

Cold Ash Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110713
Inspection date	12 September 2007
Inspector	Melissa Cox

Setting Address	Acland Memorial Hall, Hermitage Road, Cold Ash, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG18 9JX
Telephone number	07778 442489
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Registered person	Cold Ash Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Cold Ash Pre School opened in 1970. It operates from the Acland Memorial Hall in the village of Cold Ash near Thatcham and serves a wide geographical area.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Varied sessions are available from 09:15 to 14:45 which include a lunch club, afternoon and some all day sessions.

The setting is registered to provide care for a maximum of 26 children aged two to five years at any one time. There are currently 48 children on roll. Of these 31 receive nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Eight staff members are employed to work with the children; four have Early Years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Three staff members are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay very healthy because practitioners employ a thorough knowledge of appropriate health and hygiene guidelines and procedures. They keep toilet areas very clean and equipped and use disposable gloves and aprons for food preparation and cleaning up any toilet accidents. Children are aware of their own needs and are developing independence in their personal care. They independently use the toilet facilities and are aware of the importance of hand washing after using the toilet and before snack time.

Good attention to individual children's health needs means that dietary requirements and administration of any necessary medication are properly undertaken according to each child's needs and their parents' wishes. Staff show an good understanding of children's individual dietary requirements and fully include any children with additional dietary requirements. Medication is only administered with written instructions and consent from parents and the record is signed by them to acknowledge every entry. Accidents are also properly recorded and parent signatures of acknowledgement are obtained every time. There is a clear sickness policy which further ensures the children's good health.

Children are encouraged to learn about healthy eating. They are offered a good selection of snacks during the week, that include several fruit choices, raisins and breadsticks. They learn about healthy eating through planned activities for example, healthy eating week and show an increasing awareness of the importance of a healthy diet as they shop for healthy foods in the role play area. However children are not always fully involved in the preparation of their snack and lack opportunities to serve themselves further promoting their independence.

Children enjoy good levels of physical activity. They carefully manoeuvre bikes and doll pushchairs between the trees in the outside area and shout with excitement as they score a goal during a football game. Younger children explore the climbing frame, carefully positioning their feet into the footholds to get to the top and slide down. Indoors, children have very good opportunities to use a wide range of small equipment to develop their fine control, for example, cutting with scissors, using paintbrushes and threading beads.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, bright, spacious and safe village hall environment. Activities are set out using the whole of the large hall. Mats or tables, posters and resource boxes help children to see what they can choose to do in each area. For example, there is a role play and dressing up area marked with a low partition and a reading area arranged on a mat in one of the corners. As a result, children are confident to move around the setting and choose what interests them.

Children are well supervised by staff at all times, who take good measures in reducing potential risks around the building both inside and outside. Written risk assessments are carried out and these are supported by detailed policies and procedures to ensure that the staff are consistent in keeping children safe. Fire drills are practised regularly. Children learn to keep themselves safe by giving each other gentle reminders of the safety rules of the group. For example, reminding each other how to hold onto scissors, or not to run in the hall.

Staff understand their responsibilities for protecting children's welfare. They have a good understanding and knowledge about what to do in the event of having a concern about a child in their care allowing them to act promptly if they had a concern. Supporting documentation is available, however, the pre-school does not have a clear procedure should an allegation be made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and happy as they leave their parents to play. Staff are experienced and enjoy the company of the children in their care. They spend time talking to and playing with them. The pre-school plans and provide a range of stimulating and appropriate activities for children under three years. Children under the age of three follow the same curriculum as older children funded for nursery education, and thorough assessments of their development are made and shared with parents.

The children's understanding of language is promoted well by staff through constant conversation, questions and individual attention. Staff sit with children to talk about their toys and books and prompt them to name objects and shapes. Consequently, children are developing their communication skills and are able to express their needs. All children enjoy themselves at pre-school and the activities offered are fun and enjoyable. Children can select their own activities and staff have a good understanding about ensuring children complete their activity in their own time.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are confident in their environment, arrive happily and eager to take part in all activities. They show immense enthusiasm as they make independent choices and select their own activities from good well-presented play equipment and self-selection areas. They concentrate well and persevere with tasks showing growing levels of confidence and self-esteem. For example, children spend long periods of time making shapes from play dough and filling and pouring gloop into containers. Children chat happily amongst themselves and discuss many aspects such as what foods they like, their families and what they did last week.

Children have many opportunities to develop pre-writing skills and mark-making through a good range of activities. These include using a wide range of writing materials at the arts and craft table, making lists in the role play area and chalking using the outside boards. They listen enthusiastically to stories and have many opportunities to look at books independently. They develop their early reading and writing skills as they begin to recognise their names and more able children trace these correctly in well formed letters.

Children use numbers in all topics, for example, counting how many children in their group and how many cups they need at snack time. They are introduced to simple addition and subtraction appropriately through number rhymes and they use language such as more, less, big and little frequently in routines and activities. They have many opportunities to sort, match and compare objects in a variety of contexts.

