



Cliffe Woods Pre -School & The Acorn Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY241306
Inspection date	01 February 2007
Inspector	Stephanie Graves
Setting Address	Cliffe Woods CP School, View Road, Rochester, Kent, ME3 8UJ
Telephone number	01634 222667
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Registered person	Cliffe Woods Pre School
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 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?

Cliffe Woods Pre-School and The Acorn Club opened in 1989 and operates from one classroom within the primary school. It is situated in Cliffe Woods, Rochester, Kent. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.00 and The Acorn Out of School Club is open 15.15 to 18.00, both during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area as well as the school field and gym.

There are currently 76 children aged from two to under five years on roll within the pre-school. Of these, 40 children receive funding for Nursery Education. There are 35 children aged from three to eight years on roll at the Acorn Out of School Club. Children attend from the local area and neighbouring communities. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The pre-school employs ten members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from local authority advisors and works closely with a range of outside agencies.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about good health and hygiene issues in a variety of ways. For example, they know they must wash their hands 'otherwise you might get germs' and understand when and why this practice is necessary. They are encouraged to be independent with routine self help skills, including toilet visits and wiping their own noses. Many effective procedures are in place to help prevent cross infection. This includes the use of disposable gloves and nappy bags during nappy changes and paper towels for hand drying. Toys and equipment are regularly cleaned with antibacterial solution. Children benefit from procedures which ensure they are well cared for if they have an accident or become ill. For instance, accidents are recorded and children remain at home if they have infectious ailments. A range of information is made available to parents regarding communicable illnesses.

Children are actively involved in experiences which help them to learn about healthy diets. These include talking about their favourite foods and using a range of art and craft materials to make examples. Their creations are displayed and include options such as pasta, broccoli and a selection of fruit. Drinking water is readily available and children help themselves. Packed lunches are stored appropriately and children are encouraged to make healthy choices regarding the snacks they eat. They can choose from options including bread sticks, raisins, apple or a plain biscuit. Labels, such as 'food that is healthy for you', help reinforce children's understanding. Children attending the out of school club enjoy a variety of sandwiches with their favourite fillings as well as warmer options, including beans on toast, soup and pasta. Staff and parents work closely together to ensure children's individual dietary needs are met.

Children take part in various physical activities and learn about the benefits of exercise through the nursery education curriculum. They can experience many fine manipulative experiences as well as vigorous outdoor play and activities within the school gym. They understand the effect physical exercise has on their bodies, and staff ask effective questions to help them make connections. For example, after an energetic outdoor activity using a play parachute, a member of staff asks them 'what do you need now?' Children are heard to answer with 'a drink' and 'a rest' as they return to the pre-school room.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children can play and learn within a safe, secure and welcoming environment. There is plenty of space to move around and play within safe boundaries. The toys and equipment are checked regularly for safety and the majority are stored effectively to promote free choice and easy access. However, a few resources stacked in the toilet areas may present a risk to children if they attempt to access them. An ongoing risk assessment ensures key hazards are identified

and reduced. For example, security around the main entrance door has been addressed to ensure children are unable to open the door independently. Children learn the importance of keeping safe through meaningful staff explanations and well planned activities. For example, they know they are allowed to run 'in the gym or in the playground' rather than in the pre-school room, in case they fall and hurt themselves. They learn the importance of not running with their hands in their pockets when playing outside, in case they trip over.

Children are well cared for through effective procedures and courses of action, which promote their welfare and safety at all times. This includes an emergency evacuation procedure which is practised regularly with the children. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the necessary measures to help safeguard children and the group's policy reflects current requirements.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive confidently and are comfortable and settled within the pre-school. They quickly involve themselves with wide a range of stimulating toys, resources and free play experiences. These include areas to explore construction, art and craft, puzzles, small world activity sets, mark making, role play and a comfortable book area. Children are at ease with familiar staff who spend most of their time playing and talking with them. They have a sound understanding of the experiences required to enable children to progress in all areas of learning. Children attending the out of school provision are able to play outside after their school day and can access activities to suit their needs. They have a designated homework area, where they also have access to the computers. The pre-school has implemented the Birth to three matters framework and staff adapt activities to meet the developmental needs of the younger children attending. Young children enjoy investigating, for instance, through resources such as play dough, construction and art and craft activities. They are encouraged to lead in their play and make choices. Role play resources encourage young children to represent real life scenarios as they play. For example, they use notebooks to make menus and pretend to order food, including 'pancakes' and 'yoghurt'. They take part in activities including music and movement experiences, which help to develop their confidence and ability to listen and respond as part of a group. Children's creations are beautifully displayed, which helps to promote a sense of pride in their achievements.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Their learning and achievements are good in relation to their initial starting points and capabilities. This is because the staff working with them understand the Foundation Stage requirements and provide a broad and balanced curriculum. They observe and assess children's learning from when they join the group until they leave, at which time a transfer document is completed. Planning is well documented and differentiation ensures the needs of all children are addressed. The next steps in children's learning build on what they already know and can do. These are recorded on individual plans and inform the future planning of activities. Activity plans help to ensure learning objectives are met and regular evaluations help to monitor the effectiveness of the activities provided.

Children are confident, friendly and play well together. They are becoming independent learners as they move around the room and make choices from a very good range of toys, resources and activities. Staff effectively gain and maintain children's interest, for instance, during small group activities and discussions. They ask questions and include the children in teaching concepts, which encourages them to concentrate and focus well. They are able to select a variety of tools to make marks and learn to write their names using correctly formed letters. They learn to link sounds and letters, for example, as they use a keyboard to write their names on the computer. Children concentrate during familiar stories and enjoy contributing to storylines. They are sociable and have many opportunities to discuss their ideas and favourite activities.

