

Croftlands Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	317497
Inspection date	16 January 2008
Inspector	Sandra Elizabeth Williams

Setting Address	Croftlands Infant School, Oakwood Drive, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 9JU
Telephone number	01229 480 018
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Registered person	Croftlands Pre-school Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Croftlands Pre-School Nursery has been open for approximately 20 years and operates from a purpose built prefabricated building situated within the grounds of Croftlands Infants School, Ulverston. The pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee. It is open each week day from 09.00 until 11.30 and from 12.30 until 15.00 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 37 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties.

There are four members of staff who work with the children. Three of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a relevant qualification. The setting receives support from Cumbria Sure Start and is working towards a quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children demonstrate a good understanding of simple health and hygiene practices and are learning to take responsibility for their own self-care routines. For example, they use the toilet independently and wash their own hands using soap and paper towels provided. Children are very well protected from infection because the sick child policy is widely available and well adhered to. All of the members of staff hold current first aid certificates, which further supports children's health and safety.

Children take part in an exciting programme of physical activities both indoors and outdoors. There is a great emphasis upon the importance of children receiving plenty of fresh air and exercise. They thoroughly enjoy their PE sessions each week and excitedly giggle together as they take off their shoes and await their instructions. They know the importance of warming up before they start their exercise and they show a good awareness of personal space as they prepare for their activities. They move with confidence and coordination as they pretend to be pirates on a ship, climbing the rigging, walking the plank and steering the wheel. They also enjoy practising their throwing skills as they compete in a game of skittles. Their fine motor skills are also developing well as they play with the play dough using rolling pins, cutters and knives.

Children are very well nourished and enjoy healthy snacks each day, such as bananas, kiwi fruit, crackers and cheese. They help themselves to a choice of milk or water and are developing their independence skills and hand-eye coordination as they pour their own drinks. They are able to find their place at the table by finding their name cards, that they have made themselves with their names and pictures on. The pre-school prides itself on being a sugar-free zone and has achieved the 'Smile for Life' award for providing healthy food for the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is welcoming and safe, vibrant and exciting. The pre-school is extremely attractive and welcoming due to the hard work and effort of the staff each day. They work cooperatively together. Resources are easily accessible in labelled trays and drawers. Clearly identified areas of play are arranged, such as the mathematics and writing tables, construction, role-play and the reading corner. Children's art work is displayed creatively on the walls, which positively supports their sense of belonging. Activities are very invitingly presented at floor-level and low-level, which ensures children are interested and motivated to become involved.

Safety is given high priority. For example, staff ensure that they supervise children's arrival and departure extremely carefully and ensure that the door is always securely closed. Children are independent but closely monitored when using the toilets. The staff and committee work well together to ensure that regular risk assessments are carried out to address all areas of potential concern that may impact on children's continued safety and well-being. Children learn about keeping themselves safe by following the rules, such as not throwing toys and not running inside. Fire safety is also taught through emergency evacuation practises, however, these are not practised very regularly. The children benefit from visits to the local fire station where they learn about fire safety. Children are very well protected because staff fully understand their

important role in protecting them from abuse and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice if needed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are excited and enthusiastic when they arrive at the setting. They enjoy very positive relationships with staff, who greet them warmly. Children are very confident and show great interest in all they do. For example, they play cooperatively in a small group with the play dough and take turns and share the shape cutters and rolling pins. Children frequently use their initiatives. The free-play sessions encourage them to continually make many choices in their play. They freely link up with friends and help each other to try on dressing up costumes and use props, such as dolls, prams and toy food, as they role play taking their babies shopping. Staff implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support them in their planning and assessment of the younger children under three years. They are clearly and successfully linking this to the Foundation Stage to show natural progression in children's development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress as the staff are clearly very familiar with the Foundation Stage. This is very evident in their written planning, that links very well to the stepping stones over time. Focused activities are evaluated and observations are made about the progress of all children. This information is used effectively to aid future planning for individual children and ensures that appropriate challenges are set so that all children make progress. However, the staff do not currently obtain information from parents about their children's abilities when they first attend, to establish their starting points. Staff use questioning appropriately, which extends the children's learning. Children are fully able to engage themselves in activities of their own choosing for extended periods of time. This is particularly evident with the role play equipment and the computer. They frequently initiate positive interactions with others. For example, they approach staff and confidently ask them questions or provide information about what they are doing. Children are developing a good understanding of what is right and wrong, and learn not to push other children when they line up to go out to play.

Children are learning to concentrate and actively listen to others at group times and story times. They converse animatedly as they tell each other what they did after they left pre-school the previous day. They are developing their language for thinking as they join in discussions about Spain and about how to travel there. Children are able to recognise the initial sounds in many words, such as S for Spain and J for January. They have opportunities to use writing as a means of recording as they access a range of mark-making resources, such as paper, pencils and pens. However, the children do not currently have continuous access to painting resources, which means that the range of mark-making items is somewhat limited and not all children are encouraged to make attempts to write their names or make their marks. Children happily select their favourite story books and enjoy sitting with the staff to read the stories. They thoroughly enjoy reading and reciting the Bear Hunt story in a group and animatedly undertake the actions such as 'over' and 'under'.

