



Carlton pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219170
Inspection date	09 October 2006
Inspector	Margaret Coyne
Setting Address	Carlton Village Hall, The Moor, Carlton, Bedfordshire, MK43 7LP
Telephone number	07799 305593
E-mail	
Registered person	Carlton 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

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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?

Carlton Pre- School has been in existence for over 20 years and operates from a village hall attached to the lower school in a village approximately 10 miles north of Bedford. The group have access to two base rooms, the school hall, toilets and disabled facilities. All children have shared access to a secure, enclosed outside area. A maximum of 12 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9.00 to 11.30. On a Monday Wednesday and Friday children are offered an extended session with a lunch club. After the October half term holidays the group will be offering an afternoon session on a Thursday from 12.30 to 15.00.

The group are open for 38 weeks of the year.

There are currently 18 children aged from two years six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The pre-school employs three staff. Of these, two staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification. The pre-school receives support from a qualified teacher and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean and hygienic environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned routines and procedures. For example, children wash their hands after messy activities and before snacks in bowls of water, which are changed frequently. They use the sinks in the toilet area to wash their hands after using the toilet. They understand the importance of hand washing to prevent germs spreading. Children are protected from infection through the well-managed hygiene routines which are practised by the pre-school. For example, the sick child policy and the high standards of cleanliness all contribute to the children's good health. Children use the outdoor area and gain fresh air and exercise. Staff are well informed about children's health issues and all relevant records and documents are in place. However, the temperature of the fridge is not checked and recorded to ensure food items are maintained at the correct temperature. The manager holds a first aid certificate and other staff are booked to attend courses. As a staff team they are confident they can administer first aid to the children to protect their health.

Children learn about the benefits of a healthy diet. They are provided with varied, nutritious snacks in accordance to their needs and any allergies or dietary requirements are complied with. Snacks are varied and healthy and children enjoy trying fruits and vegetables as part of the government initiative to provide these for the pre-school. During snacks and lunch club children sit as a group enjoying a wonderful social time together. Staff involve the children in topics and discussions about healthy eating and the effect this has on our bodies. Children extend this learning into their own role play and carry on conversations as they talk about the beetroots and carrots they have grown and as they use their imaginations to 'cook' healthy food in the home area. Staff involve children in cooking activities where they can learn about food preparation as they make sandwiches, fruit salads, fresh bread and pizzas. This has a positive impact on their understanding of keeping healthy. Those children that stay for the lunch club have healthy, nourishing packed lunches prepared at home and stored in the fridge. Children are offered regular drinks during the day. However, they do not have free access to water during the session to increase their independence and ensure they remain hydrated. They enjoy their meals because staff make it a fun time sitting with the children having their own lunch and joining in conversations. These social times are enriched because the children have gained excellent social skills and good manners.

Children enjoy a varied range of equipment to promote a healthy life and their physical development. They take part in activities to encourage them to use their bodies to keep fit as

they run around in the playground playing chase and having races. Simple pleasures such as blowing and catching bubbles also increase children's physical skills as they chase, jump and clap at the bubbles. Children move with confidence and skill as they walk along a painted line holding out their arms for balance. The outdoor area is shared with the adjoining school and the children benefit from the open space, access to the playing fields and the climbing and balancing equipment. They join in enthusiastically in discussions about their bodies and how they work. They feel their heart and talk about how it beats faster and slower. Children's dexterity and hand and eye coordination is developed well as they enjoy playing with small figures, construction equipment and one-handed tools. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide a broad range of stimulating physical play experiences for younger children to boost their confidence and help them learn about their own bodies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children, parents and carers are welcomed into a stimulating, bright and cheerful environment with examples of the children's work displayed, good quality equipment and because staff set the room up prior to children's arrival making it exciting and interesting when they enter. The playroom is set out with designated areas such as the book area, dressing-up, art and craft, role play and construction. Children move easily around with plenty of clear floor space to spread out and play. Children have shared access to the school grounds which enables them to have a wide open space to take part in physical activities and to investigate and explore nature in the wooded area and playing fields. On wet days children are able to use the school hall. All areas are extremely clean and safe which further promotes children welfare.

Children have free access to an abundance of high quality play materials that are kept in well stocked storage cupboards and shelves. These are selected to ensure they are age-appropriate and to provide children with varied exciting and purposeful play and learning. Children are all occupied as they move freely around the activities and equipment sharing their play with others. All items are checked for safety before they are used and children respect their toys and resources as they play and when they help to tidy them away.

