

Great Staughton Pre-School (Piglets)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221745
Inspection date	11 September 2007
Inspector	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
Setting Address	The Playing Field, Great Staughton, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 5BA
Telephone number	07759 382575
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Registered person	Great Staughton 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

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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?

Great Staughton Pre-School (Piglets) operates from a premises sited within a sports pavilion in Great Staughton, close to St. Neots. The provision was registered under the Children Act 1989 in October 1992 but has been in operation since 1977. The group serves the local and wider area.

A maximum of 25 children may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 14 children from two to under five years on roll including funded three- and four,-year-olds. Children have free access to the outdoor play area. They are open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:45 during term time only; this includes an optional lunch club.

The provision is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. There are three staff directly working with the children, including the manager, and two hold recognised early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a recognised early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a stimulating environment where there is plenty of space and separate areas to offer a wide range of activities. Children's immediate safety, health and welfare is well promoted because staff understand and promote children's good health by being good role models and ensuring that their own knowledge is up-to-date. For example, staff or committee attending training courses cascade that information to all the others. There is strong support from the committee which further enhances the care and support for the staff during daily routines. Children have ample opportunities to understand personal health and take full responsibility for their physical needs. This is consistently seen as they wash and dry their hands independently before snacks, after walks in the community or as they complete activities. Children discuss the links between germs on their hands and the transfer of germs into their tummies, which may later make them ill. Children are keen to share this knowledge with each other and help new children to learn the routine by taking them by the hand to show them where to go. They show that they are able to predict outcomes based on their current understanding and developing knowledge.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious foods, including a broad range of fresh fruit and vegetables. They participate in a range of creative activities such as taste testing and making fruit salad with the assistance of a visiting parent. Some children attend the lunch club where they participate in a social meal time discussing the activities of the day. Children show great interest in new foods and those they see growing around them, for instance blackberries, and eagerly discuss the changes in colour and the ripening process. Children note the effect that exercise has on their body as they run across the community field and explore hopping, jumping and rolling on the open spaces used each day. They know that exercise makes them hot and thirsty and talk about their need to rest and have a drink, children demonstrate an understanding of their own physical well-being. They have access to jugs of water and help themselves when they are thirsty with minimal help needed. Children enjoy a social snack time when they fetch their own cups and pour drinks, they clear away after they have finished developing personal responsibility. This promotes their independence and development of health awareness. Children take part in planting and growing seeds and follow the growth with interest, exploring the links between food, water and healthy development.

Children enjoy an extensive range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities. Children move freely between the indoor and outside areas making independent choices. Each day children enjoy walking and exploring the local community field and play area which offers them multiple opportunities for development. They observe the seasons and changes to the environment, observe and learn about the weather, and have open spaces in which to run freely. Children enjoy play in wet weather, snow and fog and discuss what they see such as noting that in fog they cannot see the pre-school building from the opposite side of the field. Children talk eagerly about the changes to the trees and apples growing, the blackberries growing on the hedgerows, and the bees pollinating the flowers. They count spontaneously as they count from five down to one to start a race and compare speed together as they learn who is fastest at running. Children frequently take part in action rhymes and stories such 'Little Rabbit Foo Foo', where they explore drama. Children use small equipment such as scissors, glue spreaders and small construction pieces which aid their development of fine manipulative skills. Children are becoming fully involved in the routines

of the setting. Younger children are developing their independence physically and emotionally. They are active and becoming increasingly independent, acquiring control over their bodies and new physical skills. They are learning to express their needs and are beginning to meet those needs independently for example, by being able to access the toilets and washbasins themselves.

Children's general health and safety is fully supported by all relevant paperwork and records. Children's medical needs, both ongoing or of an emergency nature, are dealt with through clearly outlined procedures carried out by qualified staff. Clear methods of recording and procedures underpin all aspects of physical care. These stringent, well-executed measures ensure that children's health can be promoted at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given a high priority and risks of accidental injury are minimised because staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Policies, procedures and paperwork in this area are well planned and reviewed. Children may explore their environment safely because staff carry out daily safety checks. However, children did have access to unsafe items in the kitchen as the door to the second room used for specific activities was wedged open and the kitchen door stood open throughout the sessions. The community field, whilst being subject to an overall risk assessment, is not subject to daily safety checks before use by children and is open to use by all members of the public. These identified areas currently present a risk to children's safety and well-being.

