

Caversham Heights Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	116821
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspector	Marie Thompson
Setting Address	Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7BG
Telephone number	0118 9484851
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Registered person	Caversham Heights Pre-School
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 outstanding. 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?

Caversham Heights Pre-School has been registered since 1963. They operate from the Methodist Church Hall and serve the local area.

There are currently 45 children from three to five years on roll, all of whom receive funding. The setting is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open from 09.15 to 12.15 Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.20 to 14.50 Tuesday and Thursday, term time only.

Seven members of staff work with the children. Six of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. 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 outstanding.

Children's good health is promoted effectively by staff that demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the pre-school's health and hygiene procedures and attend appropriate training. Children have a clear awareness of their own needs and are developing independence in their personal care. There are suitable hand washing facilities on the premises which provide children with a soap dispenser and paper towels to wash and dry their hands. The brightly coloured posters 'clean hands are happy hands' around the toilet serve as a useful and attractive reminder to the children to wash their hands. The children learn about covering their mouths when coughing and using tissues to blow noses then placing them in the bin. The pre-school ensures that their health and safety policies and procedures are up to date and displayed and readily available for the parents. The staff ensure that all parents are up to date on the incubation periods for infectious disease and alerted to any outbreaks in the pre-school immediately. All parents receive a copy of the 'parents handbook' within which is the health policy stating the signs and symptoms of illness that they need to be aware of. The staff are extremely effective in keeping the children healthy. The children are helped to develop their knowledge and understanding of the working of their bodies through discussion during PE activities, using books about the body and the correct foods to eat which is covered during project work. They learn action songs about body parts, use puzzles and games and role play hospitals.

Children's healthy growth and development are extremely well met as staff show an excellent understanding of their dietary requirements. The older children bring their own packed lunches and stay for lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays, in preparation for school. This is a very social time when the staff and children sit together and chat about the morning's events, the weather or any topic of conversation the children wish to discuss. Children's personal independence is developing very well. At snack time the children sit with their key worker group at small tables. The children all count the number of children sat at their table and take turns to get the correct amount of food from the kitchen and share this amongst the other children. They are aware drinking water is available to them at all times because a jug of water and plastic cups are placed on a small table in the main hall. The children are actively encouraged to drink water in the hot weather. This promotes their independent skills. Children are provided with a healthy snack and encouraged to eat fruit and drink milk. Parents provide a range of different fruit for the children each week which is carefully cut up and offered to the children along with wheat biscuits and rice cakes. The staff talk to the children about healthy eating and encourage the children to take care of their environment by helping them to place all their cups and plates on the tray tidily to go back to the kitchen. Children's allergies are very carefully recorded and a signs and symptoms poster is clearly displayed on the notice board. All the staff are trained in allergy awareness and some staff individually trained to treat children in the event of anaphylactic shock. Individual documentation about children's specific medical needs and allergies is held and meticulously recorded in medication record folder.

The children have opportunities each day to get fresh air and exercise playing in the outside play area. Daily exercise is encouraged, inside and out, available to all and encouraged through a wide range of equipment and activities. The children have great fun jumping in the hoops in relay games, whizzing around on the scooters, in and out of the cones, stopping to 'fill up' at the petrol station and waiting for the 'lights' to change at the crossings before whizzing off again. They are very good at balancing and climbing on the wooden climbing frame and there is lots of laughter as they slither down the slide. There is always music on the tape recorder so

that if they wish to the children can indulge in some impromptu dancing, which many of them do.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety needs are extremely well met. They access an outstanding range of toys and resources in a well planned child orientated environment, where potential hazards have been identified and minimised effectively. Excellent routines and gentle reminders help children learn about safety within the setting. Staff are extremely vigilant of the children's safety at all times. The premises are very secure and there are good procedures in place to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access. The doorbell alerts the staff to the arrival of visitors and a member of staff is on duty by the front door to ensure that no children leave the building unaccompanied by an adult. All visitors are required to sign in and out of the visitor's book. The staff remind the parents to be vigilant when they leave the building and to make sure the door is closed when they exit. The staff make sure that a fire drill takes place every half term and that it is carried out on different days so that it includes all combinations of staff and children who attend the group. An equipment safety check is carried out once a term to ensure all the equipment is safe for the children to use.

The children are very aware of the 'ground rules' within the pre-school which include not going in the kitchen in the pre-school and being kind to each other. The children adhere to these and if they forget the staff gently remind them so that all the children remain happy and safe. Representatives from the Burford Research group come in at regular intervals to talk to the children about the safety of bottle tops so that the children learn not to open the bottles with press-down screw tops and be aware of dangerous substances.

Children feel confident and secure in their environment through excellent deployment of staff working directly with the children. Staff's awareness of children's developing abilities helps to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place to avoid dangerous situations and minimise risks. All policies and procedures are individual to the setting and promote the children's safety and well-being, supporting all to develop to their full potential.

