

William Cowper Pre School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254350
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspector	Anne Walker
Setting Address	William Cowper Close, Toftwood, DEREHAM, Norfolk, NR19 1LT
Telephone number	01362 698306
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Registered person	William Cowper Preschool Nursery
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

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

William Cowper Pre-school Nursery opened in 1984 and is managed by a voluntary management committee. It operates from mobile premises on a self-contained site within the grounds of Toftwood Infants School. The pre-school is situated in the village of Toftwood on the outskirts of East Dereham, Norfolk. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday morning from 09.00 to 11.30 and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 13.15 until 15.00, during term time. Children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 18 children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local area. The setting currently supports children with disabilities.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and another member of staff is working towards an early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children understand when and how to wash their hands because they have clear explanations from the adults around them. As a result they quickly become independent and confident to care for their own health in this way. Good measures are in place indoors to minimise the spread of germs. Each child has a hand towel and they always correctly identify and use their own. Staff understand good hygiene rules and employ them throughout the session. There is a policy for the care of children who are ill or infectious and parents are made aware of this so that they can work cooperatively with the pre-school to safeguard the health of all the children. The outside sandpit does not have a cover which fully ensures that sand children are handling is clean. All the staff hold current first aid certificates so that there are several people on site each day that could deal with any accidents or emergencies that may arise.

Children bring a snack from home to eat at the group. Good levels of communication between the setting and home ensures that only healthy foods are brought in. They enjoy grapes, kiwi, bananas, dates and rice cakes. The setting provides drinking water throughout each session and at snack time children choose between milk or water. Fruits and vegetables grown by the children provide opportunities for trying new tastes so that the range of healthy foods they eat continues to grow.

The large outdoor play area provides a wide range of opportunities for children to play actively on a regular basis. They clamber up the climbing frame, pedal cars and enjoy the space to run around and join in group activities with the parachute. They go outside in most weathers but when this is not possible space is created indoors. Here they use balance beams and bean bags, exploring different ways of using the equipment successfully and helping them develop control of their bodies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Space is well organised to provide an attractive environment that is practical and safe for children to use. Different zones ensure that they take part in messy play away from areas where they may wish to spread out on the floor. Staff are vigilant in tidying areas and sweeping sand to prevent accidents. For a short period at each session children help with this process so that they learn to contribute to their own safety. Good staffing levels ensure that children are supervised effectively indoors and out. Adults are deployed at each area of the building so that children are always in their sight. Safe procedures exist for children's arrival and departure and people who parents nominate to collect their child are clearly recorded.

The pre-school furniture and equipment is of good quality, clean and in good order. The furniture enables children to access their play safely and increases their independence as they can select things from storage units at their eye level or in boxes at floor level. Items are developmentally appropriate so that children are not put at risk of harm and children are provided with suitable guidance about using equipment, such as scissors, safely.

Children's welfare is promoted as staff have a sound understanding of their responsibilities with regard to child protection. They have attended training and are attuned to what may cause

them concern and know how to deal with this in a professional way that ensures confidentiality but safeguards children. Relevant guidance is displayed for staff to refer to at any point.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The pre-school is organised and ready to receive children before each session. As children arrive they are warmly greeted by their carers and older children greet each other, so that even the younger children generally separate confidently from their parents and find something that interests them. Good attention is paid to the settling and welcoming process, helping children feel valued and part of the pre-school community.

Across the course of the week the various sessions are organised into broad age groups. This means that children play alongside children of similar age. The routines for the session vary according to the developmental level of the particular group. However, the planning does not show how staff adapt activities to meet the needs of children under three and they do not refer to relevant guidance, such as 'Birth to three matters', to help them plan, although generally these children have appropriate activities. Two-year-olds have fewer changes within the routine of the session and this helps them to get used to being away from parents and with a bigger group of children. Staff spend time playing alongside children so that they get to know them and are able to encourage their interest in a range of activities and toys. They learn about children from playing alongside them and make useful observations but they do not record these to assist their future activity planning to best support children's overall development.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have a suitable understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance. The qualified staff work closely with those who have not attended training to support their awareness of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Activities are planned that enable children to be active participators in their learning, selecting what they wish to do from the range of things available to them. Adults aim to utilise children's interests, as they arise, as a way of teaching a range of skills, although how to do this is not fully understood or sufficiently refined. Consequently it has some impact on the short term planning which is not sufficiently clear to help all staff understand what they hope a child may learn from a particular activity. It also impacts on the challenges for some children on occasions.

Children have strong relationships with the adults and are motivated to learn because the staff provide a range of interesting activities and are interested in helping children succeed. Some aspects of their teaching are strong, such as children's personal, social and emotional development and their language skills. Adults spend time talking with and listening to them in a way that helps them express feelings and ideas, or pose questions. This is generally on a one-to-one basis or in small groups and opportunities for older children to speak and listen in a larger group are less frequent. Their competent language skills mean that they also use talk to communicate with each other. This is evident as they develop imaginative games in the role play area, negotiating the storyline. They enjoy stories being read to them but do not readily access the good range of books independently. Children are confident to tackle new challenges. They are interested in the summer's growing project. Having grown their own fruit and vegetables they keenly sample the end produce. Those that have not previously used the balance beam think about how they will move across it and confidently adopt their own way independent from their peers. Mark making opportunities are available to children but are not

sufficiently diverse across the learning environment to encourage children to practise their emerging skills more frequently.

