

Cheddington Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	140844
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Inspector	Ann Hilary Guy
Setting Address	C/o Cheddington School, High Street, Cheddington, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 0RG
Telephone number	01296 662292
E-mail	
Registered person	Cheddington Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Cheddington Pre-School is run by a voluntary management committee. It has been running for over 20 years and operates from one, self-contained room within Cheddington Combined School, Buckinghamshire.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open each weekday during term time from 08:50 to 11.20 and 12.25 to 14.55. The group also operate a lunch box club to prepare children for full time schooling. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 49 children aged from two and a half to under five years on roll. Of these 34 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from both the local area and a wider catchment area. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs ten staff. Five of the staff, hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards, or furthering, their qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children remain in good health as the pre-school diligently follows current and appropriate health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. They learn about good personal hygiene from the daily routine and the ease of access to toilet facilities. Some of their topics throughout the year also emphasise aspects of personal hygiene, for example, a visit from a dentist and a nurse. Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible, self-selecting equipment, putting on coats and jumpers before going outside and taking themselves to the toilet.

Children learn about healthy eating through daily chats at the snack table, when they discuss the various foods they have brought for snack and through topics looking at where food has come from and talking about healthy eating. All food for snack and lunch club is provided by the parents. They are given clear guidelines in order for the children to have a healthy snack and a healthy meal. These were written in conjunction with the school's healthy eating policy. The pre-school have a water cooler freely accessible in the room to enable children to help themselves to a drink at any time, and the group provide milk for the children at snack time. Parents provide some drinks at lunch time, otherwise the children have water.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical opportunities. They have a self contained play area attached to their room with a safety surface. This has playhouses, slide, climbing frame and a variety of sit and ride toys for the children to use. A good selection of other equipment is stored in the shed in order to offer variety whilst playing outside. This includes, balls hoops and quoits. During the week they have a session in the school hall where they can use the school gym equipment, they also have access to the school adventure play area which enables children to practice their balancing skills amongst other things.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Clear procedures and documentation, together with an extremely child-centred, safe environment, ensures the safety and well-being of the children at all times. Regular daily risk assessments, together with more comprehensive termly and annual assessments, ensure the safety of the premises at all times. Children have access to a wide variety of equipment, regularly checked for safety and kept in good order. Staff pre-select equipment based on their six day equipment rota, ensuring all children see all equipment during their time at the group. The children have some degree of freedom to self select equipment, especially puzzles, from the low shelves and boxes.

Good use is made of stable doors and stairgates, to prevent children accessing potentially hazardous areas. The premises are linked to the school fire alarm system and the preschool has mainly held fire practices at the same time as school. As the school have only had three in an 18 month period, it is possible some children within the group may never experience an evacuation. Hourly risk assessments are carried out within the toilet block, to ensure it remains safe and in good order for the children's use. Children enjoy regular walks around the village. Ratios are always extremely high for these and clear risk assessments carried out. A very clear and comprehensive child protection policy, fully understood by all the staff, ensures the children's well-being and care is maintained.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs very well met in all the different sessions offered by the pre-school. The youngest children attend the afternoon session, where they enjoy a wide range of activities, based on the same planning as is used for the morning session. Within the planning the learning intentions for Birth to three matters have been identified alongside those for the Foundation Stage and observations on all children contribute to their assessment folders and are linked to either the Birth to three framework or stepping stones within the Foundation Stage. Independence is encouraged for all the children, through the activities and routines of the group. Children greatly benefit from the well planned sessions that give them opportunities to experience a wide range of activities enabling them to develop their understanding and skills.

Children remain busy throughout the sessions, are well stimulated and have fun. Staff tailor the activities to meet the developing needs of the children and encourage them to do as much as they can for themselves. Both the morning and afternoon sessions offer a wide range of activities to stimulate and challenge the children. The activities are set out on a six day rotation, to ensure those attending part-time get to experience all the equipment. Children can request specific pieces of equipment and readily do this. All children in all groups assist with the tidying up at various points in the session and all enjoy constructive and informative whole group times. These are generally slightly shorter for the younger children. Throughout the sessions they begin to learn the difference between right and wrong and greatly benefit from the positive behaviour management strategies employed by the staff that incorporate much praise and encouragement.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's active involvement in their learning is stimulated by a vibrant and varied topic based curriculum. They are developing in confidence with some of the older children working independently and only requesting help when required. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum with a good working knowledge of the stepping stones. Children greatly benefit from the interaction with the staff and the challenges, support and encouragement they receive. The topic base plans clearly link to the stepping stones and care is taken to ensure a good balance is achieved throughout the year so all children experience activities in all areas. Observational recordings made by all staff members throughout the sessions contribute to the children's clear assessment folders and are clearly cross-referenced to the relevant stepping stones on the individual assessment sheets. This enables staff to see a very good picture of the child's progress and identify the next steps of learning. The fortnightly staff meetings ensure all staff know and understand the session aims. They take it in turns to plan a week at a time and use the assessment folders to ensure they meet the children's needs. Children greatly benefit from the play based, and fully integrated, approach to learning in which they receive a wide variety of experiences to stimulate their minds.

