

Candover Valley Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 507968

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Inspector Catherine Greenwood

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Registered person Candover Valley 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

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?

Candover Valley Pre-school opened in 1993. It operates from one room attached to Preston Candover School in the village of Preston Candover. Children have access to separate toilets and their own enclosed play area. The pre-school serves the local community.

There are currently 35 children aged two years and nine months to under five years on roll. Of these, 30 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term time. Morning sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30. During the summer term, four afternoon sessions are offered to children, of which, two are for children about to start school. Afternoon sessions are from 12.30 until 15.00.

The pre-school employs six part time staff of whom three hold early years childcare qualifications and one is in the process of obtaining a qualification. Three or four staff work with the children each day. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children learn about healthy foods as they choose cheese, ham, carrot, lettuce, sweetcorn and cucumber to make their own sandwiches during planned activities, and talk enthusiastically about food they like to eat. They are encouraged to try different healthy foods at snack time, such as dried apricots and fresh pineapple, which they bring into the pre-school from home. Children help to prepare fruit for snack time, for example, by peeling oranges and cutting up apples. There are clear procedures in place which protect children from the risk of cross infection and four staff hold a current first aid certificate.

Children develop very good hand and eye co-ordination as they use tweezers to pick up small bears and transfer them into containers, spread butter on their sandwiches and catch pretend fish using magnetic fishing rods. Photographs show evidence of children building tall towers, making 'tables' using construction resources and threading beads. They use scissors to cut grass they have grown in trays in the garden and cut up different coloured card to make their own designs. Children show good control as they use wooden spoons to fill containers in the sand tray and use tools to manipulate dough. Children run freely in the school field and take part in activities such as cricket. Staff help children to develop good ball skills using the accessible small and large rackets, cricket bats, croquet mallets, hoops and improve their co-ordination as they use balls of different size and weight. Children show excellent self confidence and control of their bodies as they independently use the climbing frame and slide. They enjoy pretending to hop like frogs with staff, playing football outside and show good balancing skills as they use low level blocks set up inside the pre-school.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Risks of accidental injury are minimised because staff are extremely vigilant, supervise the children at all times and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. This means that children can explore their environment independently and are extremely confident with initiating their own play and learning. Risk assessments are completed for outings, and indoor and outdoor activities. These are reviewed on an annual basis and updated if a new activity or outing is introduced. The pre-school has a written health and safety policy in place which is clearly understood by staff. This includes details about the environment, supervision, adult safety and special considerations such as activities, use of water and equipment. There are clear written procedures in place for children's arrival and departure, which included a member of staff standing by the door or gate at the beginning and end of each session. This means that children are kept safe and secure within the premises.

Children are kept safe within the setting because staff are observant of their play and ensure they follow the rules for using equipment. For example, when children use the climbing frame staff remind them that they are not allowed to climb whilst holding resources, that they need to swing ropes in a clear space in the garden and not to wave the cymbals around when using them in a large group activity. Children understand the rules regarding their own safety, for example, they know they need to ask a member of staff to help them take the bikes out of the storage area. Children are kept safe in the event of a fire because the setting completes regular evacuation practices and records the details. The manager has a good awareness of the importance of new children knowing the procedures.

Children's welfare is fully safeguarded because staff have a sound knowledge of the child protection procedures to follow. Written procedures are shared with parents so they understand the action the pre-school will take if they are concerned about a child. This contributes to children's safety. Current child protection documentation is available.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely animated within their play and persist at activities when playing individually and in small groups. They take part in a wide range of exciting activities such as making Easter baskets, cards, chocolate nests, dressing up as pirates and making treasure boxes and maps. Cooking activities take place every half term and include things such as sandwiches and cheesy puff pastry fish shapes. Communication is excellent, and children are consistently given time to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings. Staff enter into children's play with energy and enthusiasm and are skilled at capturing children's interest. For example, children laugh out loud and shout with excitement as they watch staff operate puppets behind a curtain in the main play area at snack time. Consequently, children are inspired to use the puppets independently, to create their own shows.

Children have access to the garden all year round and staff make excellent use of the outdoor area as a learning environment. For example, the play house is currently set up as a garden centre, and a very good range of resources are made easily available, such as tyres, wheeled toys, water play, large equipment, tunnels, digging and planting areas, books, a chalk board and sports equipment. Consequently children play freely and make independent decisions within their play. Staff use their observations of children's play and particular interests to set up resources and opportunities for children to extend their learning. They then use these observations to link to the following weeks planning. Staff have an extremely flexible approach to the daily routine, for example, when children decide to have a 'party time' and hang dressing up clothes from the climbing frame, they delay a planned activity.

