

Imagine Co-operative Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY275796
Inspection date	18 May 2005
Inspector	Carole Argles
Setting Address	Imagine Co-operative Childcare, Shrewsbury Road, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 3AH
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Registered person	Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Co-Operative Society
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Imagine Co-operative Childcare is a neighbourhood nursery which opened in 2004. It is one of five nurseries run by Oxford, Swindon and Gloucester Co-operative Society. It operates from four playrooms in purpose built premises in Shrewsbury Road, Swindon. There is an enclosed outside play area. The nursery serves families in the local area.

A maximum of 73 children aged under 8 years may attend the nursery at any one time. It is not registered to provide overnight care. The nursery usually accepts children aged from 3 months to school age. It is open 5 days a week all year round except bank holidays. Sessions are from 08.00 to 18.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 61 children aged from 3 months to 4 years on roll. Of these, 17 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children who have special educational needs and there are no children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 staff who work with the children. There are 12 staff including the manager who hold an appropriate early years qualification and 1 member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

All children, including weaning babies, eat healthy and nutritious food which is freshly prepared on the premises. This includes a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. The meals are varied and attractive to the children who usually eat well. Children's dietary needs are catered for and there are good procedures to ensure that babies and young children are safely introduced to new foods to avoid the likelihood of an allergic response. Drinking water is readily available for all children and many older children access this independently as they begin to recognise their own needs. Young children and babies are usually looked after by familiar staff, for example during nappy changing. This helps them feel comfortable and develop a positive sense of well-being.

The children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute towards their good health. They play outside daily either on a grass area or a covered patio where they use a suitable range of equipment including wheeled toys and balls. They also take part in physical activities inside including movement to music where they enjoy moving in different ways while pretending to be various animals. The children are developing good control and coordination. They are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle because they enjoy these activities.

The children are cared for in clean premises and there are effective procedures in place to minimise the risk of infection spreading between them. For example, the staff maintain good hygiene during nappy changing and they make sure that all the toys and equipment are kept clean. The children learn about the importance of good hygiene, for example washing their hands before meals. The children are protected because staff implement good procedures for keeping accident records, administering medication and many staff have taken first aid training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. All toys and equipment are of good quality, well maintained and appropriate to the ages of the children using them. The children are protected because the staff ensure that basic safety equipment, such as socket covers, are in place. They also take additional precautions, for example, padding internal pillars so that the children can move around the building safely. The staff regularly review the risk assessments and check the outside area daily before use. The children are well supervised at all times. Sleeping babies are checked frequently and carefully by the staff. These actions minimise the risks to the children and help to keep them safe.

Children's welfare is supported because the manager and staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures which they update regularly during in-house training.

The children learn about the importance of keeping themselves safe both in the nursery and when out. For example, they are reminded to take care when using equipment like scissors or the climbing frame, and they talk about the importance of road safety during pretend play activities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are happy and settled at the nursery and most separate readily from their parents and carers. Children of all ages take part in a range of activities which support their development. These include music, stories, pretend play, art and physical activities as well as activities which help develop their intellectual skills. There are many opportunities for children to make choices, for example, about the fruit they eat for their snack. There is a good range of equipment and toys appropriate to the needs of all children. Many resources are stored so the children can select them independently and this allows them to make choices about their play and follow their interests. The children are becoming independent with their personal care, for example washing their hands or dressing, and some very young children can feed themselves competently with a spoon. The children form good relationships with the staff and go to them readily for comfort and assistance.

The babies and young children are able to follow their individual routines and staff make detailed notes of babies' sleep routines which are displayed above their cots. The staff and parents exchange information daily so that children's needs are met. This ensures that there is continuity in their care between the child's home and the nursery.

Staff have begun to implement the Birth to three matters framework and provide a varied range of age-appropriate experiences for the younger children. However, currently the staff have not assessed or recorded the development and achievements of many of the children so that they can be sure that children are making good progress and that their future learning is planned effectively.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children are beginning to relate well to other children and to consider their needs, sharing fairly and taking turns. They enjoy being monitors and taking on responsibilities for simple tasks in their room, for example shutting the curtains at rest times. They receive encouragement and praise for their achievements and this helps them develop a good self-esteem. Many children are confident and speak readily to others, offering their comments at group times. They talk about real and imaginary ideas, for example when in the pretend play vet's surgery. There are many activities which support children's physical development and they are developing good control and coordination of their large and small muscle movements. The children often use scissors and show increasing skill. Staff provide interesting resources to support the children's learning and opportunities for them to find out about the world around them and nature. For example, the children enjoy caring for the tadpoles in their room and watching them change into frogs and talk eagerly about what they see. Children use many construction toys to design and build but have fewer opportunities to begin to learn new techniques or to meet challenges and solve problems by using a wide range of other materials in their model making.

