



Covingham Kingfisher Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511586
Inspection date	12 December 2006
Inspector	Rachel Edwards
Setting Address	St Pauls Church Centre, Lovell Close, Covingham, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 5EJ
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Registered person	Covingham Kingfisher Pre-School Committee
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Covingham Kingfisher Pre-school is a privately owned group. It opened in 1996 in its present name, having been Dorcan Playgroup since 1971. It operates from four rooms in St Paul's Church Centre, Covingham. The setting serves a wide area. A maximum of 42 children may attend the provision at any one time. The group opens five days a week during term times. Sessions are from 08.00 to 15.00. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 50 children aged from two to under eight years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school also provides a variety of sessions, including a breakfast club, lunch club and wrap around care for children from five to eight years old. The group supports children with additional needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs eight staff. The manager has an early years degree and five of the other staff have appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and clean environment. Their good health and well-being is promoted by the excellent staff who follow highly effective procedures and practices, which meet children's physical, nutritional and general health needs. The children become highly independent in managing their own personal care, such as using the toilet and washing hands and with very good support from the staff, they understand why this is so important. Staff follow hygienic procedures when changing nappies or helping children after toileting accidents and they do this sensitively, maintaining children's dignity and privacy.

Children bring water bottles to pre-school, which are stored so that they can help themselves to a drink whenever they wish. Children attending the breakfast club are given a healthy breakfast and enough to eat to meet their needs. Younger children benefit from a wide range of healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit and also frequently enjoy different foods from around the world, such as curry and naan bread. They often take part in cooking activities, for example, making pizzas. Meals are eaten sitting together with friends and staff and these relaxed social occasions encourage children to eat well and try new tastes. Several times throughout the year, staff organise cooking afternoons for parents with their children, when together they enjoy making nutritious and healthy recipes. Currently there is a year long topic on healthy lifestyles, and the children are helping to make wall displays on various aspects of this, such as cereals that are good and not so good for us. Parents are involved in bringing in foods and children are sharing their new found knowledge with parents and carers. This very positive approach and high level of parental involvement contribute significantly to children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Children of all ages enjoy exercise and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor activities, such as obstacle courses, which they tackle enthusiastically. The secure outdoor area gives them room to run, pedal and enjoy ball games. There is also a wild area next door, where they hunt for mini-beasts and collect natural objects. Children are becoming aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies, 'I'm all puffed out 'cos I've been running' says a three-year-old.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given a high priority at this setting, where staff follow very effective procedures to keep children safe and protect them from accidental injury. There are good arrangements to keep the premises secure at all times and prevent unsupervised children leaving the building. There is a high ratio of staff to children, allowing children to be well supervised at all times and staff carry out thorough and regular risk assessments of the premises, equipment and any outings undertaken. Staff help children learn how to keep themselves safe, for example,

by explaining the dangers of a lighter when lighting the birthday cake, 'be careful' warns a three-year-old. They also regularly take part in emergency evacuation drills and understand why they must tell staff if they find any broken toys.

Children are able to choose from a wide range of good quality, well maintained toys. Staff have a good understanding of buying and maintaining safe and developmentally appropriate toys and equipment.

Children's welfare is promoted by staff who have a thorough understanding of child protection issues. They would be able to follow approved procedures should they have concerns about a child. Parents are clearly informed of the group's responsibilities regarding the safeguarding of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children really enjoy the time they spend at this friendly and well organised pre-school. Children of all ages arrive happily and quickly settle to their chosen activities. The few who find it difficult to separate from their carers, are given very good support from their key member of staff, who spends a great deal of time comforting and encouraging children, until they feel confident enough to join in with others. Staff use their good knowledge of early years guidance, such as the Birth to three matters framework and the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage, to plan a very wide range of stimulating and enjoyable activities that help children develop in all areas. Staff make regular observations of what children do and say and record their progress. There are separate sessions for two-year-olds in the adjacent room and this helps children make a smooth transition in to pre-school once they are three.

Staff know children and their families very well. They are warm and caring and show a real interest in each child. Children's confidence and self esteem is nurtured so that children quickly become highly independent, for example, in choosing activities or visiting the toilet. They form good relationships with staff and each other and are confident to speak in small groups and to try new experiences. For example, at the dough table, a two-year-old selects a roller and announces 'I know how to do this'.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are well qualified, experienced and knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage. Their thorough planning and enthusiastic approach make activities fun. As a result children are eager to learn and able to concentrate for increasing lengths of time on self chosen and adult directed activities. They are able to listen and sit quietly when appropriate and they play co-operatively with one another. Staff observe and record what children can do. However, they are still developing this system and are not yet fully effective in routinely monitoring children's progress in all areas or in using the information effectively to plan activities that will help move each child forward at their own pace. The two playrooms are attractively laid out to provide plenty of room for children to enjoy activities, such as sand play or modelling and painting. The smaller room is cosy and inviting with comfortable furnishings and low shelves where children can help themselves to play materials,

for example, a small group of children choose a simple board game and are able to set it up and begin to play without adult assistance.

