

Curious Kittens Day Nursery (Kings Road)
Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	117108
Inspection date	14 March 2007
Inspector	Sara Jane Frost
Setting Address	Kings Road, Devonport, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 5QG
Telephone number	01752 305872
E-mail	
Registered person	Plymouth College of Further Education
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Curious Kittens Day Nursery (Kings Road) has been on its present site since 1996. It serves the students and staff of Plymouth College of Further Education. If places are available they can also be offered to children in the wider community.

The nursery operates from a purpose built building, of which they have exclusive use. There are three main rooms, two offices and associated facilities. There is a secure tarmac area for outside play which includes an area with a safety surface and climbing equipment.

A maximum of 48 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 08.15 until 17.30, for 51 weeks of the year, closing over the Christmas period. Before and after school care is also available for older children up to the age of 12.

There are 61 children currently on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 staff working a variety of full time and part time hours with the children. The childcare manager holds an NVQ 4 in Management, and an Institute of Management Certificate. Of the remaining staff one holds a level 2 qualification and the others hold level 3. The nursery receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and very inviting environment. Children learn excellent hygiene practices, for example, a two-year-old knew having dropped some food on the floor it was dirty and informed a member of staff it needed to be thrown away. Older children have developed a high level of understanding of their personal care. For example, children independently take themselves to the toilet, and after hand washing children ensure the used hand towel is placed in the wash basket. The staff's good clear nappy changing procedures, of ensuring the changing mats are clean before and after use, wearing disposable aprons and gloves and disposing of nappies hygienically minimises the risk of risk cross-infection. Staff engage with children when changing their nappies through conversation and use of attractive mobiles above the children's heads. Staff in the baby room are able to identify babies' needs and ensure they can rest or play accordingly. Children's health needs are very well met as staff are diligent in recording accidents and ensuring the environment is clean.

Children's dietary needs are very well met as staff are very aware of any special requirements or allergies. The very clear procedure ensures children's privacy is maintained. Staff from the nursery have liaised with the college catering staff to ensure well balanced nutritional meals are provided. When distributing meals, staff wear disposable aprons and gloves. Children have access to drinks throughout the day with staff recognising when the babies need a drink. Staff liaise with parents on the babies' individual feeding needs, with any food provided by parents stored appropriately labelled in the fridge.

Very good use is made of the outdoor facilities. Children have opportunities throughout the day to enjoy the fresh air. They take part in activities that develop their physical skills, such as riding on bikes, learning how to use a scooter as well as using bats and balls. Older children are developing strength and control in their large and small muscles. They confidently use small tools within the classroom, such as scissors in the creative area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in premises which are secure, very well organised and well maintained. Children are well protected from hazards within the setting as risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis. Each room is clearly well laid out allowing children to move freely and safely around between activities. The toilets in both rooms enable children to use them easily and safely and this promotes their independence. Staff are vigilant with regards to keeping children safe and the good attention to safety issues, for example, the safety surfacing around the climbing frame allows children to freely play and protect them from bumps.

The nursery has very good clear safety procedures. Staff and children are fully aware of the fire procedures as these are regularly conducted. Children's safety in an emergency is well supported, for example, each room has their own 'red fire evacuation bag' sited by the emergency

exit. It is collected by the designated member of staff as they evacuate the building. Items in the bag vary depending on the age group and room. For example, reins in the toddlers' bag ensure an excellent awareness of children's safety should the nursery have to evacuate from their grounds and join the main college.

Each room has a broad range of stimulating resources which are in good condition. The range of resources provided ensures children are appropriately stimulated. The staff in the baby room for example, provide varied and interesting opportunities; photographs show babies clearly enjoying the experience of texture through the use of shredded paper.

Children are well protected from harm because staff have a very good understanding of child protection and their responsibilities in this area. All staff are encouraged to develop their knowledge of child protection issues through on-going training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have a very good knowledge of Birth to three matters and the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Activities planned in both the baby and the toddler rooms are linked to the Birth to three matters framework, for more able toddlers activities are expanded to challenge the children. Their excellent understanding of children's development enables all children to take calculated risks and be confident to try new skills, for example, in the baby room there are strategically placed chairs to encourage children to pull themselves up. Baby sign is used to encourage children's early communication skills. Both babies and the toddlers are given opportunities to explore their sensory skills by providing a varying range of resources, such as paint, water, bubbles and paper. Babies are held and comforted according to their individual needs. Staff are able to recognise individual children's needs and support them well. For example, a toddler became very tired at lunch time and with assistance from staff was able to leave the table and lie down for a sleep, secure in the knowledge his lunch would be ready for him after his sleep. Children clearly enjoy their experiences in this calm happy environment as they eagerly enter the setting. Babies and toddlers clearly loved taking part in the action songs and nursery rhymes, toddlers being able to choose the songs, and have the opportunity to sing to their friends. Staff are attentive and ensure children are provided with a range of resources that feed their inquisitive minds, for example, they press a button which makes a character jump up. Staff have developed a good rapport with the children and children interact well with staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The pre-school leader and staff who support her demonstrate a very clear knowledge of the Foundation stage and children's development. They implement the nursery's education curriculum to provide a wide range of activities and experiences to cover all areas of children's learning. Planning is clear and links to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Weekly target activities focus on key learning intentions for individual children. Comprehensive assessment records show how children progress and these are used to plan the next steps in children's learning. Children's interests, individual needs and skills are obtained by staff as they start at the nursery. The information gained is used to ensure children are able to achieve to their best of their ability. The planned programme is not set in concrete, staff show flexibility within the session to allow children to learn at their own pace. There is a very good balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Very good effective teaching ensures more able children's learning is extended, for example, allowing a child to copy her own prose to go inside her mother's day card.

