

Sturton Cygnets Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253471
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Inspector	Beverly Kemp-Russell
Setting Address	Sturton by Stow Primary School, School Lane, Sturton by Stow, Lincoln, Lincolnshire, LN1 2BY
Telephone number	07811 936116
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Registered person	Sturton by Stow Pre-School Group Committee
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?

Sturton Cygnets has been registered for many years, originally known as Sturton-by-Stow Playgroup, and is run by a volunteer management committee. It operates from a classroom in Sturton-by-Stow Primary School and has access to the school hall and secure outdoor play areas.

A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 27 children from two to five years of age on roll. This includes 26 funded three and four-year-olds. The setting can support children with special educational needs and there are no children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week, term time only. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 hours.

Seven staff work with the children. Two staff hold a relevant qualification and one is working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff follow clear procedures for maintaining hygiene which ensures that the children are cared for in a clean and healthy environment, for example, tables are wiped with anti-bacterial spray prior to being used for snack time. Children are encouraged to become independent in promoting their own good health such as routine hand washing before food and children show confidence in using this ability. Children's health is promoted by health and medication records. However, consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is not obtained in writing from parents. Staff hold current first aid certificates which helps maintain children's health.

Children are offered a choice of snacks which include toast, cheese and a variety of fruit such as apples and bananas to ensure healthy eating choices are promoted. Children have access to milk and water throughout the session to ensure they are well hydrated.

Children enjoy some opportunities for physical activities and are skilled at using a range of small equipment to promote co-ordination skills. There is provision for children to use equipment such as a climbing frame and balancing beam to develop their large body skills but they are not used frequently enough. Staff plan and discuss topics which include health to promote children's awareness.

Children are able to rest according to their needs and the wishes of their parents. Staff provide a carpeted area with scatter cushions for children to rest and relax.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, well-maintained environment which is safe and secure. Children have some opportunities to play safely outdoors in the school play ground and designated areas. The risk of accidental injury to children is minimised through the active supervision of children, regular safety checks and on-going risk assessments.

Children use appropriate equipment such as low level tables and chairs to sit, eat and play safely. They also use a suitable range of developmentally appropriate resources which are regularly checked to ensure they are safe. Staff use explanations about safety so that children are able to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. The building is kept properly secure so that unwanted visitors do not gain access to the setting or present a risk to the children.

Children are protected well by the staff. They have a good awareness of child protection procedures and know how to put these into place should they have concerns about the welfare of a child. Children are protected by staff's awareness of child protection guidelines and all staff have attended training. Children are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted and the staff know who will collect children at the end of each session.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The care and play experiences for children in the setting are good. Children are supported to deal with the separation from parents and carers and develop close relationships with staff

caring for their age range. Staff discuss with parents to ensure that young children benefit from and experience familiar home routines helping them to feel safe and secure. Children show interest in what they do such as using the sand and are often interested by resources such as construction kits. Children have opportunities to develop their creative skills and to use freedom of expression during painting activities. Children make choices from a good range of resources provided each day to ensure they are absorbed throughout the session. Staff provide worthwhile activities to observe and use assessments to ensure children are moving towards the next step. Staff include younger children in activities to develop their skills and are making full use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning for nursery education is good. Children make their own choices and are supported by staff. Staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage is good and they fully understand how children learn and develop but they do not always put their expertise into practice leading to some missed opportunities to provide challenge for more able children. Most staff are qualified and have experience of caring for children, they gently guide children and use questioning techniques which extends their language. Staff meet with parents initially to discuss children's starting points to ensure they are aware of observing progress. The assessment of children's progress towards the early learning goals identifies what they need to learn next and planning and assessment records clearly link to how all aspects of the stepping stones are covered. The planning of how some activities and resources are presented does not always ensure that children are fully inspired and motivated to learn which again leads to some missed opportunities for children to reach their full potential.