Children's safety is paramount to the organisation of the pre-school. Staff recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these using effective risk assessment and daily checks. Efficient security measures are in place to protect the children from harm and promote safety around the pre-school. For example, safe heating systems, safety glass, socket covers and secure procedures for outings. These ensure children's protection at all times. All staff share in the responsibility for keeping the children safe and are fully aware of the procedures in place to do so. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe in the group as they explain and practise simple procedures such as the emergency evacuation drill and teaching children the boundaries in place to keep safe in pre-school. Children apply these as they move around both indoors and outside. They know not to throw toys, ask to be escorted to the toilets and know to stay on the narrow path when walking to the playground. Road safety is also practised when going on outings or walks around the village. Staff effectively explain safety to the children. Supervision is high throughout the pre-school while giving children opportunity to explore within a safe environment.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through current policies and procedures for the protection of children. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection and some have recently attended training to further their understanding. This ensures their good practice is up to date and any concerns are dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate manner. All procedures are up to date and supporting literature and comprehensive records are in place and available for staff. A designated person is responsible to share information with outside agencies to ensure children are protected at all times. Parents are aware of the groups responsibility to protect the children in their care and appropriate guidelines are followed at all times. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of any allegations made against them as these are included in the child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, contented and secure throughout the pre-school. They confidently access the stimulating and challenging range of activities and form secure relationships with staff and other children. Staff enjoy the time spent with the children playing and interacting together which has a positive effect on the children's enjoyment and achievements. Staff have an increasing awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has started to have a positive effect on the younger children's progress. They plan activities in line with this framework using the different components and have gained a secure knowledge of how children learn through their play. Children's development is recorded in line with this framework and shows the progress they make. These are used to gain a secure starting point for the Foundation Stage.

Staff show respect to the children which helps children relate to caring for others and showing consideration. For example, when two children were racing each other, one slowed down to let the other child catch up so they could win the race together. Relationships are positive and caring. Staff give children a great deal of praise and encouragement as they receive cuddles and attention. This increases their sense of well-being and contentment. They are eager to participate in the activities because staff make them fun and interesting. For example, painting on the two way mirror board and playing hospitals to extend the topic about keeping healthy. Children listen to their hearts and went to see the 'doctor' at the hospital when their heart had stopped beating. They enjoy the various activities such as a domestic play area, creative activities, using their imaginations in a variety of ways and gaining an understanding of the computer.

A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's social skills, self-esteem, confidence and emotional well-being. This is evident as children stand up in a group and sing a favourite song. Young children develop their communication skills as they respond to others around them and take part in language rich conversations and discussion at group time. They are responsive to new experiences and are directly involved and interested in their play. They extend this themselves as they link it into the various themes and topics. For example, making cut outs of themselves and fitting body parts onto these such as eyes, nose, mouth and internal organs. They are starting to learn about responsibilities and are allowed to make errors, decisions and choices as they select activities and share their play with others.

Nursery Education

Children are secure, happy and occupied during their time at the pre-school. They move confidently and enthusiastically between activities playing freely and happily together. Older children are invited to participate in some structured learning activities to develop skills such as literacy and mathematical knowledge. They have a strong sense of belonging as they seek out friends, and clearly know the daily routine. They become absorbed as they play and concentration levels are growing as they take part in activities that interest them. Children involve staff in their activities such as playing doctors. The adult becomes the patient while the child takes their blood pressure, listens to their heart and wraps bandages on the broken bones. Staff are adept at stepping back letting a child take over the activity using their own skills and imaginations. Behaviour is very good as the children know what is expected of them. Children enjoy using language in their imaginative play and during group discussion as they happily talk about personal events and join in talking about body parts and eating healthily. They are confident sharing their views and opinions and use their speech to explore and interact during real and imaginary play. Children thoroughly enjoy the story times and listen attentively to the story. They confidently recognise their own names and some can write this on their own work. However, their emergent reading and word recognition is limited as there are no labels on familiar objects around the room.

