



CYGNETS PLAYGROUP

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110031
Inspection date	22 January 2007
Inspector	Jacqueline, Ann Connell
Setting Address	VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, BARTON STACEY, WINCHESTER, HAMPSHIRE, SO21 3RU
Telephone number	01264 720705
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Registered person	Cygnets Playgroup
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?

Cygnets playgroup was registered in 1993. It operates from the village hall in Barton Stacey, near Winchester. Children walk to the near-by recreation ground for outside play. The playgroup serves the children of the village and the surrounding area. It is a community group and is managed by a committee of volunteers. It is registered to care for 18 children from two to five years, although it does not accept children who are younger than two years and nine months. There are currently 22 children on roll. This includes 18 funded children. The setting supports children who have learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. It is open on weekday mornings during term time from 09.00 to 12.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are two members of staff who both hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children play in a clean environment and develop a firm understanding of good hygiene and personal care as they progress through the playgroup. They become independent in their self-care skills and learn that they must wash their hands before eating to prevent germs from spreading. Children's health is promoted because staff talk to them about keeping clean, for example, when they sing Here we go round the mulberry bush. Staff follow good hygiene procedures, such as wiping the tables with anti-bacterial spray, in order to minimise the spread of infection.

Nutritious snacks help children to learn about healthy eating from a young age. They choose from a selection of cheese, crackers, fruit and vegetables. They are eager to sample less common fruits, such as melon slices. They decide when they feel ready for a snack and then prepare it for themselves. For example, they spread their crackers and pour their own drinks. This encourages their independence. Children have time to eat at their own pace. Water is available throughout the session so children can have a drink whenever they feel thirsty. The staff are aware of the children's individual dietary requirements and ensure these are respected.

Children's welfare is supported as all staff hold a first aid qualification and work closely with parents to collect information about any individual medical concerns. There are procedures in place to record accidents and parents become fully aware of any accidents, because they sign the completed records.

Children benefit from regular visits to the recreation ground, which gives them the opportunity to play outside in the fresh air. They enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health and help them to develop a positive attitude towards exercise. Their large muscle control develops as they climb on the climbing frame or peddle the wheeled toys. Balancing on logs and beams increases their co-ordination. Children enjoy taking part in music and movement sessions where they learn to move confidently and negotiate space well. They have fun and use their imagination as they pretend to be a mouse or a tree blowing in the wind.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel very secure in the playroom where the displays of pictures and posters make it a welcoming environment. They develop confidence as they move safely and freely around the well-planned play area. Staff follow good procedures to maintain safety at all times. They identify potential hazards through regular risk assessments and by thorough daily checks. The premises are very secure and staff vigilantly monitor the main door to ensure only known adults have access to the building. Parents sign their children in and out so there is always a record of those present. Children learn about keeping safe through discussion with the staff and planned activities. For instance, staff talk to them about the dangers of throwing toys and they learn about road safety when they play the traffic light game or walk to the recreation ground.

The furniture and play materials are in good condition and meet the needs of the children. Children independently choose from the very broad range of safe, good quality toys and play materials, which provide challenge and meet their developmental requirements. Children access them easily since they are well stored to encourage self-selection. For example, there is a large trolley where they can choose from the rich variety of craft materials. They put their completed work into their own named basket. Children keep free from harm because the staff check the equipment regularly to ensure it is safe and clean.

The required procedures and documents are in place and understood by staff so that children's health, safety and welfare is promoted. For example, there are regular fire drills and excellent procedures when taking children to the recreation ground. Each child wears a fluorescent tabard and staff use cones to create a safe walkway. Staff are aware of their professional duty to safeguard children and understand the child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter happily and quickly become involved in their play. They enjoy their time in the setting and respond well to the staff's support and encouragement. They benefit from the calm, busy atmosphere in the group, which motivates them to play and learn. They become increasingly confident as they develop strong and trusting relationships with the caring staff who know the children very well. Their self-esteem grows because staff give praise and value all their contributions.

Children play well together and enjoy one another's company. They take part in a broad range of activities which support their development and learning and provide them with a wealth of new experiences. Children under three years benefit from the staff's knowledge of the Birth to three matters material, which helps to ensure all their developmental needs are met.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are keen to play and learn and eager to engage in new experiences. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They provide a well balanced programme of planned activities that promote children's learning and allow them to progress through the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals. Staff observe and record the children's progress and stage of development. This enables them to identify the next stage of learning for each child. As a result children make good strides in their learning. However, occasionally the more able children are not sufficiently challenged because staff do not plan sufficiently to show how activities can be adapted to suit different rates of learning.

Children speak confidently to one another, both in group situations and whilst playing together. They use language well to negotiate and express their ideas. For example, during group time, they discuss the weather and people who live in hot and cold climates. They extend their vocabulary when they learn new words, such as camouflage, during a discussion about why polar bears cannot be seen in the snow. Children are learning that print carries meaning and is read from left to right. They enjoy listening to stories and some children are able to recount

their favourite stories, such as Mr Gumpy's Outing. They learn to recognise their own names and begin to make their mark and to make writing patterns. The more able children confidently write their names and name their work. Children have opportunities to link sounds and letters, for instance when they think about other words beginning with the letter W and they enjoy making up rhymes.

