

The Pre-School At Gissing Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254077
Inspection date	30 October 2007
Inspector	Lesley Gadd
Setting Address	The Old School, Lower Street, Gissing, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 5UJ
Telephone number	01379 677300
E-mail	
Registered person	The Pre-School At Gissing Children's Centre
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Gissing Children's Centre is run by a committee of parents and carers. It opened in 1982 and operates from a Victorian building, with a surrounding outdoor area, in the village of Gissing, Norfolk. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children as a pre-school open from 09.30 to 14.30, Monday through to Friday during term times. The setting is also registered for a maximum of 26 children as a play-scheme open from 10.00 to 14.30 during the school holidays.

There are currently 62 children aged from two to 11 years on roll. Of these 20 children receive funding for early education. Children attend the setting for a variety of sessions throughout the week and during the holidays. The pre-school welcomes children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or English as an additional language.

The setting employs six members of staff and all of these hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives the support from the local authority and has completed some modules of a local quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is very well promoted by staff and children are actively encouraged to take an increasing role in caring for their bodies and all round physical health.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and clean environment. Rigorous standards of cleanliness within the playrooms and thorough hygiene practices minimise the risk of infection. Regular cleaning schedules are in place to maintain the basic bathroom facilities and sturdy equipment. The staff use anti-bacterial spray when wiping tables and use table cloths before snacks are served. Children are very clear about why they need to wash their hands before eating to stop germs making them ill. If children become unwell the setting ensures parents know that children need to stay at home to avoid them passing on infections to other children. Children's welfare in case of accidents is actively supported. Staff are trained to administer first aid, a well stocked first aid kit is easily accessible and the setting holds parental consent to seek advice in a medical emergency.

Children's growth is positively supported and they are keen to help themselves to refreshments. They attend the welcoming snack table when they are ready throughout the morning. They competently collect their snack boxes and pour their own drinks of water or milk demonstrating their excellent independence skills. Children discuss the types of fruit, dried and fresh, they are eating and staff seize the children's interest in bananas to develop a project about the 'journey of a banana from around the world'. As a result of this and gardening projects, where children grow food to eat such as cress and runner beans, they have a strong awareness about food origins. Children enjoy a diverse range of celebratory refreshments which stimulate their taste buds such as Chinese crackers at New Year. Children attend a lunch session as part of the pre-school and play scheme. They sit together and unpack their food carefully from their lunch boxes enjoying the social occasion of eating with everyone and displaying positive social skills as they routinely say 'please' and 'thank you'. Children know about the benefits of healthy eating. They eagerly discuss what happens to your body when food is eaten and how milk is good for growing strong bones. Children's individual dietary requirements are met as their needs are discussed with parents before care is provided and details are kept to remind staff of their allergies.

All children enjoy a rich variety of active play which fosters their interest and enjoyment of exercise and promotes their physical health. The setting has easy access to an outside play area where children are able to enjoy routine play outside in most weathers, benefiting from daily fresh air to exercise their lungs. Children delight in the opportunities offered to ride bicycles relishing the thrill of whizzing past friends with the wind blowing their hair and giggling with delight at their achievements when riding competently. They show great skill at manoeuvring around objects as they run freely and use their bodies well to balance, climb and slide on the adventure equipment strengthening their large muscle tone. Children show competent small muscle control when using scissors during craft projects and threading rings onto laces. Older children who attend the

play-scheme enjoy parachute games, mini-Olympics and team games. Children take part in regular gardening and nature activities and have a rich understanding about the environment. They are keen to help sweep leaves in Autumn and older children notice how some animals go underground to hibernate in winter.

Children take the opportunity to rest and recuperate when needed, supporting their sense of well-being. They relax on the large cushions and enjoy a quiet story with staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely at the pre-school and play-scheme as staff are aware and take suitable steps to minimise most hazards. Cleaning products are stored securely, fire exits are clear and an accurate register of attendance is kept for children, staff and visitors to ensure all can be accounted for in the event of an emergency evacuation. The play equipment used by the children is checked before they arrive to ensure it is safe and the setting holds relevant insurance. Detailed risk assessments have been conducted of the premises, activities and outings to reduce the risk of accidents to the children. The entrances to the building are secure, however, the arrival door is solid wood and approaching visitors cannot be seen. This makes managing access to the premises and responding to unwelcome intruders in this isolated location difficult and may compromise staff and children's safety in these circumstances.