Children have a firm understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves, and others, safe as they take part in regular emergency drills. They are given explanations by staff and understand the importance of listening to instructions in order to prevent accidents. Children enjoy visits from fire safety officers when they complete topic works and reinforce the routines learnt at pre-school. This strengthens the children's understanding of the routine. Children have opportunities to learn about other aspects of safety, such as using equipment, because explanations given to them encourage them to think about consequences. For example, children confidently use the climbing frame and know that the numbers are limited to four at a time to reduce risk and accidents.

Children are cared for in a welcoming setting where their work is creatively displayed on all areas and at child height. Continuous monitoring of the environment and staff's constant attention to all details ensures that children's access to play materials reaches a high standard of safety. This is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly-sized slides, play houses and climbing frame.

Children are very well protected because staff have a thorough understanding of child protection issues and the appropriate steps to follow. They have continued to review their practice and made sure that procedures meet the Local Safeguarding Children Board requirements. There are robust procedures for the induction of suitable staff and their ongoing suitability whilst employed by the group.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They are eager to attend and participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. They settle eagerly to play areas when they arrive in the 15 minutes available to them with their parents and carers before the session actually begins, anticipating what they may be about to do each day. Children are confident in their relationships with each other and with staff, participating in discussions and initiating conversations. Children engage in discussions about a variety of topics, for example, they talk about what is happening in the village, tell about what their families may do and discuss the items they have brought for the interest table.

Children show a high level of independence as they move around the setting from indoors to outside and control their own activities and independent learning. This is because staff have equipped all areas with a variety of inviting materials on free choice trolleys and offer them additional choices where possible. Children are recognised as individuals with different rates of development and interest. Evaluation of planned activities is carried out using observations at the time of the activity, where staff watch what children are doing and offer support where needed. Assessment of children's progress is detailed and purposeful, staff are skilled in using a variety of methods. They ensure that assessments are always fed into planning so that all children are offered challenging opportunities and activities which are adapted to suit their individual need. This helps to ensure that children are able to realise their full potential. All staff make good use of open questions and take opportunities to extend children's learning. For example, following a question by children about what 'land' or 'the ocean' were, staff described them by asking children to think about what boats sailed on and think of words to describe what they were standing on. This led on to asking children 'how may we get to other countries?' which led to children using their current knowledge and thinking about all forms of transport.

Children settle quickly due to the staff's care, understanding and planning. They ensure that they have all necessary information about children, including their likes and dislikes. Younger children's learning and development is promoted because staff have a very good understanding of child development, staff have accommodated the 'Birth to three matters' framework into all planning and aspects of care. Assessment and developmental progress books are thorough and assist the ongoing support to children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a thorough knowledge of the Curriculum for the foundation stage, enabling them to plan and adapt activities appropriately. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use comprehensive methods for assessing them, making use of information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered. Planning of all activities is clear and is linked to the Foundation Stage, ensuring that all areas of learning are covered. However, there is no initial assessment or profile developed when children first enter into the setting that involves the contribution of parents and carers. This means that there is no baseline level established, from which children's educational progression may be measured.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they choose their play and activities from the wide range offered. These include regular opportunities to engage in sand and water play, exploring texture by looking at corrugation, rubbings and other substances such as shaving foam or syrup.

They explore a variety of crafts, construction, reading and creative opportunities for role play, such as taking part in drama using nursery rhymes. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a range of themed topics which change on a regular basis. This enables them to look more closely at subjects such as 'colour' where they explore filters, silhouettes, colour mixing, mixing blackberries with glue and close observation drawing. Inventive methods, such as water with black and white filter paper, offer children activities to explore science and gain their interest in exploring through practical experiences.

The well-organised environment and daily planning means that children have good opportunities to develop the attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning. They are given sufficient time and appropriate resources to enable them to complete tasks, and their behaviour is very good throughout the sessions, enabling them to listen and concentrate. They are motivated to learn through the provision of exciting and interesting activities and visitors. For example, children have painted pictures using their toes to hold paintbrushes, have tried to balance baskets of fruit on their heads copying a story book, 'Handa's surprise', and strapped dolls to their backs to explore how other people may carry their babies.

