for parents to take home. A system is in place for recording any child protection concerns.

At the last education inspection the play unit was asked to involve staff in the planning process to ensure they are clear of the intended learning outcomes and use assessment to inform future planning. In addition they were asked to develop the planning and implementation of the curriculum for physical development and extend the use of the outdoor environment. Finally, they were asked to increase opportunities for children to calculate and problem solve in everyday situations. The play unit now has regular staff meetings to allow staff to share ideas or to take on the planning of a specific activity. Understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning is for some staff, limited through lack of training. This in turn limits their effective contribution to observation, assessment and planning systems and their understanding of objectives for planned activities. The management recognises the need to improve overall understanding through attendance of training courses. Physical development is now included within the weekly plan to ensure children build on physical skills. However, during inclement weather more able children are not sufficiently challenged by the range of physical play opportunities available indoors. Opportunities for children to explore mathematics independently as they play or as part of daily routines are still somewhat limited. Children count and calculate as part of small group time and on a one to one basis with staff during worksheet activities and free play. However, children do not have access to a display of numerals to aid recognition or to resources to allow exploration of mathematical concepts independently as part of their play.

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

Since the last inspection 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 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 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):

- promote healthy eating and awareness of healthy living through provision of healthy snack options, improved access to drinking water and physical play activities that provide sufficient challenge for most able children.(also applies to nursery education)
- extend the operational plan to include the procedure for if a child is lost or uncollected and for if there is an allegation of child abuse against a staff member.

### **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):

- extend staff understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning so that they can use observation and assessment effectively to plan for individual children's next steps in learning and keep parents fully informed of their child's educational progress
- provide opportunities for children to explore mathematics, science and the natural world as part of their free play and independent learning.

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)