Children's progress is monitored through observations and recorded against the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. These records are not effectively used to guide future short term planning to ensure that challenges for children are always pertinent.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Records completed with parents at the outset of the placement include sufficient detail to identify children's individual needs. These are conscientiously acted upon by the adults looking after children in order that they feel valued and are able to make the most of what the setting has to offer. Children with disabilities and additional learning needs are able to take part alongside their friends because suitable strategies are in place to support them. The setting works with the parents and any other agencies to plan for their ongoing development. Displays, toys and activities provide children with opportunities to explore people's similarities and differences and helps them understand the diversity of the wider world in which they live. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children attending the pre-school make friends with each other and develop good relationships with their carers. As they arrive they greet each other warmly and notice when one or two of their friends are absent and show empathy by enquiring from adults if those persons are alright. They play cooperatively and demonstrate skills in sharing and taking turns, often beyond what may be expected of their chronological age. Adults working with children act as positive role models as they show care and concern for the children, provide simple explanations and are always on hand to deal with minor issues if they arise.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff establish dialogues with parents verbally and through home and pre-school diaries ensuring that any positive or negative impacts to children's learning are known about and addressed. Parents can influence the running of the setting by becoming a member of the management committee. Relevant information about the Foundation Stage is available to them in the prospectus and provides helpful information as well as open sessions where they can see how the children spend their time. There is minimal information on a weekly or daily basis that informs parents about the themes or activities that children are taking part in. Neither are there ways for them to share what they know about their child's development or contribute or comment on the records that staff keep.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are received into an attractive environment that is child-centred. They are looked after by a team where half hold appropriate qualifications and others are undertaking courses to support their knowledge of early years practice. Appropriate arrangements ensure that there are always good levels of adults to look after children. Satisfactory systems are in place to check that people working with children are suitable to do so.

All required records are in place and used to manage the day-to-day running of the pre-school. There are a range of written policies in place. The policies for dealing with complaints, behaviour management, child protection and lost and uncollected children all have aspects missing or are unclear. The operational plan exists but is not fully developed. In addition, policies and the

operational plan are not readily available. This means that parents are not fully informed and the documents do not sufficiently guide staff and any new committee members, which could impact on children's welfare. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The pre-school manager holds a relevant qualification and has a suitable understanding of the Foundation Stage which she uses to support less experienced colleagues. She has a positive attitude to developing her practice and is currently on a management course. There are regular communication channels between the management committee and the manager and her staff so that issues are discussed promptly and the pre-school has the resources to work with children. The committee hold relevant details about staff so that they are able to encourage suitable training opportunities.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting agreed to improve medication records and systems for requesting consent to seek emergency medical treatment, ensure adults provide good role models for children's behaviour, provide privacy when changing children, improve resources that reflect the wider world and increase healthy snacks for children.

Suitable medication records are maintained that conform to requirements. Written consent to seek emergency medical treatment is requested on the registration form so that parent's wishes are known from the outset. Children behave very well and adults looking after them act as positive role models. Children are changed in the bathroom and this is done discreetly. The range of resources and activities relating to equality of opportunity have been developed so that there are good opportunities for children to begin to understand the diversity of the world around them. Working with parents the setting ensures that children have healthy and nutritious snacks while they are at pre-school to promote their health.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting agreed to increase the range of opportunities in aspects of maths, physical and creative learning, and to develop the system for assessment in order that they could identify children's next steps in learning and incorporate these into the planning. The pre-school have a suitable system of assessment which enables them to identify children's next steps in learning but identified next steps are not incorporated into the written planning to fully support children's learning and to guide less experienced staff when they work alongside children. This means that on occasions the best challenges for children's level of understanding are not set. Children now have appropriate opportunities through activities and discussion to learn about health and bodily awareness. There is a balance between adult led creative activities and children's free expression using various media and examples of this are displayed at the pre-school. Some opportunities in maths exist for children to compare groups of objects. However, the frequency of opportunities is limited because planning does not clearly differentiate for those children who are ready for this area of learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve relevant policies and the operational plan so that they more clearly guide staff and inform parents about how the pre-school is run. Ensure they are readily available to both staff and parents
- develop planning and assessment systems for children aged 2-3 years in line with guidance such as 'Birth to three matters'
- improve the cover on the sand-pit to fully safeguard children's health

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):

- improve the short term planning and the use of the assessment system to more consistently provide suitable challenges for children across the six areas of learning
- extend the mark making opportunities for children across the pre-school environment
- increase the opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning.

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