Children are emotionally secure as they receive a warm welcome from staff and come into an extremely well prepared setting happily. The play rooms are child-centred and the colourful toys, displays of children's art work and child-sized furniture all help children to feel at home in the setting and settle quickly. Children are actively encouraged to learn about keeping themselves safe for future independence. Pre-school children talk about and practise road safety routines, learn how to get out of the building in the event of a fire and talk about how to use scissors safely to avoid injuring themselves. Older children who attend the play-scheme talk about the dangers of using hot wax when making batik prints and are very well supervised by staff during these more adventurous activities. Younger children are positively encouraged and supported in taking safe risks to promote their confidence and awareness. They climb the low level tree with staff close at hand to assist to keep them safe and help to carry heavy boxes with support when tidying toys away.

Children's welfare and protection is given good consideration. Adults managing, working in and visiting the setting are checked and children are not released to adults unless parents have given written permission. The staff demonstrate that they are able to recognise signs and symptoms of child abuse and everyone connected with the setting is clear about whom they need to contact if they have concerns. Child protection procedures held are up to date and parents are advised about the setting's child protection responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All children are extremely happy and secure in this supportive, caring setting. They enjoy the company and warmth of staff which ensures they are very self-assured from an early age. Staff are attentive, kind and friendly in their approach towards the children and sit with them supporting their play. Staff and children relish their time together. They enjoy sharing the thrill of finding the missing parrot in the memory game, clapping with glee at their success, and staff offer ready cuddles and reassurance to children who are temporarily upset. Children are actively encouraged to communicate. They make their needs known using gestures and simple signs. Staff are quick to respond and skilfully support children sounding out letters and words fostering their confidence in the use of language. Older children talk easily, brimming with confidence as they describe what is in their painted picture of a family swimming trip with borrowed arm

bands. All children are keen to talk about their lives; how they dance the 'cha cha cha like grandma' what their favourite food is and they listen when others speak exceptionally well.

Children experience a rich, diverse range of interesting activities that are enjoyable and actively foster their skills and development. Staff have a secure knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and embrace these principles when planning to provide a positive range of new experiences that stimulate the children's senses. Children enthusiastically explore compost, dried wheat, cornflour, sand and water, enjoying the sensation of drizzling wheat grain through their fingers and stopping to explore the detail of the tiny grains. Older children take great care with their paintings, selecting and choosing colours to create their pictures, whilst younger children derive a pleasurable satisfaction from patting paint, exploring how prints are made and making connections in their play. Children delight in the opportunities provided to unpack treasure boxes of interesting objects that promote conversation and exploration. They focus well as they concentrate on using tools in art and craft activities and smile with pleasure when they show finished creations to staff who respond enthusiastically and display children's art pictures. All children co-operate exceptionally well and engage readily with friends. They pretend to drive trains to the farm to deliver the grain and giggle with joy when they play a chasing game outside behind the bench. Children competently make marks on paper with crayons and pencils and are keen to look at photographs displayed around the room which positively reinforces their sense of self, promoting their confidence.

Children who attend the play-scheme discuss ideas for projects during each holiday and staff harness their interests to provide an excellent, adventurous range of activities in which children gain many skills. Creative opportunities include stained glass, batik, sewing sessions, designing mosaics and Greek charm bracelets, building volcanoes outside in the sand, taking part in well supervised outdoor cooking events on the bonfire and making fruit smoothies. Children learn about the environment as they make bird boxes with the countryside ranger, create scarecrows and insect feeders. Older children relish opportunities to work alongside younger children supporting them with a variety of projects showing their care and concern for others.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. All children are enthusiastic learners in this setting and are quickly developing skills in all areas. All staff have an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and know how young children learn best. They provide a rich play environment where they observe children, keep detailed developmental records of children's skills and use this information very effectively to evaluate, make individual play plans and robustly support children's learning. Activities planned are developed through children's interests at any one time which harnesses children's enthusiasm for new experiences and maximises the benefits for learning. Children are active participants in their own learning in this setting and fully involved in decisions about activities and future plans. Staff make wholly effective use of open-ended questions to challenge, stimulate and extend children's thinking as illustrated by staff's comment about 'what sort of shoes have you got? '. This leads to a full discussion on size, colour, shape, purpose, how shoes are made and the origins of leather materials. Staff know when to sit quietly alongside children reinforcing their confidence in making their own links and discoveries in learning and are quick to praise children for their achievements however small.