Children have a good knowledge of mathematical concepts. They learn to use numbers in everyday conversations. Games, such as Incy Wincy Spider, encourage them to count backwards as well as forwards. Some of the more able children can count beyond 10. They all learn the concept of more and less when they discuss the number of boys and girls in the group and they show that they understand size and shape through practical activities, including puzzles and building bricks. They use technical equipment such as keyboards and programmed toys with confidence.

Children are curious and have extensive opportunities to learn about the world around them. They enjoy digging in soil and looking for bugs and then planting a garden and watching as it grows. They confidently put their hands into different textures, including jelly and gloop, and discover what happens to dough when yeast is added to it. Children experience how it feels to be a diver when they try on a diver's equipment and find out how people in other countries celebrate festivals when, for instance, they learn about the Swedish celebration of Saint Lucia.

Children relate confidently to each other and to adults. They share their toys and resources well and understand that they take turns, for example, when playing a matching pairs game. They are eager to participate in the activities provided. They play enthusiastically with the sand and brio railway track for extended periods.

Children can express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings by using a range of creative materials, which they can easily access for themselves. They are encouraged to use their imagination in a variety of different ways, such as free style painting and collage. They access and use scissors, paintbrushes, glue sticks and pencils well. Experiences, such as working together to make a colourful wall display, especially encourage these skills. Children become absorbed in their role-play and enjoy dressing up. There are frequent activities which help to extend children's musical experience. They enjoy singing rhymes and playing with the musical instruments. Music and movement sessions encourage them to listen, and respond to different rhythms and tempos.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel happy, valued and respected because the staff have a good understanding of their individual needs and ensure all children are included. For example, children who are new to the setting receive lots of additional support and cuddles until they feel confident and secure. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully included in the life of the group because staff offer good support. They do this by working closely with the child's parents, seeking advice from other professionals and ensuring the learning programme meets any specific needs.

Children learn to show care and kindness to one another as they share their toys and take turns. They behave well because they understand the ground rules for behaviour. Calm explanations from staff help children to understand about acceptable behaviour and show respect to one another. They learn that throwing toys may hurt another child and that it is especially important to be kind to new children. Children are polite and are eager to help and please. They enjoy taking simple responsibilities and co-operate with one another as, for instance, they help with the clearing up at the end of the session. Their independence increases because they choose their own activities, pour their own drinks and decide for themselves when they need to use the toilet.

Visits from people in the village, such as the police officer, as well as the regular outings to the recreation ground help children to learn about their local community. They develop a positive view of people in the wider world through discussion with the staff and the range of resources and planned activities, which reflect diversity. For example, they celebrate a variety of festivals such as Chinese New Year, Diwali, Burns night and Christmas.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They show wonder, for example as they dig in the soil and discover bugs and small insects. They are caring towards one another and begin to understand the difference between right and wrong. Children engage in conversation spontaneously, with both adults and other children. They chat informally while they eat their snack. They have regular opportunities to learn about their own culture as well as those of people in the wider world.

The partnership with parents is good. Staff develop a friendly, working relationship with parents who become involved in the playgroup as committee members and parent helpers. Parents feel included in their children's learning because there are activities which are shared between the home and the setting. For instance, children take home books from the group and bring in items for the interest table. Parents are well informed about their child's progress because they speak to staff each day and have access to their individual folders. They gain an understanding of how children learn when they look at these. However, they receive limited information about the Foundation Stage or how the activities provided contribute to children's learning. Parents have regular newsletters and access to the group's policies and procedures so that they understand how the setting is organised. Staff value parents' comments and welcome any feedback. Children benefit from the involvement of their parents, thereby contributing to their welfare, development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the effective organisation. They feel comfortable in the playroom and are therefore confident to initiate and extend their own play. The familiar routine and well-organised space helps them to feel secure. Staff work to the correct ratios so that children have good support at all times.

Staff are strongly committed to further training to ensure their knowledge and skills are up to date. All staff are vetted. There are arrangements for the induction of new staff so that they understand their responsibilities. However, the information about their recruitment is limited

and does not show clearly the procedures for appointing suitable people. All records are kept appropriately and confidentiality is maintained. The documentation is used effectively to promote the health and welfare of the children.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The staff work well together and meet daily to evaluate activities and to identify how they can progress children to their next stage of learning. They have annual appraisals and regular planning meetings. They build strong relationships with children, parents and staff and promote equality of opportunity and an inclusive environment. They have good support from the managing committee. Staff and managers are focused in their aim to ensure all children receive high quality care and education. As a result, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, staff were asked to ensure that children had access to resources throughout the session, that times of arrival and departure for children, staff, visitors and volunteers are recorded and that the name and address of the regulator is in the complaints policy. Children have good access to resources throughout the session. All times of arrival and departure are recorded and the information about the regulator is included in the complaints policy. These measures contribute to children's safety and enjoyment.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to consider ways of improving the following: increasing the opportunities for children to practise handwriting, making creative activities more freely available and providing more information about the early learning goals. There is a writing table available each session and children are frequently encouraged to make marks. The craft trolley and painting easel encourages children's creativity. These measures support children's learning and development. Parents' knowledge of the early learning goals increases when they look through their child's folder, although they still receive limited information about how children progress through the Foundation Stage.

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 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):

- ensure procedures for the recruitment of staff are in place.

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 develop planning to show how activities can be adapted to suit children of different ages who learn at different rates
- further develop the information given to parents about the Foundation Stage to show how the activities provided contribute to children's 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