Children have many opportunities for counting and problem solving, for example, they take it in turns to count how many children line up by the door. They confidently count 14 children. They are encouraged by the staff to recognise numerals. For example, whilst setting up a skittles game the staff ask the children to identify the numbers on the side of each skittles. They then

count how many skittles they are able to knock down with each throw of the ball. The children also learn about shapes and are able to identify many different shapes whilst playing with table top games such as mosaics.

Children examine objects and living things to find out more about them and really enjoy exploring different textures as they touch the display on the wall. They learn about living things, such as the goldfish. They take turns to feed the fish and take a closer look at it by using the magnifying glass from the discovery table. They also enjoy growing seeds and beans and watch caterpillars develop into butterflies. They learn effectively how to operate equipment, such as cameras, torches and magnets. Children have easy access to a computer and confidently select programs, skilfully operating the mouse to work through them. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills by undertaking adult-led craft activities, such as making and decorating fans and experimenting with colours by mixing primary colour paints to make other colours.

Overall, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging and are able to make a positive contribution due to the warm and friendly welcome they receive as soon as they arrive at the group. Staff are particularly cheerful and enthusiastic, and children's peers are genuinely pleased to greet them. Children have plenty of opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions due to the interesting range of resources and activities provided by the staff. They enjoy learning about different countries and cultures. They are currently learning about Spain by role playing bull fights, tasting paella and making fans. They enjoy looking at the world atlas and learning where Spain is in relation to Britain, and they discuss the different ways available to travel abroad. Children also learn about their own community and make a positive contribution as the staff involve them in trips to local places, such as the library, the post office and the fire station.

Children with learning difficulties are welcome to attend the group and the staff are very aware of the importance of working closely with parents and other agencies to support children's individual needs. Children are very well aided by staff to understand responsible behaviour. The staff act as excellent role models and they are calm and gentle in their own approach, addressing each other politely and respectfully. Behaviour issues are managed using entirely suitable strategies which children fully accept. These are totally in line with the written behaviour management policy, using appropriate explanations at a level children understand. Children are helped to develop self-esteem and respect for others as they learn to actively listen to each other at group times. They are regularly praised and encouraged by staff, which makes them feel good about themselves and develop a strong sense of self. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children are cared for by staff who work very closely and successfully with parents to meet their individual needs. Relationships are warm and friendly, and verbal communication is clearly very good as informal conversations about children's care take place as parents drop off and collect their children. Parents express their complete satisfaction with the care and education provided for their children. A complaints policy and procedure are in place and there have been no complaints to record since the last inspection.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are actively involved, consulted and receive feedback throughout the time that their children spend at the group. Parents have access to their children's assessment records and are invited to discuss their children's progress with the staff on a regular basis. Parents receive very well presented information about the educational curriculum and are provided with ideas of how they can support their children's learning at home via the home link books. Parents are also encouraged to visit the group and take part in the sessions.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children's care is good due to the efficient organisation of the provision. Staff demonstrate a commitment to continual development and they regularly attend relevant training courses and workshops to support them in their work. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Children are relaxed and confident in their environment due to the effective organisation of their care and learning. Children's play opportunities are good as the staff organise the premises very well, thus allowing children to move about with ease. Indoor and outdoor space is well laid out and care is taken to ensure that children receive a good balance of indoor and outdoor play opportunities. Documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in good order and stored with a high regard for confidentiality. Policies accurately reflect the working practice observed at all times.

The leadership and management are good. Children's educational needs are well met through the positive leadership and management of the manager and the committee. Staff have attended relevant courses and have a good understanding and knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The manager is very familiar with the principles for early years education. An effective level of ongoing support provided by the local authority education advisors and Sure Start also positively supports children's learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was agreed that a system be set up for recording incidents. This has been undertaken and the contents are shared with parents. It was also agreed that the security of the premises needed to be improved. A security system has been installed, which means that the premises are much more secure and safe for children. Also the staff now have a means to safely escort the children out of the playground in the event of a fire or emergency.

It was also decided that the Foundation Stage assessment systems needed to be further developed to ensure that the children's development is specified and used to inform future planning. This has been undertaken and the children's progress is well recorded. It was agreed that the children needed to develop skills in mathematical development, in particular in comparing sizes and weights. This has been implemented with the use of appropriate equipment such as weighing scales, which the children readily use to develop their skills in this area of 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 records 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):

- increase the frequency of the emergency evacuation drills

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):

- extend the range of mark making resources and encourage children to practise writing their names
- develop systems for obtaining base line information from parents about their children's abilities when they first start attending the setting.

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