

# Piccolo Early Years Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102987
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Julie Wright
<b>Setting Address</b>	Bugle CPS, Fore Street, Bugle, St Austell, Cornwall, PL26 8PD
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<b>Registered person</b>	Piccolo Early Years Group
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Piccolo Early Years Group has been established since 1999. It operates from the school hall and a separate building in the grounds of Bugle County Primary School. The group is committee run and serves the Bugle area plus surrounding villages. It is open five days a week during school term time. Sessions are available from 08.45 to 15.15.

The group is registered to care for up to 48 children aged from two to five years. There are currently 57 children on roll. This includes 24 children in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children who speak English as an additional language and also a community of travellers.

There are 10 staff employed to work with the children. Nine staff have early year's qualifications. One member of staff is currently working towards a level two qualification. The group receives support from the local authority early years team.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children learn good health and hygiene routines in the setting. Staff implement effective policies to prevent the risk of cross-infection and to promote children's health. The youngest children show their understanding as they go to the sink and say 'wash hands' without being prompted. Children learn about how their bodies grow and also benefit from taking part in dental hygiene topics. Accident and medication details are accurately maintained and all staff have current first aid certificates.

Children's dietary requirements are known and met well in the setting. The group promotes healthy eating in line with the school programme. Children take packed lunches or may have a school dinner. They enjoy going to the dining hall, which helps to prepare them for the transition to school. Children feel important and enjoy going to the serving hatch with their tray. They make independent choices from nutritious meals freshly cooked on the premises. Snack times are sociable and provide opportunities for the older children to develop independent skills. They enjoy helping staff with small tasks and pouring their own drinks. However, the younger children have fewer opportunities as they tend to be served by staff. Children learn how food grows and help to prepare some snacks. For example, they cut and peel vegetables to make soup, or mix ingredients to bake bread with.

Children benefit from physical play and exercise, indoors and outside. They enjoy music and movement sessions as a large group. They use a variety of equipment which helps them to develop balance and coordination. The younger children are helped to step carefully along the tyres in their play area. They enjoy using wheeled toys with their friends, or playing throw and catch with the staff. Physical development is included in planning and promoted by staff.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are safely cared for in warm and welcoming premises. The younger group are looked after in the school dining hall, which provides plenty of space and age-appropriate equipment. Staff work very well together to ensure that children are continuously occupied and interested during the session. For example, when it is time to reorganise the room the children are taken to an area for story time, singing or outdoor play. The older children have a designated mobile unit in the school grounds. Children are confident in the setting and show a clear sense of belonging. There are bright displays of children's creativity in the clearly defined play areas. The outdoor areas are safe and used effectively to extend children's learning and interest. Resources are well maintained, clearly labelled and accessible to children.

Staff complete detailed risk assessments and routine visual checks to ensure safety for children on the premises and on outings. Children learn about safety during fire drills and interesting activities, which involve relevant visitors to the group. For example, from a police officer, a 'lollipop' person and a man with an emergency breakdown vehicle. In summer children have use of the school swimming pool. Parents help with this activity to ensure that children are safely supervised. A member of staff has a relevant certificate to supervise this activity and ensure safe sessions.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a clear knowledge and awareness of child protection issues. They attend relevant training to ensure that their information is up to date. Parents and carers are informed of the safeguarding procedures and the responsibilities to protect children.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in two groups, a short session for children aged two to three years and part or full days for three to five year olds. Children who attend the reception class in school are also offered care sessions in the Piccolo group. There are strong links with the school which provides good transitional arrangements for children. Children are very happy in the setting and form good relationships. They are sociable, confident and show a keen interest in their environment. Activities are varied and promote all areas of development and learning for them. Detailed planning is in place which provides children with age-appropriate challenges. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and development. They use the 'Birth to three matters' framework and Foundation Stage curriculum effectively, to provide children with interesting programmes of activities.

Staff skilfully include all children in the activities, topics and themes, carefully adapting the learning intentions to suit the children. For example, following a woodland walk the children make their own individual gardens. They are proud of their results and all benefit from using a varied range of materials. The younger children make simple representations and see their grass grow. The older children make more detailed creations, using their imaginations to construct pebble paths, ponds and flowers. In constructive play children initially use resources to stack or link pieces together. As they progress they begin to make more complex models and designs. The imaginative play areas are well resourced and link to the current activities. For instance, when the children bake dough shapes they use these as pretend food in the home corner. Staff compile a book of photographs and children's text for each theme. These reinforce learning as children recall what they have done, or look at in preparation for a new experience.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide continuous opportunities for children to consolidate learning. They extend children's interest through play and interact very well with them, listening and asking questions to prompt children's thinking. Staff record their observations on the children and effectively plan for next steps in their development. Children concentrate well during activities and make interesting observations. They readily explore, investigate and make choices in their play. Children take an active part at registration time, listening to staff and making their own contributions. They understand the structure of the session, following routines and instructions well. The organisation of the day provides a good balance of adult led activities, small and large group times, free play and individual attention for children.

Children are enthusiastic, eager and willing to learn. They develop positive social skills and attitudes in the setting. Children become confident communicators, expressing their needs well. Staff promote language development in all activities. Children sing songs and play games, which help them to link letters to sounds. They learn that print has meaning as they recognise their own names and simple labels or signs. They use a variety of writing materials in focussed activities and also in spontaneous play. For example, in role play children independently use a note book for drawing and mark making. There are accessible chalks and boards in the outdoor

play areas. Children thoroughly enjoy story time as staff engage their interest with visual aids, such as hand puppets.

