

Culverstone Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 127134
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Inspector Susan Jennifer Scott

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Registered person Culverstone 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 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?

Culverstone Pre-School Group is a committee run pre-school. It opened in 1979 and operates from a mobile classroom on a school premises. It is situated in a rural area in Culverstone, a few miles from Gravesend, in Kent.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are 32 children on the register and 29 of these are funded for nursery education. The pre-school is open each weekday from 08.45 to 12.00 for 30 weeks of the year. All children share access to secure outdoor play areas.

The children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school welcomes children with learning difficulties and disabilities and with those English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Five of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well organised activities and routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack and are learning why they need to do so. Their health is effectively supported by the posters displayed and the reminders that staff provide, such as passing tissues to children to blow their noses. Staff do not hold valid first aid certificates at present but there is a member of school staff available on site who holds a first aid certificate.

Children are able to help themselves to drinks of water at any time. They are regularly offered drinks to ensure they are not thirsty. All children benefit from a healthy choices at snack time and confidently help themselves to varied fruits which they prepare. Staff take account of the wishes of parents when providing food and drink and ensure individual dietary preferences are catered for. As a result, children confidently engage in the snack time routines when they enjoy good social opportunities.

The outdoor area is frequently available for play and exercise and is used well. The staff organise a range of physical learning outside as well as inside in the play room which children enjoy. Children benefit from a good range of energetic physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They successfully develop confidence in their physical skills such as steering and peddling play vehicles and enthusiastically build on their understanding of nature with good encouragement from staff. They use a range of indoor and outdoor play equipment, such as wooden balancing beams in the playground.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle well in this secure and welcoming environment. They benefit from being able to wave goodbye to parents through the window which helps them feel settled. They are able to play in a well organised environment which allows them to choose whether to play inside or outside. Children take pride in the attractive displays of their work, such as, the display on growth. This shows that staff nurture children's contributions and this makes them feel valued.

The good organisation of well maintained toys and equipment means children can move around safely and independently access resources from tables, shelves and boxes at child height. As a result children make choices about their own play and are interested and stimulated by the options they have.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures, clearly documented in risk assessment procedures; for example, sockets are covered and there is a secure outdoor play area. However, some tree braches overhang the climbing frame which presents a hazard to children who use the higher platform as they can be injured by these. Children develop a good awareness of safety through practical play opportunities and well planned topic work. For example, they practise road safety when they use bikes and observe the play traffic lights and crossing signs during outdoor play.

Children benefit from systems which protect them, such as recording and monitoring access to the pre-school and designated staff are trained to be aware of possible child protection issues.

Children are, therefore, safeguarded through the use records and procedures if any concerns arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in good quality activities throughout the session. They play happily with each other and staff, learning to take turns and respond to others as they use role play, crafts, games, and books. Staff awareness and good use of the Birth to three matters framework is improving younger children's achievements. They become confident communicators as they share ideas in their play; for instance, during the painting activity they extend their knowledge of colours when they communicate with staff and other children about rainbow colours. All children participate in singing and musical activities and regularly use of a wide range of imaginative resources, such as, dressing up clothes and play vehicles which encourage them to explore experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's interest and involvement is positive, they are keen to communicate and contribute comments, ideas and thoughts. For instance, during outdoor play, children develop their understanding and interest in the topic as they capture insects for observation and discussion. Occasionally, the lack of planning for extended learning for older or more able children does not offer sufficient challenges to fully develop their ability. For example, children can answer many of the routine questions staff ask during storytime and several older children are able to count competently but have few opportunities to perform simple sums or calculations.

Staff ensure that all children are well supported and included in all activities. They regularly assess children's development and progress using the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and they identify the next steps for children's learning, although they are not consistently recording these. This means that staff are not fully utilising their observations and assessments of individuals to inform their planning and effectively promote children's progress.

Children concentrate on activities for long periods of time. They are confident to take risks in their learning, trying new and less familiar activities without fear of failure. The staff praise and encourage children to try things for themselves who practise and develop their skills.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff on arrival. They are actively involved in play and activities throughout the sessions. They have a high level of independence, freely selecting equipment for themselves and taking responsibility for their personal care. Children show concern for each other and enjoy the responsibility of helping to prepare snacks of fruit.