Children are engaged by the range of stimulating activities and enter the room with excitement. Children are eager to learn, become engrossed in the activities and confident to try new experiences. They listen intently to and join with stories such as 'We are going on a bear hunt'. They are able to sit and listen to each other at circle time and revisit through discussion the activities they have accessed. Children and staff confidently use sign language throughout the whole nursery; this encourages children with learning difficulties to participate fully and confidently within the setting. Older children are confident in writing their own names and many are able to recognise each other's. More able children are able to copy simple sentences. Children ably use mathematical language in everyday play and daily routines.

Children's imagination is fostered well, as the role play area is regularly changed. The current role play area is a 'vets' and is used to its full potential as it is very popular with the children. The range of additional materials supplied encourages children's writing skills, for example, through recording the name of the patient, its illness, making additional appointments and the cost. Children's vocabulary is further developed as they are introduced to use new vocabulary such as 'next customer'. Children are learning about and fascinated with the life cycle of a frog, paintings on the windows are a good visual source of the process and frog spawn within the classroom brings the process to life. Children have access to programmable toys and regularly use the computer equipment.

Children become involved as they create their own 'Mother's Day' cards. Their skills are further encouraged when they make three-dimensional models by the use of junk materials. The regular opportunities of using the outdoor facilities help to develop children's physical skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children have very good relationships with staff and each other. Children's key staff have sound knowledge of their individual needs. All children are warmly welcomed and fully included. Staff take time to ensure that children new to the nursery are fully settled in. Displays of children's work as well as photographs of themselves assist in promoting a positive self-image and a sense of belonging. Children are eager to show with pride their completed art work to adults. Children's behaviour is extremely good. Older children are able to share very well and show concern for each other. For example, having noticed his friend had not been offered some snack, he ensured his friend was given snack before taking his own. Children respond very well to staff and older children happily follow simple instructions. For example, every child in the pre-school room took an active part at tidy up time. Staff gently support younger children in turn taking and sharing. All staff act as calm role models and lead by setting good examples. Good behaviour and manners are praised and rewarded. Good opportunities are provided for children to learn about themselves, each other and the wider community, this is achieved through planned activities, visitors to the nursery and those who become involved with the nursery through fund raising for various charities, such as 'children in need' and 'red nose day'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have special needs are well cared for and very well supported. Staff are experienced in devising strategies to encourage all children to learn and develop. They are able to plan appropriately and do seek additional advice from local agencies. A deputy has been identified to work closely to assist the co-ordinator in this area. Children's individual needs are well known and respected.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. This excellent partnership contributes significantly to the children's well being within the nursery. Parents report how the nursery staff are very accommodating. For example, at home a child is cuddled when she goes to sleep; this is continued by staff within the nursery. Another parent explained how very supportive staff are in relation to potty training. Staff ensure children's needs and interests are sought from parents before the child starts at the nursery. This is reviewed on a regular basis. Parents receive very good informative daily verbal feedback back from key staff in all rooms. This ensures parents are kept fully informed of their child's day. Additional written material is provided especially for parents with babies. For example, written records are clearly kept for sleep patterns, food intake, and their general well-being. Parents whose children receive funded education are full of praise for the nursery. They particularly like the good two-way communication process the nursery provides. Children are very proud of their 'Link bags' which are used effectively between settings to further forge good working relationships. Parents are provided with opportunities to view the daily planning and receive regular newsletters. They are also provided with a termly report that informs them of how their children are progressing and developing.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit from this very well organised environment where everything runs smoothly. The nursery's indoor and outdoor facilities are very well laid out and used effectively throughout the day.

The good organisation of staff ensures they are deployed effectively throughout the whole nursery, particularly during staff breaks. Staff work very well as a team, this ensures the appropriate support to the children is maintained. Children benefit from highly skilled and qualified staff who show a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The nursery provides an effective well run provision as all the required regulatory documentation is in place. This contributes to the children's safety, well-being and health.

The leadership and management is outstanding, this has a positive effect on the care and education provided for the children. The management and staff have developed very good procedures to ensure the nursery is effectively monitored for the benefit of the children. Staff reflect, monitor and improve their practice as they regularly conduct staff meetings and welcome support from the local authority agencies. The excellent appraisal system ensures that the policies and procedures are consistently applied. The positive commitment to improving the provision benefits the children and their parents. The high quality of the provision means that the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspections recommended that the nursery improve the regularity with which healthy items are included in snack and meal times; and nursery education inspection recommended that consideration should be given to improving children's access to books. The management in conjunction with the college catering department have produced a range of well balanced nutritional daily meals and snacks that include a good range of fresh fruit and vegetables. The menus are displayed in all rooms for all parents to access.

By attractively presenting materials at child height around the nursery and particularly in the pre-school room children can easily access reading and reference books.

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 outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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