



Cassio Pre - School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130629
Inspection date	03 November 2006
Inspector	Julie Whitelaw
Setting Address	St Andrews Church Hall, Church Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD17 4PY
Telephone number	01923 252086
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Registered person	Cassio 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 good. The registered person meets 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?

Cassio Pre-School has been registered since January 1993 and is held in St Andrews Church, Watford. The group have use of the main hall and two smaller rooms. Children also have access to an outside play area. The pre-school operates during the school term, Monday to Friday 09:30 to 12:00 and 13:00 to 15:30 except Friday afternoons, when the setting is closed. It is a registered charity and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding area and is registered to take children from two to under five years. A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 65 children on roll, aged from two years eight months to four years five months. Of these, 33 children receive funding for nursery education.

The pre-school employs 10 staff, of whom eight have early years qualifications. The group supports children with learning disabilities and children who have English as an additional

language. The setting have attained Hertfordshire Quality Standards (HQS) accreditation and are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy the benefits of fresh air and have the opportunity to play outside most days, during part of each session. Their physical skills are promoted through a wide range of planned activities. Children accurately throw balls into a large net, balance whilst walking along a line and ride bikes. Indoors, they climb on the climbing frame, play on the see-saw and exercise to music tapes. Children are developing strong manipulative skills through the range of resources that they can access. They squeeze together the garlic press and cut out shapes in play dough with palette knives. They use pencils, paint brushes and have opportunities to use scissors. These experiences encourage children to develop a positive attitude to physical activity and ensure they make good progress in their physical development.

Children's understanding of hygiene is promoted to a satisfactory standard. Staff ensure the environment is clean and regularly check the toys and resources to ensure they are suitable for the children to play with. Children develop an understanding of hygiene as staff give clear explanations, such as how the pasta is dirty when children walk on it and therefore has to be thrown away. Staff encourage children to wash their hands after messy play and before eating. However, one towel and bowl of water is used for all the children. This does not fully promote hygiene or reduce the risk of the spread of infection.

Children benefit from and enjoy a variety of healthy foods at snack time, such as fresh fruit, bread sticks and raisins. However, food was served directly onto the table. A jug of water and cups are in the main hall but stored on a high shelf so children cannot access these independently. At snack time, children choose from milk or water, which they pour themselves. During topic work and cooking activities, children develop an understanding of healthy eating. Effective procedures are in place if children have allergies. This ensures their needs are met. The well-being of the children is promoted as the required documentation to record accidents and administered medication is in place.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. A daily written risk assessment is completed which ensures potential hazards are reduced. Toys and resources are regularly cleaned and checked and are therefore safe for children to play with. Resources and the environment are changed in the afternoon when the younger children attend. This ensures they are appropriate for the developmental stage of the children.

Staff place high priority on the security of the environment. This prevents unauthorised persons entering the building and children leaving unsupervised. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised for a week, each session, once a term. This ensures that children know how to respond

to the fire alarm. Staff give clear explanations to children that develops their understanding of how to keep themselves safe, such as how they must not eat any berries that fall off the trees, as they may make them ill. Children understand that they must wait while staff check the outside play area.

Children are encouraged to sweep up dried pasta that they have spilt on the floor and then put it in the bin, understanding that they cannot play with it because it is dirty and that they may slip on it. They are aware they must not run indoors and the consequences of doing this. Children are kept safe as several members of the staff team hold a relevant first aid qualification. Their welfare is protected as staff have a sound understanding of the different types of abuse and what action they would take if they had concerns that a child was at risk. Staff are currently updating their policies and procedures in line with the new legislation.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children happily separate from their carers and confidently move around the setting accessing the resources they choose to play with. They form friendships with their peers and are keen to engage in conversation with adults. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage guidance to plan a range of stimulating, enjoyable and worthwhile activities. Planning is different for the younger children who attend in the afternoon. This ensures their needs are met. Children show an interest in what they do as they engage in a variety of activities that are on offer. This includes painting, play dough, role play in the home corner and small world play. They are curious to explore items in the rummage box and their learning is extended by supportive staff.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is given high priority in the setting. Independence in their personal care is encouraged and children soon know to wash their hands after going to the toilet and use tissues to wipe their nose. Children select what fruit they want at snack time and pour their own drinks. They say 'please' and 'thank you' and are keen to offer help to others. Staff know the children well. Through this knowledge and from their observations and assessments, they are able to help children move on to the next step in their learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They plan a purposeful, interesting curriculum. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given high regard. This ensures that children feel secure in their environment and are confident to explore their surroundings and engage in activities and therefore learn. Staff challenge children as they ask open ended questions. Children show curiosity and are keen to taste sweets and savoury snacks that are made to celebrate Eid. Staff have created an environment that reflects children's own cultures and the wider world, promoting respect for all. Effective use is made of time, resources and accommodation. The coming together of children in their key groups, for set activities, ensures they develop a sense of belonging and feel secure.