Children are making very good links and increasing their confidence within the group as they take part in group activities and those that offer them responsibility. This includes wearing the 'helping' badge which means that they carry out tasks such as reading the weather board, singing the days of the week song to the group, leading the group on their walk and inviting the parents and carers to come in at the end of the session. Children show great enthusiasm for this task and use it to learn about taking turns, showing responsibility and feeling part of the group.

Children are confident in using language to organise and explain their thoughts and play, for example, they ask questions such as 'if you let it go, will it pop up again?'. They plan and take part in developing activities for the setting such as when they visited the garden area. This has been lent to them by the school and they looked at what was already growing and planned what they themselves could plant and grow. They are able to explain what they are doing such as 'I am using the tools to mend the fence like a builder!' when playing outdoors. Children understand that print carries meaning and are beginning to use this as a means of communicating, recognising their names on their name cards and showing attention at story time with books. There are plenty of materials available for children to use to explore early mark-making, however, their understanding of this area is not fully promoted as staff frequently write names on pictures for children without prompting them to try first. Children are not currently seeking opportunities to use mark-making for a purpose and this means they are not currently developing to their full potential.

Children recognise that numbers carry meaning, confidently and correctly counting the number of objects and using numbers in a meaningful context. For example, they hold up three or four fingers when asked and understand that the number can relate to objects or their age. They discuss finding small or big objects and tell each other which one is smallest or biggest. Children begin to think about fractions as they are encouraged to speak of folding paper into half again and again to make it smaller, and compare how it gets thicker as it gets smaller in size. They understand the concept of full or empty as they participate in snack time and pouring their drinks. Children sequence and match eagerly, shown as they use peg boards to match rows of colours, name the colours and count the rows. Children enjoy counting by rote and will eagerly chant numbers together, seen to reach as far as 38. Children competently calculate at activities where they know there are four children allowed on the climbing frame, use labels and numbers

for playing at the sand, and count down from five to one for starting a race on the community field.

Children have opportunities to observe, explore and question in a wide range of activities that form the foundation of their later learning in subjects such as mathematics, science and technology. For example, they have the use of a computer, tape recorder players and karaoke, and mechanical toys that they use freely. Children gain a practical knowledge of some aspects of science, such as magnetism, as they explore magnets and iron filings. They reach conclusions themselves as to the properties of such materials because staff encourage them to explore the facility and explain to them what it is they are feeling. This means that they gain benefit from practical experience. They plant and grow seeds and watch with interest the effect of water and the sun on them. This is being extended to offer wider scope and is an activity in which they show enthusiasm. Children have good opportunities to learn about the present and past because they reflect on the seasons each day as they walk in the community and learn about the natural environment. Children take part in many topic based activities which enable them to learn about other countries and cultures.

Children's physical development is extremely well promoted and they enjoy a wide range of activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills when using large and small apparatus, tools and equipment. This area is further supported by clear daily planning for physical activity which demonstrates that children have opportunities to explore their own abilities in the extensive open areas used rather than being limited to the use of equipment in an enclosed space. They enjoy a wide range of opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form, for example, through activities such as painting, modelling with dough, sand play and the use of chalks and collage materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full and active part in the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities which promote their understanding of their local society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. Children welcome each others' families into the setting where they enjoy activities such as cooking, exploring music and instruments from other countries or explore aspects of daily life such as how babies may be carried strapped to parents' backs. These link into topic works which explore countries around the world and which support children's interest in the world around them. Children explore the local community through visiting the school, links to the day care provision close by and observing daily life in the village, such as looking at buses and their times for collection, when they are out walking. They welcome visitors to the setting such as the fire safety officer, and visitors bring animals and insects. These activities help them to understand the roles of people in the community around them. Children show interest in the work of the visitors and take part in trying on uniforms and handling the animals and insects brought to show them. Participation in realistic role play such as shops and family life enables children to gain a clear and meaningful knowledge of these issues.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children's needs are extremely well documented and met, and their welfare consistently promoted to a high standard because of staff's excellent relationship with parents and carers and the quality information about the provision given. Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. They are encouraged to think about each others' feelings and eagerly take care of each other. This