Children are confident and keen to get involved in activities. They form good relationships with staff and other children. Children are confident to try new activities such as creating pictures from bark rubbings. They are able to sit and concentrate when using resources such as small world toys. They sit and chat happily to each other when completing jigsaw puzzles and offer support when building with construction equipment. They understand right from wrong and children's behaviour is good. However, staff miss opportunities particularly at meal times to help children develop independence skills. Children are able speakers using clear sentences to explain and recall past events. They listen carefully and talk confidently during registration and activities. However, children have too few opportunities to mark make and write for a variety of purposes. They have opportunities to enjoy books and participate in story telling. Children count by rote well with more able children eager to count well beyond 10. They know the names of common shapes and use some size language in their play such as large and small. Staff provide opportunities to say and use number names in familiar context with the children but there are limited opportunities for children to use methods to solve practical problems. Children have a growing awareness of other cultures as they celebrate some festivals and have resources to enable them to explore and learn. They explore and investigate in the natural world and enjoy growing seeds such as, sunflowers and cress. Children enjoy moving in different ways such as climbing, running and jumping, but their ability to make strong progress in developing their large body movements is hindered by too few challenging planned activities. Children know most colours and have good opportunities to create and design for themselves. They have opportunities to use their imaginations through role play and access information, communication technology but are sometimes impeded by the presentation of the resources.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet individual needs and ensure all children are fully included. All children and parents receive a warm welcome from staff who are sensitive to each family's circumstances. Each child is known as an individual and time is spent making sure their needs are met and continuity of care is offered. Parents views about their child's needs are actively sought before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage and are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Staff ask them to contribute ideas to planning and regularly share information using the home links folders. Staff ensure that parents know how their child is progressing and developing by regular written and verbal contact.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and through acting as positive role models and using appropriate methods, such as consistent and gentle reinforcement of rules, children learn good manners and to care for others. Children gain a good understanding of right and wrong through the clear, consistent messages and explanation they receive from staff. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff, building their confidence and self-esteem.

Children's knowledge of the local community is promoted through discussion, visitors to the group such as the health visitor and outings such as nature walks. They regularly share news about their own lives and their thoughts during circle time. Children's opinions and achievements are recognised and praised by everyone in the group. Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for and protected by a caring staff team. Two staff are suitably qualified and all staff have experience of caring for children in a variety of roles. Staff maintain suitable ratios to keep children safe and support their care and play to meet the needs of the children. Most policies and procedures are known by the staff and are in the main effective in promoting children's health and well-being. Records are well-maintained and are shared with parents to ensure continuity of care. Children are cared for in a secure environment and staff are effective in supervising children. Children feel secure and develop a strong sense of their own self-worth through the relationships they share with staff.

Leadership and management for nursery education is good. The nominated person and the leader's commitment is bringing about some improvements in the nursery. They are committed to improving staff's knowledge to ensure they have a sound focus for future improvements for children's learning and development. All staff contribute to the planning of the children's curriculum. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to; improve the information parents receive regarding Ofsted's contact details and the group's approach to behaviour management. Since the last care inspection the setting have introduced and updated policies and procedures and all staff take responsibility for managing children's behaviour.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to address several issues to improve the quality of teaching and learning for children; review planning so that it identifies the next steps for individual children; review the organisation of the classroom to maximise children's learning, reduce the opportunities for inappropriate behaviour to occur; develop parents involvement in children's learning. Since the last nursery education inspection staff have made sound progress and updated planning and assessment records to clearly show what individual children need to learn next. They encourage parents to become involved with the pre-school by inviting them into the setting to discuss any issues on a daily basis. Regular newsletters are sent, home links folders are shared and a parents evening is planned to discuss how children are progressing. Staff have made good progress with managing children's behaviour and are clear about boundaries and consistency with regard to encouraging positive behaviour. However, the organisation of the classroom does not maximise children's learning.

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.

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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 consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is obtained in writing from parents.

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):

- deploy staff effectively to ensure the presentation of the room layout, resources and activities motivate and inspire children to learn and develop new skills
- develop staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage to ensure they are able to fully implement the curriculum and provide challenge for children to help them progress and reach their full potential.

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