The children benefit from the senior member of staff's good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum which allows her to plan and provide a wide range of activities which support all areas of their learning. Generally these provide suitable levels of challenge for the children. However, at times some less experienced members of staff do not take advantage of situations to extend children's thinking and problem solving skills, for example encouraging them to solve simple number problems. Many children show good levels of concentration on self-chosen and adult-led activities, for example when completing jig-saw

puzzles or cutting out a mask. However, occasionally some children do not become involved in the activities and are not well occupied. Staff do not always engage with them or encourage them to join in, making the activities interesting or challenging for the child which helps them develop a positive attitude towards their learning. Staff observe and make notes about what the children can do. However they have not updated their individual records so that they can monitor the children's progress towards the early learning goals and be sure that they are planning the next steps in their learning effectively.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the friendly relationship between their parents and the staff who frequently exchange information about the child's care, both verbally and on diary sheets for the younger children. This ensures the children settle quickly and are happy at they nursery because they feel comfortable and secure. There is good support for children who have special needs because the staff, their parents and others involved with the child's care work closely together exchanging information and carefully planning their support and future learning in detail. This ensures that these children make good progress. All children and staff at the nursery are learning to communicate through a sign language and this helps the inclusion of children who have hearing impairment or other communication difficulties, as well as increasing all children's understanding of the needs of others. Children see and use a good range of positive images and resources which reflect the diversity in our society and this helps children become accepting of others.

Most children behave very well and play cooperatively together. They learn to manage their own behaviour as the staff give them reminders and explain to them why their behaviour is unwanted. Children receive praise and encouragement when they are behaving well and this reinforces their good behaviour. Staff usually have consistent expectations for the children's behaviour which are appropriate for their age and understanding. However, occasionally some staff are not consistent in their management of the children's behaviour and this does not help them understand what is expected of them and why.

The partnership with parents of children receiving funded nursery education is satisfactory.

Parents receive good quality information about the themes and activities their children will take part in. This includes suggestions so that they can help their child at home by talking with them about what they are doing. This has a positive impact on the children's learning. To date, parents have had more limited information about their child's achievements and progress towards the early learning goals and have few opportunities to discuss what they know about their child's learning so they can become further involved with their education.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

The children feel at home in the premises which are bright, well maintained and attractively decorated with many displays. There is an effective organisational plan which contributes well to the care and learning of the children. For example, staff use the rooms flexibly so that

children of all ages are able to sleep undisturbed, and rotas ensure that all children have frequent opportunities to use the outside area. The children receive sufficient support because good staffing ratios are maintained. The children benefit because the staff regularly update and develop their knowledge and understanding of child care issues through in-house and external training.

Most of the required records, policies and procedures are in place and monitored regularly and this contributes to ensuring that children are well cared for. The managers have clearly identified areas for future development in the nursery and how this will enhance children's care and learning. This includes the introduction of revised procedures for assessing and recording children's development and the introduction of a key person system. However, these are not fully established and this poses the risk that the staff do not identify that a child is not receiving appropriate care or support.

The leadership and management is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the clear routines and activity plans which ensure that the sessions run smoothly. The staff are generally deployed effectively to support the children's learning. The senior member of staff has correctly identified that some staff would benefit from further training to develop their teaching skills to help work them with the children more effectively. This is being implemented. She monitors the breadth of the curriculum to make sure that children can take part in activities which support all areas of their learning. The observational notes of what the children can do have not been consolidated into their individual records because there are plans to introduce a revised format. This means that monitoring of the child's learning and progress towards the early learning goals cannot be fully effective. This poses the risk that the teaching or the activities provided do not fully meet the needs of the child.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the provider agreed to display art work throughout the premises to improve the visual stimulation for the children, and to extend the information available for parents in the nursery's complaints procedure making it clear that they can complain to Ofsted if they choose.

The children have the benefit of numerous visual stimuli as there are many pictures, posters and examples of children's artwork displayed in all areas of the nursery. Staff have placed mobiles in the rooms and above the cots of the youngest children to provide interest and stimulation for them.

There are many notices displayed throughout the nursery informing parents of their right to contact Ofsted directly if they are concerned about the welfare of their child or if they wish to register their satisfaction with the care provided. This contributes towards a good partnership with parents and helps ensure that all children being cared for according to their parent's wishes.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 that procedures for assessing and recording the children's development and progress are fully implemented (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- ensure that all staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to support children's learning effectively
- ensure that activities provide suitable levels of challenge for all children

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