was seen when children eagerly showed new children where to wash, what the snack routine was, welcomed new children to the setting and waved goodbye as they left. Children's behaviour is good throughout the sessions as they take part in activities and competently organise turn-taking and sharing. Children are able to feel secure as staff make efforts to understand significant events in their lives and anticipate the possible disruption these may bring. For example, they understand the changing schedules of parents working and will make sure that children are taken to the day care facility adjacent to them if they attend both settings. Children show an eagerness to learn and experience new activities or ask about things they do not understand. For example, children ask about what 'land' and 'ocean' mean after singing a rhyme together and listen intently as explanations are offered.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this. Staff ensure, when children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are attending, that this is implemented, working with individual children and parents to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines. Plans for professionals to be invited into the group are developed to enable children to receive the best possible support. Children are given opportunities to learn about how each other may develop a skill to adapt to possible physical restrictions during play and to understand how a disability may be overcome. For example, they have explored painting using paintbrushes held in their toes to paint. By exploring different ways to move their bodies children learn to appreciate achievement and skills. Children for whom English is not the first language receive appropriate support as staff work hard to establish working relationships with parents and extended family.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. There is a commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are kept very well informed of their children's progress through regular newsletters and consultation meetings with staff. However, the methods of recording accidents and other identified documentation does not currently comply with the setting's own written policy to maintain full confidentiality for all families using the provision. Staff provide photographs taken of children during their first day in the pre-school which establishes effective communication channels. Individual learning plans for all children are developed in partnership with parents and carers and reviewed regularly. Parents are invited to use feedback forms to share with staff any achievement of the children at home. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued and appropriate stimulus can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the care provided by experienced and skilled staff. Their daily comfort and enjoyment is enhanced by the quality of organisation and the attention to all details relating to their care and well-being. Children's varying needs are consistently met and they are offered a broad, planned range of activities. Topics are extended or shortened according to the children's interest, this enables children to become self-motivated learners. The well-organised environment means that children have good opportunities to develop the dispositions and attitudes that enable them to achieve in their learning.

Children's welfare and safety are promoted through the setting's clearly defined policies and procedures and the staff's practical knowledge and daily implementation of these. There is a clear induction process for new staff, providing information and support. This continues through the staff assessment and appraisal system, which ensures that all training needs are identified

and staff are able to work appropriately with all children. Staff take part in an observation system whereby their practice is reviewed by the manager, this leads to continual review and self-assessment for continued development.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the very good understanding that the manager has of her role and responsibilities. She ensures that she is aware of new regulations, carrying out research and reviews to implement any changes and carefully studying the implications of these to both children and staff. For example implementing the change to regulations regarding complaints and concerns into practice and arranging training for the forthcoming Early Years Foundation Stage for all staff.

The manager acts as an excellent role model and staff are highly motivated, acquiring qualifications and regularly attending additional training. All daily sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of opportunities throughout the day. Staff pay attention to what children are doing and ensure that they are always given sufficient time and resources to complete their activities and tasks. Staff meet regularly to plan and evaluate future work, to incorporate target activities fed from the children's assessments and review each week's activities. This ensures that the needs of individual children are met, the development of all children is promoted and the setting continues to provide high quality care. This is reflected in the assessment and achievements of children shown in their personal files.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to consider the hygiene and privacy for children within the arrangements for changing of nappies. They were also asked to develop opportunities for children to gain independence such as through self-selection of equipment.

Since that time they have reviewed the process and procedures for personal care by using different areas of the setting and this ensures children's privacy and dignity whilst improving personal hygiene. They have also increased opportunities for children to self-select equipment and serve themselves when having snack. This broadens their development of independence.

At the last inspection for nursery education the provider was asked to develop the monitoring and evaluation of the learning environment and to extend the challenge offered to older or more able children.

Since that time they have introduced formal monitoring observations and added a review to the planning and activities. They have also broadened the assessments for children ensuring that these are fed from children's interests and this ensures that children's own interests and observations are taken account of in the planning and development of activities. This subsequently increases the challenges for children and builds on what they already know to foster further child-initiated activities.

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.

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 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):

- take steps to ensure that hazards to children on the premises, and areas of the community used, are minimised; this refers to the adjacent communal park and the accessibility of the kitchen
- ensure that the confidentiality policy is adhered to throughout daily care; this refers to the recording of children's information in accident records, medication records and personal home contact information.

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 opportunities to use mark-making materials to help children explore their creativity and understanding of writing for different purposes.
- continue to develop the methods of assessment, show that an initial assessment involves the contribution of parents and carers which enables planning to build on what children already know.

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