Staff have an excellent understanding of child protection issues and know how to proceed if they have concerns about a child in their care. This supports children's well-being. There are effective child protection procedures which promote and safeguard children's welfare within the setting.

Children's development and well-being is effectively promoted through the well organised space. They access an outstanding range of choice in toys and resources to develop their own ideas in their play and learning. The extensive range of safe and well maintained furniture, equipment and resources meets the varying development needs of the children attending.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The children really enjoy their time at pre-school and this is evident by the happy buzz of activity and chatter. They arrive happy and confident and quickly settle into the routine making their own choices about their play. The support from friendly, dedicated staff helps the children settle and become familiar with their surroundings and the daily routine. Children are interested in activities and involved in their learning. Practitioners know children well and talk to them

about their family and what they have been doing at home. This interaction, and the implementation of a successful key worker system, helps to secure relationships between children and staff developing a strong sense of trust. The children have an outstanding range of toys, resources and activities which link into the wide and varied curriculum.

The children enjoy cooking activities at least twice a month and have made a range of food such as soup, scones, chocolate nests, Easter biscuits and Christmas shape biscuits, sandwiches, fruit salad and at Harvest time, bread making and dough hedgehogs. This is a popular activity. On Tuesday afternoons they look forward to the weekly visit from the French teacher. Each week a member of the community comes in to play the piano and the children sing along; he plays popular nursery rhymes and requests. The role play corner is bright and attractive and the children extend their imagination in a range of different scenarios with the resources provided. Children have great fun dressed as an astronaut, using the wooden climbing frame as their rocket and counting back '3, 2, 1' before sliding down the slide to the planets and walking on the planets lifting their legs high. The children include the staff in their play by asking them to make sure the 'rocket' door is closed so that the 'aliens' cannot get in. The children have some super excursions, for example they went to Reading museum where they dressed as Romans.

Books are an important part of pre-school and the staff offer a library service for the children to borrow books. The book corner with cushioned benches and cuddly toys is ideal for the children to sit at and look at books or listen to a story. The children are looking forward to a visit from the librarian which was organised through the Library Service. Each child will receive a treasure box full of goodies including books, coloured pencils and stickers.

Children develop very good communication skills as they contribute to group discussions and become competent learners. Practitioners talk about how each child is progressing and plan their next step for development. They recognise the value of play in a child's development and introduce an exceptional and exciting range of experiences, enabling all children to learn to play and work together in large and small groups as well as independently.

Children are adept in their physical skills. They have good co-ordination and awareness of others, particularly when riding bikes and wheeled toys outside. Children take part in copious amounts of activities in all areas of learning, which help to develop their fine and gross motor skills. They are very proficient at matching puzzles, making 'cross heads' and placing the small coloured beads onto a board which requires concentration and dexterity. The children are able to control pencils, scissors and paintbrushes with a super range of activities to develop their manipulative skills. Every summer the pre-school hold an outing to the soft play at Rivermead which is combined with the sports day.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make extremely good individual progress because practitioners have a secure understanding of how children learn effectively and use their self-chosen play to extend their learning. The staff adapt their questioning techniques, according to the age and ability of the child, and implement a varied range of teaching methods to introduce an exciting range of activities and experiences to all children. Practitioners encourage children to lead their own learning and this is successfully achieved by a well developed routine, with a good balance of child and adult initiated activities.

Children are eager to learn and concentrate well showing good perseverance with activities. They cooperate and negotiate roles, for example when acting out their imagined ideas in role-play and value one another's ideas. Children listen with excitement to stories and are encouraged to interact with the story through discussion, questions and comments about the text and pictures. Staff use 'story bags' and puppets to include the children and enhance the stories. Children independently use a range of tools and materials and freely access a variety of resources which they use to represent their own ideas, such as writing letters or numbers during their play. An excellent art station with clearly labelled drawers enables them to easily access materials they need. There is also a 'mark making' table in the Wendy House. The children have ample opportunity to recognise their own names because the staff encourage them to recognise their named cards on arrival and at snack time. In addition to this each child has their own peg with their name on. The children are confident and articulate and obviously thrive in the pre-school environment.

Children gain confidence in using numbers and compare the weight and size of objects as they predict which objects will float and which will sink. They confidently use good mathematical language and this is enhanced through a fantastic range of topics which look at shape and depth, size, longest to smallest and weighing and measuring. There are some fun activities which contribute to their colour recognition and some beautiful, colourful posters around the rooms which enhance their learning. The children love the computer and eagerly wait for their turn. They are very competent using the different programmes and the mouse.

Effective use is made of time and resources to provide children with opportunities to engage in physical activities, including dance, aerobics, musical movement to the 'Sticky Kids' tape, and explore creativity using a wide range of media such as paint, water and sand. The knowledge and understanding station is a 'treasure trove' of exciting things for the children to feel and describe. Each drawer is clearly labelled and the 'feely bags' within contain a range of hard, soft, fluffy, rough, sticky, warm and cold objects with lots of books linked to project work on these topics. Each year the children take part in a nature hunt which enables them to explore the natural world. They learn about themselves and their families through discussion and topic work and talk about their local community and the wider world.

