

Christow Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106099
Inspection date	21 November 2007
Inspector	Heather Morgan
Setting Address	Christow Community School, Dry Lane, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7PE
Telephone number	01647 252542
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Registered person	The Trustees of Christow 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?

Christow Pre-School has been operating for over 30 years and was registered at its current premises in 2001. It occupies purpose built premises within the grounds of Christow Primary School, with whom the group has strong working links, and is situated in the village of Christow in the Teign Valley. The pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee of parents. It runs on each weekday morning from 09.00 to 11.30, during term time only. Children attending come mainly from Christow and surrounding villages although occasionally children attend from further afield.

A maximum of 19 children aged from three to five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 24 children on roll, 22 of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. On one morning a week children aged two-and-a-half may attend, if accompanied by a parent or carer.

There are five members of staff working with the children, four of whom hold relevant qualifications. The fifth member of staff is currently working towards a qualification. The group receives the support of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are supported very well in developing healthy lifestyles. There is a strong focus on providing outdoor play opportunities and consequently children have regular access to the outdoor environment where they enjoy playing in the fresh air and developing their physical skills. They regularly choose to play outside on the covered decking area and also enthusiastically engage in vigorous activities within the school grounds. They manoeuvre wheeled toys skilfully around the playground, carefully negotiating cones and taking care not to run into each other. They also learn to climb and balance using the fixed play equipment.

Indoors, children learn the importance of good hygiene as they carefully wash their hands before snack time or after using the toilet. They use liquid soap and disposable paper towels to limit the risk of cross infection and also protect each other from germs by using tissues to keep their noses clean, promptly disposing of them in the bin. Parents are familiar with the sickness policy and keep children at home when they are suffering from infectious illnesses.

Children are developing healthy eating habits as they enjoy a nutritious snack during the morning. They choose from an appetising range of fresh fruit, raw vegetable, bread sticks, cheese and biscuits. They are able to help themselves to drinks of water throughout the session, in addition to the drink of milk or water they have at snack time. Consequently they are well nourished and hydrated throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very safe and secure within the pre-school environment because staff have assessed potential hazards and taken effective steps to minimise any identified risks. Children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised because the door is fitted with a high level handle and there are robust procedures in place to ensure that children are only collected by persons authorised to do so. Children's play environments are checked regularly to ensure they are well maintained. Children are regularly reminded of rules that are in place to keep them safe, for example they are not permitted to access the store cupboard. A bolted gate ensures they do not access the kitchen area without supervision. Children help to maintain the safety of the environment as they tidy away toys that are no longer in use. They learn to use physical play equipment safely as they develop skills, such as manoeuvring their wheeled toys carefully to avoid collisions.

Children regularly practise fire drills to ensure they are able to evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of any concerns. Electrical equipment is tested regularly to minimise the risk of accidental fires. Children enjoy many outings with the pre-school and are kept safe during these trips because staff plan them well. They assess potential hazards before taking children out and identify how to minimise the risks. For example, they increase adult ratios by inviting parents to accompany them. Children learn to take responsibility for their safety through discussions about potential dangers, such as moving cars in a car park and slippery outdoor surfaces following heavy rain.

Children's welfare is given very high priority as staff have an excellent understanding of child protection issues. There are comprehensive procedures in place as well as additional reference materials to support them in carrying out their responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and settled within the pre-school environment and participate enthusiastically in the wide range of activities available. They enjoy making independent choices in their play, for example when moving freely between the indoor and outdoor environment. They respond well to the familiar daily routines that provide a structure within which they can access interesting resources, develop friendships and enjoy the company of adults.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff know the children very well and plan interesting and challenging activities that support their progress along the stepping stones in each of the six areas of learning. They make very good use of the premises to provide an attractive learning environment with well presented resources to enhance children's play experiences. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan themed activities which sustain the children's attention well. They provide many opportunities for children to initiate their own play, in addition to the carefully structured adult-led activities that focus on clear learning objectives. Staff monitor children's learning regularly and use comprehensive documentation to record their achievements and progress towards the early learning goals. This information is used very effectively to plan children's next steps for learning.