Observations are carried out and assessments track the progress children are making. However, these do not cover all aspects within the six areas of learning and are not used to inform planning. Planning does not show differentiation for more or less able children.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. They are interested and excited to learn. Children persist at making jigsaws until they are complete. They play co-operatively and use their imagination well as they pretend to be dogs. Children show respect towards others, listen attentively at circle time or when a story is read to them. Resources are arranged to enable children to take the initiative and become increasingly self-sufficient. Most children recognise their name plates when they arrive. They speak clearly and with confidence and are able to express their likes and dislikes. Children confidently count up to 19 children at circle time. They use mathematical language and ideas within their play. They explore capacity as they fill pots and bags with pasta.

Children learn about the local environment, when staffing levels allow them to leave the setting. They enjoy planting herbs and vegetables in the sensory garden and learn that they need water and sunshine to help them grow. Children have many opportunities to express themselves creatively. The well equipped home corner is often changed to different settings, such as a shop or an office. This gives children opportunities to make sense of the world around them, as they pretend to be other people and act out situations. Children have daily opportunities to paint and model with dough. They explore instruments and happily sing songs. Staff plan a variety of activities for outside play. As children play outside, they develop an understanding of space as they avoid running or riding into each other. Staff encourage children to think about how running makes their heart go faster. Children enjoy the well planned routine which is flexible to follow children's interest, and therefore make good progress in all areas of learning and personal development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the setting. They develop a sense of belonging as staff greet them by name, as they recognise their name plate and see their creative work displayed on the wall. Staff place high importance on the settling-in period, when children and parents are supported as they separate from each other. This ensures that children quickly feel safe in the pre-school and confidently engage in activities. Children's backgrounds and cultures are valued. Children learn about others through a range of resources that portray positive images, such as dressing-up clothes, books and dolls. Topic work, such as the celebration of Eid gives children practical experiences as they have the opportunity to try on clothes worn at this time and taste sweets that are made for the occasion. There are labels in different languages around the room. Therefore, children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude to diversity and the wider world.

Children with special needs are welcomed into the setting and staff are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action is taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. This ensures their needs are met. They understand that they may need to seek advice, adapt activities or obtain different resources in order to help children to reach their potential. Children behave well and are calmly managed by staff who are excellent role models. They support

children well and encourage them to share and take turns. Staff consistently use praise to reinforce positive behaviour. Parents are actively involved in the running of the pre-school. Many help at the sessions and some form part of the committee. Parents report that they are very satisfied with the care children receive at the provision and feel that staff are caring, friendly and approachable and praise the wide range of stimulating activities and experiences provided for the children. This close partnership with parents ensures that children's needs are met.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children play happily together and are learning to share the toys. They form friendships with their peers and the staff and show support to others when they offer to take their friends to the toilet. Children's moral development is promoted as staff give clear explanations why some behaviour is unacceptable and explain the consequences. Children show wonder as they see colours mixing together on the spinning wheel. They learn about other cultures through planned topics and practical activities.

The partnership with parents is good. Staff actively seek parents' views about their child before they start, through a home information questionnaire and general discussion. This ensures that appropriate care is given so children quickly feel secure in the setting. Informative notice boards and newsletters keep parents informed. Parents are given detailed written information about the Foundation Stage. They attend consultation evenings and receive reports that outline children's progress. The daily verbal exchange of information, annual family trips and concerts ensures parents are informed and involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a strong team of staff who are well qualified, have relevant experience and are vetted to ensure they are safe to work with children. All staff are dedicated and continually look to develop their practice through evaluation of what they do and the care they provide. They attend training to develop their skills and update their knowledge. The effective organisation of the environment and daily routine ensure children are busy and stimulated. Staff are well deployed to ensure they are either directly involved with the children or preparing for the next activity. Staff know the children well and close, trusting relationships are being developed.

All the required documentation is in place and well organised for the safe and efficient management of the provision. Clear recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are well protected and cared for by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Policies and procedures are reviewed and kept up to date with current legislation.

The leadership and management of the provision is good. All staff are involved in planning the curriculum and attend regular team meetings. Their skills are utilised well and staff are given responsibility for different areas. This ensures they feel valued. Children's progress is monitored and discussed so that all staff are aware of what stage children are at and are therefore able to help them make progress. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, it was recommended that the temperature of the premises was monitored and maintained at an appropriate level. The boiler has now been repaired. There is a thermometer in the room to ensure an appropriate temperature is maintained. Therefore, the environment is suitable for the children who attend.

At the last education inspection, it was recommended that staff's observations and assessment of children were improved to ensure that creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world were covered in more detail. Observations and assessment now cover some aspects within each area and track the progress children are making within these aspects. However, not all aspects within each of the six areas of learning are covered and developing planning and assessment will remain a recommendation.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1st April 2004, 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 the 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

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of how to promote children's understanding of good hygiene routines, to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.

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):

- ensure assessments inform planning, that they cover all aspects within the six areas of learning and show differentiation for more or less able children.

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