Children play with shells, buttons, corks, transport bark in trailers attached to bikes, make clay birthday cakes, use play dough, water, paint, make collages, cook and do planting in the garden. The provision of these resources and activities mean that children develop their senses. Staff have a good awareness of the importance of these experiences, for example, they encourage children to notice the smell of grass when it is being cut in the adjacent school field. Photographs show evidence of children handling conkers and leaves and going on a bear hunt using musical instruments. Children's scrap books show examples of a wide range of creative activities such as bubble painting, marble painting, and collage.

Children enjoy outings, related to themes, such as garden centres, where they buy pots and compost to make mothers day presents. Staff are responsive to children's ideas, and help them complete their aims, such as digging a hole to lay a pretend gas pipe in the garden. Children often experiment with using the resources in different ways. For example, they fill buckets of water, tip them down a slope, watch the route the water takes, and use their initiative by finding sticks to unblock a drain. Staff enable children to make their own decisions and be driven by what they want to do.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have a very secure knowledge of the stepping stones within the Foundation Stage Curriculum. They use their excellent knowledge

of children's development to help them make very good progress and reach their full potential. Staff interaction with children is of a high standard. Staff make excellent use of planned and spontaneous opportunities to extend children's learning. They show great interest in what children say and do, and ask appropriate questions that encourage children to think and communicate their ideas. They consistently give children time to think and explain what they are trying to achieve, and value their contributions. For example, they ask children to explain how they join together pieces of construction resources they have brought from home. Staff respond to the information that children volunteer, for example, when eating grapes at snack time children talk about their holidays and what they have seen, such as seeing grapes being made into wine.

Staff use record of achievements to monitor children's progress in relation to the stepping stones. Learning for older and more able children is fully extended. For example, all children who are due to leave for school are encouraged to complete a short task twice a week, such as sequencing pictures. These opportunities give children an insight into what will be expected when they go to school, and increase their concentration and sense of achievement. Staff complete a focused activity each week and use their evaluation of the activities to identify what children have learnt and changes that can be made to ensure continued improvement.

Children are extremely well behaved. They play together co-operatively, for example, when using the cars, small world toys and the home corner. Staff notice and encourage children's friendships with each other. For example, children who are less confident are given the opportunity to choose a friend to help them cut up the fruit for snack time. Children develop confidence with speaking as part of a large group as they show and talk about the items they have brought to pre-school. They make marks and attempt to write their name, for example, to label sandwiches they make. Children are well supported with developing their writing skills. For example, when deciding to make a card, staff show them how to write some of the names of members of their family so they can copy them. Consequently, older and more able children attempt to write unfamiliar words with most letters correctly formed.

Children learn about number and solve mathematical problems during practical activities. For example, they count the pieces of ham and cucumber when making sandwiches and are encouraged to identify the shapes as they cut them. They show an excellent ability with thinking about solutions to solve mathematical problems. For example, when making clay birthday cakes, they independently decide to cut cotton buds in half to represent candles for the age of their siblings. Children use tools such as cheese graters when they make sandwiches and are encouraged to notice the different patterns on the graters and choose which one to use. They laugh and show great enjoyment as they learn how things work, such as remote control ducks. Staff help children to use the different buttons so that the duck responds in different ways such as turning around. Children have access to a very good range of response resources and information technology equipment, for example, a laptop, computer, and till. Children learn about the features of living things as they plant vegetables, pansies in hanging baskets, and grass in trays. Photographs show evidence of children touching, smelling and preparing fish and shell fish, cooking it, and sharing it at snack time.