Children confidently count and can recognise written numbers and match objects. Resources for simple problem solving, measuring and weighing are freely available to increase children's mathematical thinking as they apply their own skills, to underpin their knowledge and experiences. Some practical hands on activities increase children's sorting and counting skills such as the electronic number mat, keeping charts of eye colours of children in the group and weighing and measuring while learning about capacity and heavy and light objects. Staff provide children with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They have fun with the computer and this shows their growing skills with the mouse and keyboard functions. They access various learning programs to support their literacy and numeracy skills. Children explore how things grow and change as they plant flowers and grow beetroot and carrots. However, children do not have regular opportunity to explore and investigate manmade objects using their own exploratory skills and knowledge to discover how things work. Children take part in music sessions and have opportunity to try different instruments making loud and soft noises and discovering rhythm and beat. Creative activities give children a sense of achievement as they are able to create spontaneously, working at their own pace, while using their own imaginations and skills. Some activities are adult led where children make glasses, and eye masks and stick favourite foods onto paper plates. Other activities are led by the children and examples of their art work are well displayed which gives them opportunity to show pride in their work. Their imaginations are uninhibited as they engage in many different aspects of role play. They have used this in the domestic area cooking healthy foods, as they play doctors and nurses in the hospital area making staff and dolls better and when playing as a group with the large dolls house and with the wooden castle, knights and dragons.

Children's achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones. Staff use on-going observations extremely well to plan the next steps in children's learning. Written observation and accompanying photographs give clear examples of children's progress and achievements. These identify any gaps in a child's learning which staff use when developing future planning. Each child has a scrap book which include wonderful examples of their work, and written

observations of the child taking part in an activity. Parents also have opportunity to share their comments and these books supplement the children's development records.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a growing knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to occupy and stimulate children through different aspects of their learning. Staff are secure in their practice which impacts on children's high levels of confidence and security and their ability to socialise with others. Staff know the children well and have created a realistic balance between adult-led and child-initiated play. They know when to step back and let children invite them into their play while being supportive and attentive to their needs. Staff's open-ended questioning skills are excellent as they encourage children to think for themselves and to take part in discussions. They are excellent role models and inspire, praise and encourage children to try things for themselves. This helps children succeed and builds their self-reliance skills and confidence. Staff extend children's capabilities and arouse their natural curiosity to learn through their play because they make the activities interesting and will link different themes and topics together. For example, healthy eating and healthy bodies. Planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively. It includes the aims and objectives of each activity and the resources required. Each key activity is fully evaluated to help staff repeat or improve this if it is used again and to ensure it has meet the aims and learning objectives. Staff are enthusiastic and dedicated to their role in children's care, learning and play and this impacts positively on children's enjoyment for learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are treated with equal care, respect and concern for their needs. Full information is gained from parents to enable staff to meet any differing needs a child may exhibit. Staff are clearly committed to supporting each child and suitable systems are in place to do so. Staff ensure each child is made to feel special, important and unique and ensures they have the right to the same experiences and to develop alongside their peers. The group are supported by the local inclusion officer. Children gain a positive view of the wider world by joining in with both familiar and unfamiliar festivals and celebrations. For example, Chinese New Year, Yom Kippur, Ramadan, the saints days, Christmas and Easter. They access a range of resources such as dressing up clothes, small figures, dolls and multicultural books. Staff are excellent role models and use positive strategies to introduce children to good manners and show kindness and respect to others. This helps children feel valued and respected by staff and peers. Worthwhile opportunities are made for children to explore, acknowledge and value both similarities and differences between themselves and others. This enables them to play in an environment where they are nurtured by adults and free from any type of stereotyping or discrimination. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children have a secure understanding of the boundaries within the pre-school and respond positively to direction from adults. All staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour and this impacts positively on the children because they know what is expected of them. Children have developed an understanding between right and wrong because staff use highly effective behaviour management strategies. If children are unable to resolve differences or conflict themselves then staff will intervene, distract a child or explain to the children about sharing

