

Castlethorpe Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141823
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Inspector	Patricia Joan Latham
Setting Address	The Village Hall, North Street, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK19 7EW
Telephone number	07749 999 361
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Registered person	Castlethorpe 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?

Castlethorpe Pre-school opened in 1974. It operates from the Village Hall in the village of Castlethorpe, which is near to Milton Keynes. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 09.30 to 12.00 during school term times. There is a small outdoor play area available.

There are currently 17 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village and surrounding areas.

The pre-school employs four staff plus a manager. The manager and three of the staff have relevant qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is maintained because staff follow effective procedures to minimise cross infection. All areas children use are kept clean and tables used for snack time are wiped before

and after use. Children know to wash their hands before eating, and after toileting, and staff encourage them to wipe their noses as needed. All necessary medical records are maintained and required written medical permissions from parents are obtained. Staff are trained to deal with any medical emergency that occurs and have undertaken additional training to deal with children who may suffer a severe allergic reaction to food.

Children eat healthy snacks which are provided by their parent, with drinks of water always accessible. Snack time is seen as a social occasion, as well as a learning opportunity with children discussing what foods keep them healthy and what they would eat to keep warm. Staff obtain information regarding any food allergies, or special diets, and take this into consideration when providing activities.

Children have the opportunity for regular exercise to promote their physical well-being. There is a small outdoor area for their use, plus ample space indoors where staff can present physical activities. Staff augment these activities with the use of an outside provider who brings additional equipment and involves the children in simple sports games and exercises. Children are frequently taken for short walks around the local area and take part in such events as Sports Day and a sponsored toddle for charity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have ample space in which to play. Staff make good use of the large space available to provide a range of activities for children to choose from. All exits are secure and the room made bright and welcoming for children with displays of their work on the walls. Children have a wide range of resources to support their play and learning. These include resources for imaginative play, physical play, writing and reading material and a variety of constructive toys.

Children's safety is maintained at all times. Staff supervise them closely and follow good practice when children arrive at, and leave, the premises. Children are reminded about safety rules and, for example, understand that in the event of a fire, they must leave the building quickly. All required safety equipment is in place and there are clear procedures for staff to follow in the event a child becomes lost whilst in their care.

Children's welfare is safeguarded. Pre-existing injuries are recorded and staff are aware of their responsibility to refer any concerns they may have regarding children's care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages receive good care and form good relationships with staff and with each other. Staff are attentive to their individual care needs and, whilst encouraging children to be independent, are always close by to offer support to young ones who may be a little uncertain about which activity to choose from the many which are presented. Staff use their knowledge of Birth to three matters to provide activities which interest children and which aid their learning and development. They interact well with the children and involve themselves in their play. They encourage children to ask questions, helping them to develop good social and communication skills. Children learn to work together cooperatively and to help each other complete tasks, such as building a giant rocket, or a paper model of their pre-school.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are suitably qualified, using their knowledge to plan a stimulating curriculum which covers all areas of learning. They use interesting themes and topics to link activities which engage children and make learning fun. For example, whilst discussing winter, children explore the properties of ice, what makes it melt faster, and why salt is used on roads to make driving safer. Staff know the attainment level of each child and adapt activities accordingly to help children learn new skills and develop them further. Staff use time and resources wisely. Children are encouraged to choose a book to look at whilst waiting for circle time to begin and staff use an activity, such as the role play area, to introduce learning as children play. They observe children's attainment and record their progress against the Foundation stage stepping stones. This builds up to an end of year report which is prepared for each child. Parents are able to see their child's records and speak with key workers whenever they wish.

Children are making good progress with their personal and social development. They all display great confidence and enthusiasm when doing activities and persevere to complete tasks. They take pride in their work and in learning new skills, such as completing computer programs. Their language and literacy skills are progressing well. All children are learning to recognise their own name and enjoy writing, knowing that letters carry meaning. Younger children are encouraged to trace over their name, whilst older ones are learning to do theirs free hand.

Children are confident about counting and recognising numbers and are beginning to solve simple number puzzles, such as are there more boys than girls, children than adults, present. They are learning to master other mathematical skills, recognising and naming shapes, beginning to understand basic measurement and gaining an understanding of mathematical language, such as bigger, wider, and heavier. Staff encourage children to have enquiring minds and to ask questions. Children explore things and discuss such things as the daily weather and the changing seasons. They learn about their environment and gain an understanding of their own culture and its traditions as well as learning about other cultures and their festivals.

Children are able to develop their imaginative skills through exploring differing mediums, recreating their ideas in paint or collage, or taking part in role play. They enjoy singing and playing musical instruments, recreating the sound of rain and wind with bells and shakers. Children also enjoy a range of physical activities which help develop their coordination and muscle control. They take part in enjoyable physical exercise games and are skilful at operating both small and large equipment

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's self esteem is promoted and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children understand they need to respect others and take part in activities to raise their awareness of the needs of others. Children know they are valued. Staff listen to them, answer their questions fully, involve all in activities and display their work. As a consequence children are polite and respectful to others. They understand the need for group rules, such as wearing an apron for messy play, and work together well, happily sharing resources.

There is a designated member of staff to coordinate the support offered to children with a learning difficulty and/or disability. Staff are attentive to the individual needs of all children present, helping younger ones to take part in activities.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff, and the management committee, ensure they receive information about the pre-school and about the nursery education offered. Staff give time at each session to discuss children's progress with parents and also arrange personal interviews between parents and the relevant key worker. Parents are involved with their child's education and any special skills are welcomed into the group.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school committee and staff, work together to ensure the group is well organised and runs smoothly. There is a robust procedure for appointing staff and files are kept up to date with records of checks done and training completed. The staff team work well together and clear roles, and daily responsibilities, are delegated by the manager. There are clear policies and procedures in place for staff to follow, copies of which are available for parents.

All records are completed accurately and stored securely to maintain the confidentiality of children's details. The majority of documentation is in place, although a complaints log has not yet been established.

The leadership and management of the nursery education offered are good. Staff plan the programme in advance and set clear learning intentions for activities presented. One focussed learning activity is planned for the week, offered each day to ensure that children attending part time are given the same opportunity for learning. Activities are evaluated; however it is not clear if the focused activity has delivered the required learning intentions.

Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Staff have made good progress on both recommendations made at the last inspection. A clear statement is made in the safeguarding children policy which explains to parents the responsibilities of staff. All pre-existing injuries are noted and countersigned by parents.

Children now have the opportunity of using bikes in the outside play area and staff plan the use of bikes into their physical development program.

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):

- establish and maintain complaints log

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):

- develop the planning and evaluation of focussed learning activities to ensure learning intentions have been met.

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