Children use mathematical language throughout the sessions. For example, they weigh and measure ingredients in cooking and baking activities. They solve simple problems in everyday situations and make comparisons as they play. Children talk about their preferences after tasting a variety of bread products, and then they record the findings on a graph. This gives them a picture of the most and least favourite and also develops their understanding of number. Children learn to count with confidence and understand number sequences.

Children develop a good knowledge and understanding of their world. Staff provide extensive opportunities for children to examine, explore and discover. Children use electronic equipment with confidence, such as the computer and mouse, showing their understanding of the screen game. They see how things grow and change during a range of processes. For example, by comparing liquids with solids when looking at freezing and melting. Children sow and grow vegetables, seeds and plants. They collect autumn leaves which are used for their displays and nature tables. Children like to collect insects and inspect them with their magnifying glasses. The 'pets' theme provides children with opportunities to see and touch a variety of animals. For instance, a gosling, newt, puppy, gerbil and rabbit. Children learn to respect and care for their environment, such as considering the impact of litter on people and birds. They enjoy the fun activity as they use dustpans and brushes to help clear their play area. They develop strong community links, for instance, during the local music festival the children form their own brass band. They proudly wear their hats and march around the playground with their instruments.

Staff plan a variety of activities to promote children's physical skills and development. Children use a range of tools and equipment during activities, which develop hand to eye coordination. They demonstrate good spatial awareness as they manoeuvre along tracks and between obstacles. They have fun as they play spontaneous games with staff, such as 'follow the leader'.

Children's creativity and imagination is nurtured in the setting. They use a good variety of materials and talk about different textures as they make collage pictures. They consider changes to colours as they mix paints together. The role play area is linked to themes and used well by the children. They enjoy playing 'camping' during the holiday topic, which extends the outdoor play activities. Children sing familiar songs with enthusiasm and benefit from regular music sessions. Overall, children make good progress towards the early learning goals given their capability and starting points.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are very well met in the setting. Staff have a clear equal opportunities policy which is effectively implemented in practice. They provide care for children from differing cultural and social backgrounds and promote inclusion. For example, some children speak English as an additional language. Staff provide translated settings information for parents and children's books in their language. They write down key words of the child's first language to help them meet their care needs. However, these are not heard to be used during the sessions. They are also not shared with all children, which would enhance the opportunities to promote respect for each others cultures and language.

Children respond well to the staff who act as good models. They encourage children's social skills, such as in being polite and sitting together to eat. Children understand the simple rules

and expectations of behaviour and are cooperative. They develop self-esteem as they celebrate birthdays and individual achievements. Children enjoy the awards and rewards which they receive on the 'smiley face chart'. They learn about responsibility, for example, in helping to tidy up and look after the toys. Children develop respect for others in the community, for instance, when they sing to elderly persons visiting the school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. There are effective systems in place to ensure that information is shared. Parents are well informed of their children's progress and make contributions to the records of development. For example, at the parents evening they discuss and set development targets with the staff. Committee members take an active part in the running of the group. Parents receive regular newsletters which inform them of the children's activities. Parents and children are involved in the fund raising events, such as the 'sponsored wheel tots' and summer barbeque. Parents are encouraged to be involved in children's learning, for instance, by using the library service. Families also enjoy the shared experience of taking a teddy home and writing about their activities at home. Parents provide very positive feedback through the questionnaires and also at the inspection. They praise the staff and value the consistent care provided by the setting.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are very well cared for by a consistent staff team. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and have an effective key worker system. This ensures good communications and promotes positive relationships. Staff are well organised and work efficiently to provide children with suitable and stimulating routines. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable persons. Appropriate staff induction and student placement procedures are clearly put into practice.

Leadership and management is good. Staff have suitable qualifications and relevant experience in the care of young children. They attend training in order to update their knowledge and awareness in childcare practice. Staff have a secure understanding of the relevant frameworks to support children's learning and development. They keep up to date with changes to the regulations and plan for their future development. Staff monitor and evaluate their practice at team meetings, appraisals and in consultation with parents. Records and documentation are well organised and maintained in good order. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to contribute to the care, safety and welfare of children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to ensure that a suitable key worker system is introduced, to provide resources which reflect disabilities and to provide opportunities for children to pour their own drinks. Since then the group has implemented an effective key worker system, developed the resources to reflect disabilities and improved the opportunities for most of the children to pour drinks. These actions result in improvements to the organisation and welfare of children.

At the last nursery education inspection there were no significant weaknesses, however, the points made for consideration were to increase resources to promote positive images of people from different cultures and people with disabilities, also to develop snack time to provide

further opportunities in learning through everyday activities. To develop the assessment and record system further, showing the targets achieved, the next steps in children's learning and to incorporate a system which enables parents to discuss their child's progress and achievements on a more formal basis. The setting has made progress and improvements in each of these areas. There are additional resources which reflect positive images of diversity and snack times promote children's learning and independent skills. Observation, assessment and recording systems are established, and include parental involvement.

### **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):

- improve the opportunities at snack time for the younger children to develop their independent skills.

#### **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 opportunities for children to become aware of and develop respect for each others culture and language and to further promote inclusion (also applies to care).

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)