Children are developing a strong sense of personal independence. They separate well from parents on arrival and are keen to come in to play. Children make choices, self-select their toys and older children easily put on their coats for outside play. They are determined to persevere

when faced with the challenge of getting their yoghurt lid off and smile with delight when they are enthusiastically praised by staff. All children help to take some responsibility for tidying up activities after play and show great consideration for others as they help to find toys to comfort younger children who are temporarily upset.

Children have regular access to books and they handle them well. Staff make group stories interesting as they change their voice and use puppets to hold younger children's attention. Older children use books to find out about their particular interests, such as which animals hibernate in winter. The clear labelling throughout the setting helps children to understand that print carries meaning and staff make very effective use of phonics within everyday activities to reinforce the initial letters of words and help children link sounds and letters. Staff are actively encouraging children to listen to differentiations within sounds as they use tins with different contents and encourage the children to comment on the loudness, harshness and softness of sounds. This very effective practice heightens children's awareness of how sounds are formed which will provide an excellent basis for future reading skills. Early writing skills are actively supported by staff. Children make marks within their routine play to represent their ideas, use large wipe easy boards and pens which provide instant rewarding results and older children are keen to have a go at forming shapes to write their names.

Children are developing very good mathematical thinking. They are encouraged to count at every opportunity and older children spontaneously count up to 10, recognise written numerals and sequence them correctly when pegging numbered socks onto a washing line. Children comment on the round shape on the table cloth and the square made outside with the chalk. Younger children talk about bigger or smaller shoes, count the number of friends at the table and discuss full and empty concepts when filling a tube with wheat grain. Older children discuss concepts of weight and size during cooking and enjoy the challenge of more complex problem solving as they add and subtract the number of figures in the basket.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is exceptionally well promoted. They build and design readily using a variety of construction materials, making bridges and ramps with bricks and competently make their own junk model creations from a range of disposable boxes and tubes. Children are keen to help with planting sunflowers and beans watching and recording the changes and growth that take place. They display great confidence in their use of technology. They work out how to get hand whisks to operate and create bubbles in the water, which button opens the tape player and how the apple corer machine works. Children find out why things happen as they watch ice melting, fix and manipulate cogs to get them to turn and notice how heat from the cooker makes their baking rise.

Children have excellent opportunities to freely express themselves using a rich range of creative materials. They skilfully stick, paint and create their own pictures. Older children comment on the fact they have created 'orange' when mixing red and yellow paint together enhancing their understanding about colour changes. Children spontaneously 'hum' and sing to themselves, join in rhythmically with group song time, dancing opportunities and enjoy making loud and soft noises with instruments. They use their imagination well to explore a variety of roles. They dress as fairies, builders and drive lorries to deliver loads to the building yard. Children act out parenting roles as they put the puppet doll to bed, covering it carefully with a blanket, staying and soothing the doll until it is asleep.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children from all backgrounds feel at home in the setting as they are very well valued and respected. Staff place a strong emphasis on meeting children's and families' individual care needs and as a result children are confident and sociable. Staff use the children's names and look at them directly when they are speaking to show that they are interested in what they say and do. Consequently, children feel positive about themselves and display a strong sense of self-esteem at the setting. They make decisions about what to play with, when to refresh themselves at snack time, visit the toilet facilities and take safe risks confident in the knowledge that they will be well supported by staff. Children are actively encouraged to develop an understanding of the wider world through planned activities and day to day conversations about differences. They celebrate religious festivals from a range of faiths and experience an increasing range of resources that positively reflect all members of society. In this way children are positively helped to learn about and respect diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The setting provides care for some children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff are quick to recognise and act upon developmental delay. Close one to one adult support is offered so that all children can actively participate in the rich range of activities on offer and ensure each child is wholly and actively supported in reaching their full potential. Staff embrace partnership working alongside parents and other agencies to ensure that all children's individual needs are robustly met.