Children are developing in their use of number. They count correctly to five and some beyond this to ten, and show a clear awareness of size, colour and shape. They confidently participate in pretend play and extend their communication skills by discussing ideas and roles. Children enjoy stories and readily select books to share with each other or with staff. They skilfully write their names on the Father's Day cards they make.

Children are able to freely explore everyday items and learn through practical play with materials such as sand, dough and water. They acquire knowledge of their environment through interesting

topics which ensure their learning is relevant and meaningful. For example, the topic of growth has captured their imagination and they spend time observing and discussing the insects they find outside as well as the butterflies they are hatching.

Children competently engage in activities that require dexterity, such as using pencils and scissors with enthusiasm. They measure and compare using different containers, often pouring their own drinks and all children enjoy making cards for Father's Day using paper, card and pencils.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals. They develop a positive attitude to others and gain a good understanding of the wider world and community through celebrating festivals, tasting food from a variety of cultures and having access to a very good range of play resources which show positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.

Children are encouraged to feel secure and to trust the staff as there are procedures in place to ensure their individual needs and preferences are catered for. For example, staff liaise with parents to provide individual support for children with speech or language difficulties.

Children behave very well. They begin to understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and the responsibility they have to help prepare items and tidy away. Staff encourage harmonious relationships through the age appropriate methods used to manage behaviour, including explanation, distraction and positive expectations. Staff are positive role models and encourage children to learn to take turns and share. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from parents' involvement in their learning. Clear and helpful information on the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and effective communication through newsletters, daily chats and occasional consultations enable staff and parents work together to help children make progress. However, there is no system to ensure that all parents access their children's records before they are about to leave and receive a record of transfer. Parents are given information on the activities provided in newsletters and the prospectus as well as being able to participate in organised events.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children share good relationships with staff who have been vetted for their suitability to work with young children. The registered provider remains suitably qualified to work with young children and the majority of staff have appropriate qualifications.

Children benefit from the combined knowledge in the staff team as staff have undertaken a variety of training, and use their skills to ensure that children make good progress. For example, Birth to three matters training enable staff to plan and deliver a suitable variety of activities for young children. However, the staff are waiting to renew their first aid skills on a paediatric first aid course, although they are able to rely on a school staff member who has had recent training.

Children's welfare and individual needs are supported by the group who have a variety of records in place. These are kept confidentially maintaining the child's privacy.

Leadership and management are good. Staff have a sound awareness of the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice to support children's development. They have identified improvements to benefit the setting, such as, extending opportunities to develop children's mathematical understanding. They evaluate and review plans to achieve or modify their aims. The parent questionnaires are used to enable parents to provide individual information to help staff identify initial targets and this has a beneficial effect on the children's induction and continuing development. The setting is less consistent at recording targets for children's learning because there is no systematic approach to observing, recording and sharing assessments of individuals.

Clear procedures and policies support staff in working successfully in partnership with parents and carers. The comprehensive range of planning enables staff to focus activities towards the children's needs. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two recommendations made at the last care inspection. These were to record arrival and departure times and to ensure drinks are readily available to children throughout the session. Both of these recommendations have been successfully met. Children are now protected by the accurate record of their attendance and they benefit from being able to help themselves to water throughout the sessions.

At the last nursery education inspection of the group there were three key issues to address which were to differentiate planned activities so that all children are challenged and stimulated and to introduce a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. Planned activities are now differentiated but there is limited planning for routines and free play choices so that learning opportunities are not fully promoted for the most able children. Staff evaluate and monitor the quality of the provision, both informally through observation and discussion and also by recording responses to planned activities. Additionally, parents are now requested to provide good information when children begin to attend the setting which enables staff to plan for the next steps in their 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 can be seen 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):

- complete an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children
- assess the risks to children in relation to the use of the climbing equipment under the tree and take action to minimise these

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 consistency by methodically and regularly recording developmental targets
- identify and develop further challenges, particularly in literacy and mathematical development for older or more able children so that they are able to extend their skills and understanding
- devise a system to ensure all parents see their children's records and can contribute to target setting (also applies to care)

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