Children play imaginatively, for example, as they dress up and use hammers to be builders when playing under the climbing frame. They enjoy using the tills and pretend fruit to play 'shops' and the petrol pump to fill up other children's wheeled toys. Once a week, children move creatively to music in the school hall. In addition, they take part in daily adult led singing activities. Staff plan music weeks where children listen to different types of music and ask them how it makes them feel. They encourage children to dance freely using ribbons on sticks and

silk scarves. Items of children's work are hung from beams in the classroom. These show evidence that children create on a large scale, and make things such as snakes, horses and dragons and a monkey to recognise Chinese new year.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well behaved. This is because staff consistently get down to children's level, explain about how their behaviour affects others and encourage children to say sorry when there are minor incidents. For example, when children hug each other in an over exuberant way. Staff recognise and praise children's achievements which means they develop good self confidence, are willing to try new tasks, and feel good about themselves. Staff have a very caring and patient approach which means that children are extremely happy and enjoy being at the pre-school. Children form very good friendships and relationships with each other. Staff have clear expectations about children's co-operation and manners at snack time and spend time talking to children so they learn to respect adults and co-operate.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Key workers meet with parents every term to discuss children's progress. Parents are given children's assessment records to take home, and have the opportunity to write their own comments which are then discussed at the meetings. These records include positive comments. This means that staff and parents share their views of children's learning and parents have the opportunity to say how children are using what they have learnt in their play at home. Each child has their own scrap book which includes photographs of children taking part in activities and samples of their creative work. Children and parents are encouraged to use the scrap books during the school holidays to include creative work they have completed at home. This means there are good links between home and pre-school, children's efforts are shared, and children feel proud of their achievements. Parents receive regular questionnaires which invite them to comment on the provision. They are invited to attend an annual meeting where staff provide an open forum for parents to ask questions and talk about the Foundation Stage Curriculum. This means that parents are well informed about the education provision within in the setting.

Parents receive a newsletter once a term which includes information about themes and events, such as the May Fair at the village hall. The committee arrange a Summer picnic, and invite children, parents and staff to take part in games such as treasure hunts and explore the local woods. This means that children and staff enjoy sharing events within their local community. In addition, parents are invited into the pre-school so they can see what their children are learning.

Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through planned activities and the celebration of festivals. For example, they take part in Spanish week, where parents come into the nursery and make tortilla, and children learn to sing and count in Spanish and use simple words for things that can be found around the home. Children learn about disability, for example, through visits from Guide Dogs for the Blind and through using a good range of accessible resources. There are currently no children attending who have learning difficulties and/or disability. However, staff have previously looked after children with a range of complex developmental needs. This has involved working closely with parents and other agencies such as speech therapists. Staff help all children to understand the needs of others, and give careful consideration to how children with disability can take part in activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The environment is extremely well organised and set up so that children can choose their own resources. Staff present the equipment in an attractive way that captures children's interest. The doors to the garden are open throughout each session and staff set up the garden as an extension of the indoor play area. Consequently children develop excellent independence as they move freely between the two areas and have a wide range of experiences. Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff are motivated, enthusiastic, and work well as a team. Both managers provide excellent role models for staff, particularly in relation to their communication with children, and how they use their knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum to extend children's learning through questioning and conversation in everyday play. The managers have clear aims, such as nurturing and building staff confidence, so they feel able to use their initiative. The pre-school complete their own written self evaluation which identifies changes and improvements that have been made in relation to the recommendations within the last inspection report. As part of the setting's accreditation process staff ask the children about what they like and don't like about the pre-school. They use this information to change and improve the care and education and the ways the activities are presented to children. There are very good systems in place to ensure staff suitability and all documentation is exceptionally well organised. This significantly contributes to children's welfare care and learning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the provider agreed to further improve documentation by showing clear links in cross-referencing documents to the bullying statement within the behaviour management policy and by including local police and social services contact numbers where appropriate in the child protection policy. Documents have been reviewed and updated to include all these details.

At the last education inspection, the provider agreed to increase children's access to the book area and for them to independently use books for stories and reference, increase access to mathematical resources to encourage matching, counting, sorting, weighing and making repeating patterns, and plan carpet time activities to ensure that all children are encouraged to participate and listen to others, can see the books and are not distracted. The pre-school has obtained a wall rack so that books are at child height as well as in a box, and obtained a sofa and two arm chairs. This means that children can access books independently and use the book area to sit comfortably and talk with others. A range of mathematical resources are now accessible at all times such as shape sorters, weighing scales, and cubes for measuring height and length. Consequently children choose to independently use the resources. In the home corner there is a till with pretend money, an abacus, buttons and shells for matching and sorting. Large group story times have been improved through the introduction of individual carpet squares for children to sit on. Staff sometimes divide the children according to their age and ability, which means they can concentrate and focus for longer periods of time. This means that the provision for children's learning has been improved.

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.

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 QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 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