Children receive praise in their work and play helping build their self-esteem and confidence. They show a well-developed self-respect for others in the setting. Children respond well to the routine changes in the session, they follow clear guidelines and are aware of the expectations

such as, helping tidy activities away. Children are not fully involved in the preparation of their snack and lack opportunities to serve themselves, further promoting their independence. Children experience varied opportunities to develop their physical skills through well-planned and spontaneous activities both indoors and out. As a result, they develop a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Children have stimulating first hand experiences which helps them make sense of the world. Children can recall events that have happened in the recent past and talk freely about their homes and families. They are learning to respect each other's culture through the celebration of many festivals, when they participate in activities and try out associated foods. However, there is limited opportunities for children to access technology on a regular basis.

Very positive relationships are evident between staff and children. Children develop a good awareness of their own needs and a mature respect for the needs of others as they negotiate turn taking. The staff are caring, patient and supportive towards the children. Staff know the children well and demonstrate a very high level of commitment to their work. They also effectively use story telling, outdoor play and role play to broaden children's experiences. Staff use effective methods to develop children's memory and learning skills such as asking them questions to make them think. Staff are particularly skilled at managing behaviour, with a strong emphasis on encouraging good behaviour and ensuring that children understand why something is wrong.

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They provide a purposeful learning environment for the children to learn and develop as individuals. Staff develop and use varied teaching methods to engage the children's interests and develop their progress although some routines can be adult directed, for example, art activities. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of tracking the children's progress and use the information effectively to guide their planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Concentrating on the individual child is a strength of the setting. Each child has a key worker who takes responsibility for collating the information about them and liaising particularly with their parents, but all staff quickly get to know all the children. Staff have considerable experience, supported by appropriate training, of children who have additional needs, due to language, learning difficulties or disability. Additional support is provided for all children who need it, whether it is because of a specific need, being new to the setting or more generally for the younger children due to their age.

Children are encouraged to build up a sense of belonging within the group. They receive individual attention from staff, and opportunities such as celebrations of their birthday are used to make each child feel special. Children also have access to a range of resources and activities which make them aware of wider society. Funded children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. For example, they experience wonder as they trace bark patterns onto paper with crayons on the trees outside, commenting on the pattern and shapes they can see. They learn about the community as they welcome visitors, for example the local Health Visitor, into their setting.

All parents are made aware of how to access the groups policies and procedures, as well as receiving the prospectus and being asked to fill in detailed information about their child before

they attend. They are also offered the opportunity of attending settling in visits with their child. During these visits staff ensure they talk to the parents to get as much information as they can about the child to help them settle, especially for the first few sessions and parents particularly comment on how approachable all the staff are.

Partnership with parents of funded children is good. They receive written information about the group, its procedures and detailed practical information. They are made aware that the group have an open door policy and are encouraged to spend as much time as they like at the setting. Some parents take the opportunity of talking to staff about their child's achievements and progress daily on arrival or collection, while others wait for more formal opportunities, such as, the open sessions. They are given opportunities to be involved in their child's learning, for example, to accompany them on outings, to attend concerts or through practical examples given by staff to support activities on their individual learning plans.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by staff who work together as a highly effective team. Emphasis is placed on training, with staff having individual targets for their personal development. Good systems are in place to ensure that all the staff are suitable to work with children. Ratios are always maintained above that required, which enables staff to provide a greater variety of activities for the children as well as look after their individual care needs. All of the staff are very experienced, which reflects in the quality of their interaction with the children. They ensure that the premises and resources are well used to provide an interesting, child-centred environment where children enjoy learning.

All necessary documentation is available in the setting although the child protection policy lacks some detail. The documentation is shared with parents and reviewed annually by the committee to ensure the smooth running of the pre-school.

The activities and experiences for all children are rich and varied meeting their individual needs very well. All staff are skilled and sensitive to the management of the children and their behaviour. Staff use the accommodation and resources effectively to support the children's learning which reflects their backgrounds and the wider community.

The provision for the quality of leadership and management are good. Staff working with the children are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and consistently promote the children's well being. This enables children to make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The manager and chair of the committee work together effectively, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They provide clear, positive leadership to the staff who all work extremely well as a team. The team constantly monitor and evaluate the provision through regular meetings, training and promoting their personal development. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last care inspection, the pre-school were asked to ensure children, staff and visitors attendance were recorded correctly and that accident and medication records were signed and dated by parents. The group have addressed these issues by reviewing and improving their documentation. As a result the children benefit from a well organised group which provides extensively for their needs.

The previous nursery education inspection required the pre-school to give consideration to the presentation of the reading area for all children to encourage and nurture their interest in books. The group have evaluated the resources and presentation in the book area. As a result this area is accessed more frequently by the children who enjoy reading with their peers or adults and are able to choose from a wide variety of exciting books.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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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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):

- improve hygiene routines during hand washing and snack time
- review the child protection policy to include a statement should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff

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):

- increase the opportunities for children to access technology on a more regular basis
- increase opportunities for children to be more independent during routine activities with particular regard to art activities and snack time

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