Children's behaviour is excellent. The staff praise children frequently when presenting positive behaviour so that they understand what is expected of them and act as exemplarily role models being respectful and courteous towards the children. Younger children are quickly helped to resolve minor conflicts about sharing the same toys with the use of a sand timer and older children learn right from wrong through the clear explanations that they are given when the staff ask them to change their behaviour. Older children who use the play-scheme develop their own conducts about acceptable behaviour and are considerate and polite.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children's well-being is actively supported through the positive relationships established with parents. Parents are welcomed and staff make time to talk with them on arrival about their children's needs for the day. Parents have an accessible information booklet to explain the routines and policies to which the pre-school and play-scheme operates. The setting is clear about how they would respond to any parental concerns, clearly display complaint contact numbers and actively seek parents' views formally about the children's care and education. As a result parents are reassured regarding complaint matters and contribute towards the full evaluation of the setting's care and education of their children. Parents receive excellent information about the Foundation Stage and have regular opportunities to discuss and comment on their children's individual progress to help secure children's learning. Parents attend sessions where they can share activities and learning opportunities with the children. Parents are invited to serve on the managing committee and regular letters help to keep them informed about developments at the setting. Parents are supportive of the pre-school and play-scheme and state that the setting shows exceptional care and support for the children and them as families. They also comment on the fact that their children love attending, gain many skills and enjoy the good range of activities provided by the approachable, friendly staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare is positively safeguarded. The setting have suitably vetted, enthusiastic and capable staff who continue to undertake additional training to ensure they offer good quality care to the children. Staff have a good understanding of how to organise the layout of the play room so that children can eat in comfort, play actively and sit quietly when they choose to do so. There are good ratios of staff working directly with the children to ensure they are effectively supervised and supported in their play.

Children are reassured by the familiar routine during sessions because they know what happens next. Their independence is actively fostered because they can freely choose from a variety of toys and equipment that are set out at their level. A range of accessible records are in place to guide staff as to operational matters and to reassure parents that their children's well-being is actively considered. However the arrival access door requires some additional improvement.

The leadership and management of the provision are outstanding. The staff and committee are very clear about their purpose and extremely dedicated to providing a quality service to the children and families who attend the setting. Clear aims help the setting provide a stimulating environment in which children learn through play, as evidenced by the progress that they are making. The voluntary organising committee supports the day to day running of the setting very well and, with staff, they have been actively involved in working to further improve the premises. The setting very effectively monitors and evaluates all aspects of the children's education and teaching to ensure children are offered a high quality play and learning environment. The setting have completed four modules of a local authority quality assurance scheme to further develop the service on offer to the children and families who attend. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting were asked to ensure the conditions of the walls in the toilet block were adequately maintained and devise an effective prompt to remind staff to consistently notify parents of entries in the accident and medication books. At the last education inspection the setting were asked to introduce more opportunities for children to freely express themselves through music and dance. The setting have made good progress on addressing these points to further improve the children's care and education.

The toilet block remains a basic facility, however, staff have regular maintenance systems in place to ensure paint is quickly repaired when peeling and to maintain it at an acceptable level. This ensures it is sufficiently comfortable for use by the children. Health records have been updated and staff are making effective use of a circle system within the register that alerts them to the fact that they need to consult with parents regarding any medication or accident records.

The children enjoy daily opportunities to sing spontaneously during sessions and during more specific group activities and play instruments. This develops their sense of rhythm. Children dance freely to music of all kinds and take part in movement sessions where they pretend to be 'floppy' and straight like a stick.

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 outstanding.

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 there is an effective system for managing access to the premises.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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