Children learn through effective whole group sessions as well as small adult led groups and free play. They choose what they wish to do with staff carefully deployed to ensure they cover all areas of the room. Children in the morning session are mostly very confident and some have quite strong friendship bonds developed with their peers. The younger children in receipt of nursery funding that attend the afternoon sessions are encouraged to develop confidence and build relationships with staff and peers. Two girls were playing together, taking it in turns to

operate a remote control robot. The language exchange that went on between them showed their sound understanding of what they were doing and the enjoyment and fun they were having in creating a story line around the robot's movements.

All the children are happy and settled and a good level of oral communication skills was noted in both sessions. Children express themselves and their needs very well, with staff skilfully introducing words to extend their vocabulary. They have many and varied opportunities to mark make using a wide variety of media, although are not always encouraged to develop their handwriting skills. All six areas of learning are well integrated into the play based session with children making steady progress; however, some aspects of mathematics are not given as much weighting as others. The children support a child through World Vision and have looked at the differences between their lives, the money they use and their housing and community. This has been covered in a very clear way to help the children understand and good use has been made of maps.

Children make good use of the various creative activities offered to them and also the wide variety of physical opportunities they have, although they do not have free access to the outside area. They enjoy sessions at times by music specialists, which are closely linked to their current topic. These sessions give them the opportunity not only to learn new songs and rhymes and play instruments but also explore movement to sound. Very good use is made of books and story sacks when sharing stories with a group of children and they enjoy the variety of opportunities to use their imaginative skills with small world equipment, dressing up and role play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children quickly settle and develop a strong sense of belonging to the pre-school. Their parents work closely with the staff to ensure the children's individual needs are fully met. They learn to appreciate the wide range of cultures and traditions through their sponsorship project, topics and the range of toys and equipment that reflect different cultures and traditions. They play extremely well together with many of the older children beginning to form friendship groups, and happily share resources.

Children with any form of learning difficulty or with English as an additional language are fully included and well supported in all activities within this pre-school. Children's behaviour is generally very good and all are extremely good at helping to tidy up at the end of the session. They have a sound understanding of right from wrong and adhere to the rules of the pre-school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children greatly benefit from the relationship staff have with their parents and the regular informal discussions, although staff are aware these do not always cover all parents. Achievement records can be seen by parents at any time and two specific times a year are set aside for parents to visit, speak to their child's key worker and discuss their progress, however, not all parents choose to attend. Clear notice boards and information for parents on the windows ensure they are fully informed about the happenings within the pre-school. Informative information is given to new parents, together with regular newsletters, keeping them fully informed about the experiences their child is having.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare is paramount and staff create a welcoming, child-friendly environment. The policies and procedures underpin the care offered and are fully understood and implemented by staff. Registers clearly show who is on the premises at any one time, and these ensure children's well being and safety at all times. Ratios of staff to children are always above the minimum to enable the children to have as much individual care as necessary.

Leadership and management is good. Children thrive in this happy, well-planned, secure group. Staff work closely as a team providing a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities, ensuring children have access to the entire curriculum. Planning is clearly linked to both the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three matters framework, thus meeting the needs of all children. Children benefit from a staff team that attend many courses and have regular appraisals, ensuring they are as up to date as possible in their knowledge. The staff team work closely together with the manager, who liaises regularly with the chair person from the committee, to ensure the smooth running of the group.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last care inspection the two recommendations relating to policies and keeping parents informed of their child's progress have both been satisfactorily met. The policies undergo an annual review and any requested updates from staff, after attending training courses, are pencilled in for consideration. This ensures the policies are up to date and fully reflect the practice of the group. As well as open access to their child's records, parents are invited to two parents' evenings at which they can talk to staff about their child's progress. Staff are available before and after every session to address any urgent issues with parents. This ensures parents are well informed about their child's progress within the group.

The recommendations made to improve nursery education within the group have been mostly met. All staff have a sound knowledge of the stepping stones and the current system for planning enables them to use this skill as they take it in turns to plan, a week at a time. Children have lots of opportunities to read familiar words from the labels and wide range of books available in the room, they also have many opportunities to make patterns using a wide variety of resources. Less opportunities are available for them to write familiar words and develop their calculation skills. The outdoor area has been extremely well resourced, giving sufficient equipment for the children to enjoy a wide variety of physical activities. They also use some of the school resources to extend children's physical 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):

- ensure times are recorded in the accident book and when medication is administered
- ensure all children experience regular fire evacuations

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):

- ensure the use of the outdoor area is fully integrated into the day
- ensure children have opportunities to experience writing their names on their work and further develop the opportunities for early calculation skills.

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