Children are becoming aware of the sounds in words and to start to link these to letters. Good use is made of name cards so that most children recognise their own and some of their friends names. They have free access to writing materials and some children use these to practise early writing skills, for example, as they make a card for a parent. However, staff do not always encourage children to 'write' for a purpose, for example, by trying to write their own name on art work. Children count well and use numbers spontaneously in their play, for example, during role play, a three year old says, 'there are two lions in here'. Staff take every opportunity to help children develop their understanding of numbers. For example, they share out pieces of ham and cheese at snack time and talk about the shapes of the biscuits. Children regularly sing number rhymes; they join in enthusiastically and are able to confidently predict one less as they buy currant buns from the baker's shop. They explore volume and weight as they weigh cooking ingredients and play with sand and water.

Children learn about the natural world, for example, as they grow and tend plants; watch and feed the pre-school fish; investigate an old bird's nest and eggs and collect leaves to make prints and leaf rubbings for a wall display. The children enthusiastically act out familiar scenarios in their role play. This helps them reinforce and explore new ideas, for example, as a child says 'I'm a fox and I eat meat' or as they show sympathy for the doll who has a 'bad ear, just like you had'. Children produce imaginative, individual pieces of art work, using a wide variety of materials, these are beautifully displayed in the children's 'art gallery'. Staff encourage children to discuss what they are doing and really value their efforts, for example, photographs are taken of models that children are especially proud of, so that they can be added to the wall display. This helps raise children's self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and valued as individuals. There is a highly effective key worker system in place, so that staff get to know children and their families very well and this helps ensure that children's individual needs are well met. Children with additional needs are very well supported, for example, by providing one-to-one support and working with parents and other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to help all children achieve as much as they can. The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good quality information about most aspects of the care and education provided. There are notice boards, newsletters, daily opportunities to talk to staff and termly reports of children's progress. Staff produce an attractive scrap book for each child charting their 'learning journey' during their time at pre-school. However, parents receive little information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the complaints procedure does not fully comply with current regulations. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their child's learning, for example, by sharing any special skills, such as cooking Indian food with the children or by attending the craft and cooking afternoons organised for parents with their children. They may also borrow books and some games to share at home with the children. They receive regular information about their child's progress but

are not invited to contribute to these records themselves, which would help gain a fuller picture of children's achievements.

Children behave very well. Staff have high but realistic expectations of children's behaviour. They act as excellent role models, treating other adults and children with respect and valuing what they say and do. Children quickly learn to share and take turns and resolve their own conflicts. For example, when several children want to paint at the easel, they agree who will go next, 'if she's good' adds one of them.

Children's confidence and self-esteem is really nurtured by the caring staff. Children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the group, for example, as they self register, choose activities they want to take part in, show sympathy for an upset friend or share together a birthday celebration. For this, all children gather and enthusiastically sing 'Happy Birthday'. They show real pleasure and no envy as the birthday child receives a bag of small gifts. The child beams at friends and proudly announces 'it's my birthday and I'm four'. Children learn about the wider world through playing with resources that show positive images of diversity, such as posters, books, dolls and dressing up clothes. They also take part in meaningful planned activities, such as hand painting for Diwali or tasting foods from around the world. This positive approach means that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the strong ethos of continuing improvement and the experienced, well qualified and enthusiastic team of staff. The owner of the pre-school has laid out clear and effective policies and procedures, which she ensures all staff are familiar with and follow to help promote children's health, safety and well-being. All of the required documentation is in place and regularly reviewed.

The leadership and management is good. Staff meet regularly to discuss planning and the children's progress. They monitor and evaluate the curriculum to ensure it is broad based, interesting and appropriate to children's developmental needs. Space and resources are well organised to provide a welcoming and stimulating environment for the children and their families. The group have established good relationships with the local primary school, which they frequently visit with the children. Links are strengthened through activities including school-aged children attending the group's breakfast club and visits from the reception class teacher. This good partnership helps children make a smooth transition into school.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last inspection, the group was given recommendations to help develop the quality of the provision for care and nursery education. They were asked to improve safety by ensuring that the building is secure and that children cannot become locked in the toilet. They were also asked to obtain parents signatures to acknowledge when they have given medication; to ensure the record of children's existing injuries is confidentially stored and to keep an

accurate attendance record. To improve the nursery education, they were asked to make greater use of the daily routine to develop children's mathematical understanding and early writing skills.

There are now very effective procedures in place to ensure children cannot leave the building unsupervised and locks have been removed from toilet doors so that children cannot become trapped. Parents are now asked to sign the medication record and records relating to children's existing injuries are confidentially stored. The daily attendance register accurately records the hours of attendance for all children and adults. These measures have improved children's safety. Staff take every opportunity to help children develop their understanding of numbers, for example, by encouraging children to count and share cups, plates and food at snack time. Writing materials are freely available at all times and children use these, for example, to make cards. However, staff do not consistently encourage children to practise early writing skills in meaningful ways, for example, by routinely naming or labelling their own work.

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

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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):

- ensure the complaints procedure fully complies with Children's Act regulations, particularly in relation to the time scale for responding to complaints

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):

- give parents more information about the Foundation Stage and explore ways in which parents can contribute to children's on going development assessments

- develop the monitoring of children's progress to ensure that observations of what children can do, are used to regularly record children's progress towards the early learning goals; more effectively use this information to plan suitably challenging activities, that help each child move on to the next stage of 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