and being kind. This helps defuse a situation and distracts and engages children in worthwhile activities. Children's self-esteem is nurtured and promoted with praise and encouragement by staff. A calm, positive, fun and interesting environment has been created by children and staff. This has a positive impact on behaviour because children are occupied and have learnt the rules of the setting. Staff are excellent role models and are kind and considerate to each other and the children. Children generally follow this example by spontaneously saying sorry if they have hurt another child and generally being kind and caring towards others.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. This positive relationship impacts significantly on each child's sense of belonging, their security, trust and well-being. Staff are friendly and approachable and have created a relaxed, happy atmosphere which impacts on both adults and children. Parents play an active role in their child's care with the regular exchange of information. They receive substantial information about their child's care and the play and learning they participate in. They are invited to consultation evenings, are involved in fund raising, sports day and sitting on the committee. An open door policy is extended to all parents and they are encouraged to share in the running of the group with a parents helper rota. This helps parents feel secure and at ease, confident with the care provided for their child. Parents are fully informed about their child's progress and achievements and have information about the curriculum and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Parents have access to the groups policies and procedures and are given additional information about the lesson plans and activities their child is involved with. This helps parents to extend activities at home with their child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The effective and efficient organisation throughout the playgroup ensures children's care and learning is successfully enhanced. The leadership and management is good. The manager continually extends her knowledge through training and ensures staff can access a training program to enhance their qualifications. She works closely with the deputy to ensure all aspects of the organisation meets the needs of the children attending. A robust system is in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. Staff already in post are given regular appraisals to help improve their practise and recognise their successes. Staff have a secure knowledge of the National Standards and implement these throughout the pre-school. This is enhanced with their growing knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. The manager would like all staff to attend training in these areas to further enhance their knowledge and skills when working with the children. High regard for the welfare of the children, well-planned activities, and sustained levels of staff support contribute to children's well-being, enjoyment and achievements. Staff work extremely well together each bring their own strengths and experinces to enrich the care and learning they provide for the children. They are positive, motivated and dedicated to this care which impacts on the children's progress and achievements. A close relationship with the adjoining school have been established and this helps when children move on to the school.

The premises are very well-organised. Indoor space is managed and arranged into different activity areas to maximize the play opportunities for children. It ensures children can move around safely and independently as they access the activities of their own choice. Well-organised

daily routines help children understand what happens next and gives them ample opportunity to work and play at their own pace. Staff use the time spent with the children in a meaningful way to ensure they have opportunity to interact and give appropriate adult attention to each child. This effective level of support helps children relate to the adults, to respond well to others and aids their learning.

Children's welfare is maintained because staff share in the responsibility for the highly effective organisation of all records and documents. These are kept secure in a locked cupboard and are up to date. However, staff records are not always kept on site and available for inspection at any time to provide evidence that children are cared for by staff with appropriate qualifications and experience. Staff are actively involved in evaluating and improving their own practice and work closely together with the committee to improve and enhance records and documents for the care and welfare of the children. For example, a system is now in place to record any complaints and the action taken to rectify these. Staff work closely together to plan and coordinate the activities and routines for the children. They are very well deployed throughout each session and have designated roles such as child protection, special needs and behaviour management. This ensures the work load is spread between them and helps staff work together as a team. An inclusive environment has been created which clearly shows that each child matters. Overall, the needs of the children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there was one recommendation raised and two key issues. To review documentation to ensure procedures comply with the National Standards, to ensure planning is balanced and the curriculum is reflected in the short term plans with the daily routine and to develop children's assessment records.

All policies and procedures have been reviewed this year and comply with the National Standards. They are freely available for parents to read. Planning has been revised and provides a balanced curriculum across all six areas of learning. The short term plans take account of the daily routine and allows a flexible approach so children can have some input into the activities and play opportunities they would like to take part in. Children's assessments have been developed and show a clear picture of the children's progress and achievements across the early learning goals. These are supported by scrap books for each child with further observations and examples of the children's own work.

Complaints 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.

On the 29 March 2006 Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 11 (behaviour management). Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to the provision on the 31 March 2006 to investigate these concerns.

The provider was not found to be in breach of National Standard 11. However, an action was given under National Standard 13 (child protection) to "ensure the written statement based

on the procedures laid out in the Government booklet 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused- Summary' includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer".

Two further actions were also given under National Standard 14 (documentation) these are to "maintain a record of incidents or events that happen within the pre-school" and also to "inform Ofsted of any significant event within 14 days of this occurring".

Ofsted expects a reply to the actions by the 25 May 2006. Ofsted received a satisfactory response to the actions on the 19 May 2006 and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- devise a system to check and record fridge temperatures on a daily basis
- ensure fresh drinking water is available to the children at all times
- ensure records are always available for inspection by the early years child care inspector with regard to staff records.

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to develop early reading skills and word recognition with labels on everyday objects
- extend resources and opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world, with regard to regular opportunities for discovery and exploration and to investigate how inanimate objects work.

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