A wide variety of mathematical resources and experiences are provided. Children are gaining confidence with numbers, counting and shape recognition. They are able to access matching and sequencing activities and use language such as 'taller' and 'smaller' to describe the size of their constructed creations. Staff imaginatively promote children's ability to work out problems. For example, when counting 23 children, they ask 'how many pairs of shoes is that?' and 'how many cups and plates?' Children respond with the correct answers, demonstrating a good understanding of these concepts. Children show curiosity for living things. For example, they observe the pre-school pets and ask questions, such as 'is this his house?', as they talk with a member of staff about the pet hamster. They investigate using their senses, for example, as they listen to a range of sounds and identify a 'storm', a 'firework' and 'sheep'. They enjoy exploring the touch, taste and smell of various foods. Labels on displays include children's comments, such as a lemon feels 'soft and smooth' and a pineapple 'spiky and prickly'. 'Smells we like' include strawberries and mint.

Children are developing good hand-eye co-ordination as they pour drinks, practice scissors control and drag and click the mouse when using the computer. Regular use of the outdoor areas and school gym promotes children's physical skills. They can play with a range of resources, including climbing equipment and enjoy balancing along the yellow lines around the playground. They show a sense of great excitement during physical play, for example, as they flip the play parachute 'up' and 'down' and shriek with delight as they shake a soft toy through a hole in the centre. Children are creative and enjoy music and movement activities. They play an active part as they sing familiar songs, pretend to be jungle animals and play with musical instruments. Staff provide resources to extend concepts relating to children's creative development. These include the provision of paper plates, plastic cups, cereal and uncooked rice for them to make their own 'musical instrument'.

Overall, the provision plans and provides a very good range of activities, experiences and play opportunities, to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their parents and carers receive a warm welcome into the pre-school and all children are cared for according to their individual needs. This is because staff work with parents to ensure their needs are addressed and they are fully attentive and enjoy being with them. The younger children are settled and comfortable because they are regularly acknowledged

and affirmed by staff who support them well. This helps to develop a sense of self assurance and confidence when making choices and seeking comfort or help. Children learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and others through the range of toys, resources and activities, which promote positive images of diversity. They understand the difference between right and wrong. This is because staff frequently remind them of the setting's rules, which helps to pre-empt any unwanted behaviour. Staff are good role models, support children according to their age and stage of development and regularly praise their achievements and good behaviour.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are extremely well supported by dedicated staff. They provide appropriate resources and develop strategies with parents and outside agencies to help meet children's specific needs. All children benefit from consistency of care because staff and parents work closely together to support their needs. Information is shared and parents know they are welcome into the setting to speak with staff at any time. A suggestion box is available for parents to make any written comments. The provider takes positive steps to ensure that parents are kept well informed about all relevant policies and procedures.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education feel they receive good quality information. They value the open door policy and being able to take individual progress records home. However, there is currently no clear system in place for parents to talk to their child's key worker and contribute to their child's development records. Curriculum plans are clearly displayed along with a range of other information. Parents are welcomed into the pre-school to share their special interests and skills with the children, which helps to reinforce children's learning.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are highly enthusiastic when playing together and the wide variety of stimulating play and learning experiences helps to develop their social skills. Children are well behaved and share and take turns as they play. They enjoy regular opportunities to share their home news and interests.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, stimulating and very well organised environment. They feel secure and have good relationships with the staff who care for them. Children attending the out of school club can access a range of freely accessible activities and opportunities to rest after their school day. Effective systems are in place to ensure the adults working with children are suitable to do so and staff training needs are addressed. The registration certificate is displayed clearly and the necessary records are in place and shared with parents. These include daily attendance records for children and staff. Children's welfare, care and learning are very well promoted, due to the range of policies and procedures, which reflect current requirements and help to underpin the group's professional practice.

The leadership and management is good. Staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage is evident and there are clear aims for the personal development and achievements of all children. Planning covers all areas of the curriculum and staff are dedicated to the integration of care and nursery education, to promote successful outcomes in all areas of child development. The provision of

equipment, toys and resources is good and children are progressing well. The regular monitoring of teaching and learning means the overall effectiveness of the curriculum is evaluated well. The setting has close links with the primary school, which helps to prepare children for school life.

The group is committed towards the continuing improvement of the provision to ensure children can enjoy, achieve and progress developmentally as they play and learn. The pre-school provides a professional service. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was left with two recommendations. These were to display different examples of writing and to develop the operational plan.

The recommendations have been addressed. There is a range of print around the room including posters and labels, which promote positive images of diversity and the operational plan has been developed well.

At the last inspection of Nursery Education four key issues were raised. These included improving the range of writing opportunities for children, develop mathematical opportunities and identifying learning outcomes for children. The provider was also asked to ensure systems for recording children's progress were improved and information made available to parents.

The key issues have all been addressed. There are many mark making and mathematical opportunities available to children, and learning outcomes are clearly identified. Children's progress records have been developed and are made available to parents.

The provider has taken positive steps towards improving the service provided and ensuring children are safe and well cared for at all times.

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):

- promote children's good health by ensuring staff responsible for the preparation and handling of food are fully aware of requirements relating to food safety and hygiene
- promote children's safety by reviewing the storage of some resources and equipment in the toilet area.

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):

- promote the partnership with parents by continuing to devise ways for them to have opportunities to visit the setting to discuss their children's progress.

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