Children are confident and inquisitive, approaching new activities with great enthusiasm and excitement; for example, they talk animatedly with staff when creating menus prior to their trip to a café and enjoy sharing with others what they have heard on their listening walk. They concentrate well on their chosen tasks and persevere until they have completed them to their satisfaction, for example when making pictures with stencils. They are developing a good understanding of number and enjoy counting how many plates they need at snack time. More able children confidently calculate how many more are needed when there are not enough. They also enjoy learning new concepts, such as identifying which objects are heavy or light and using scales to weigh them.

Children are confident speakers and use language well to organise their thoughts and play. For example, they develop complex and imaginative role play by talking to each other, such as when they act out the role of being a doctor, then extend the game to include an ambulance driver and injured patients. They work very well together to recreate a café in the pre-school following their visit to a local café. They enjoy looking at books on their own and in group story times and are developing a good awareness that print carries meaning. They enjoy mark making and use writing for different purposes, such as naming their work or creating menus.

Children are developing an excellent awareness of their local and the wider environment. Themed activities support them in learning about the changing seasons and features of the natural world. They have many opportunities to visit places of interest, such as the local shop, a mainline railway station and a café. Children use technology confidently, for example when using the computer to access a range of programs or using telephones in their role play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are met very well by the team of staff who liaise closely with parents to ensure a smooth transition into the pre-school community. Children learn about the local and wider community through themed activities and visits to areas of local interest. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They have excellent opportunities to learn about different cultures and traditions as parents from other countries enthusiastically share their experiences. Children also regularly use resources, such as books and role play equipment that reflect a diverse society. There are very clear procedures in place to support children with special needs and staff are skilled at adapting activities to ensure that all children can participate at their level of ability.

Children's behaviour is excellent. They respond well to regular praise and encouragement and reflect the respect and good manners role modelled by members of staff. They are supported well in developing negotiation skills to support them in learning to share resources, take turns and play co-operatively.

Children benefit from the strong relationships developed between staff and their parents. A wealth of information is provided for parents to ensure they are familiar with the activities, policies and procedures of the group. Documentation and daily discussions are used effectively to ensure that staff are able to meet children's individual needs and care for them in accordance with their parents' wishes. The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. They regularly attend the group to help during sessions and on outings and are clear about how to support children's learning. They are well informed about their children's achievements and are actively encouraged to participate in assessing and recording their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Sessions are very well organised as staff work extremely well together to plan and deliver an interesting and challenging range of activities within a familiar, daily routine. Robust recruitment procedures are implemented effectively to ensure that children are cared for by appropriately vetted members of staff.

Excellent use is made of the indoor and outdoor environments to provide a bright, welcoming learning environment for children where they are safe, secure and able to make independent choices from the excellent range of attractively presented resources. All regulatory documentation is in place, organised effectively and used to underpin the group's outstanding practice.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The play leader provides excellent guidance for the well-motivated staff team, who have a strong commitment to improvement. Comprehensive procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate delivery of the nursery education curriculum and to ensure that all children are making very good progress along the stepping stones. All staff participate in regular self-evaluation and attend training to update their knowledge and improve their practice. Action plans are devised and implemented effectively to support continual professional development and improved outcomes for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection several recommendations were raised to improve outcomes for children. The pre-school has developed and implemented an effective action plan which has resulted in clearer, more comprehensive procedures to keep children safe; for example, policies relating to child protection, lost and uncollected children have been improved and shared with staff. Children's health is now supported well as pre-school staff have improved their knowledge of Environmental Health requirements regarding the safe preparation of food.

Children's progression towards the early learning goals is supported effectively because the staff have improved their planning procedures in order to identify how individual children are supported in their learning. Clear procedures are now in place to monitor and evaluate delivery of the nursery education curriculum and these are used effectively to identify ways to continue improving the quality of the provision.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 1 April 2004 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

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