Practitioners observe and monitor children's progress regularly in a variety of different ways and this is used to identify individual targets for children to work towards each half-term. A realistic expectation of children and good individual knowledge helps them to consolidate their learning before moving onto the next stage. As a result, the curriculum is tailored to individual children's needs and abilities, which ensures effective support and sufficient challenges are provided to help children achieve their individual potential. Children's progress is recorded in individual record folders which include children's work, photos which are annotated with helpful assessments of children's achievements, family photos, drawings, and paintings. This creates a lovely record of children's progress, achievements and time at the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel valued in the pre-school because the staff welcome every child into the setting and genuinely strive to help them reach their full potential. The play and education provision is organised and monitored exceptionally well to ensure children have access to the full range of activities, both indoors and outdoors. For example, all toys and resources are at child height and amenable to children; the book corner, table top toys and art station which are indoors and the Wendy House and the brightly coloured climbing frame which are outside, provide the

children with stimulating accessible activities. Children arrive at the pre-school happy and confident. They are welcomed as their parents sign them in and eagerly look forward to the day's activities. Children's individually labelled pegs provide them with a sense of belonging as they store their coats and personal belongings. Children learn about themselves and the wider world through planned activities, visitors and discussions. The pre-school has strong links with the wider community. For example, children take part in concerts and social events which involve members from the wider community and they make decorations for the church Harvest. The teacher from the local primary school has visited the pre-school and exchanged ideas with the staff and enjoys seeing the children in the pre-school setting. This builds strong links to make the transition to school very smooth. During their project work about buildings the children learnt about the local areas, Caversham and Reading. They made a beautiful display board showing the locations of their homes, local amenities and transport. They looked at buildings through history and made mud huts out of clay and straw.

The pre-school always welcomes children from different cultures and religious backgrounds. The children have enjoyed celebrating festivals and even involved their parents in some activities. When the children learnt about Diwali they made lanterns called Diya and they talked about what Diwali means. One of the parents came into pre-school in traditional Hindu dress and the children learnt how to write 'welcome' in Hindi. The children made Chinese lanterns, wrote 'Happy New Year' in Chinese and had noodles at snack time. At Easter they made little chocolate nest with eggs in and at Christmas they enjoyed a lovely party with a magician. One of the children's grandfathers who was a reserve medic in the army came into pre-school and the children set up a field hospital. The children have welcomed lots of parents into the pre-school to talk about their occupations: nurses, policemen, dentist and a postman who delivered letters to all the children. The pre-school has an excellent selection of bilingual books which the children can easily access and allow them to see different scripts and texts. All of the activities, topics and visitors help the children to understand and value the similarities and differences between themselves and others. The children also learn that it is good to support local fund raising activities and to be part of community life, helping each other. They take part in charity events such as Children in Need, Red Nose Day, comic relief and jeans for genes day. This positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. There is an excellent parent rota system in place whereby at least three parent helpers are present at each session which builds tremendous relationships between the staff and parents. Children benefit from these relationships and the working partnerships with parents contribute to their well-being and the relationships they develop at the pre-school. Staff work extremely well together with parents and carers to share relevant background information, play activities and children's specific needs. A clear and informative notice board with relevant, up to date information is accessible to all parents. The open door policy for parents to speak to staff on a daily informal basis works effectively. This is reinforced through newsletters and parents' evenings. Parents have very good opportunities to contribute to the assessments made on their child and to be involved in their learning. As a result, parents and carers have a good understanding of their child's progress. Parents are well informed about the routines, curriculum and all aspects of the pre-school. Parents feel welcome and value the pre-school's congenial and consolatory approach to caring for their children.

Staff are proactive in ensuring the needs of all the children are met and demonstrated an excellent knowledge of the individual needs of the children in their care. Staff offer outstanding support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They adapt activities so that all children can experience a wide range of stimulating activities appropriate for their level of ability and visual time tables are displayed around the room to help the children. The pre-school

is able to provide one to one support for children with learning disabilities if it is needed. The pre-school's special educational needs co-ordinator attends extensive training sessions and cascades the information to the other staff members. Staff work together with parents, carers and other professional bodies, for example speech and language therapists, to organise the environment and plan appropriate activities to ensure the children take part at a level appropriate to their needs.

Children benefit very well from staff who adopt a consistent and positive approach to the management of their behaviour. They become aware of the pre-school's routines and procedures and know what is expected from them through response to the routine changes in the day. Children are given clear guidelines, know the routine well and are encouraged to take care of the environment. Children know right from wrong, they are sensitive to the needs of others, readily share toys and resources and co-operate with each other. The children are encouraged to look after their environment and make it a tidy and orderly place to be. The staff are excellent role models, they are kind, polite and calm and as a result the children learn to be kind and to respect each other.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The children use the church hall which consists of two rooms. There is ample space for the children to move around comfortably and independently. The pre-school operates a 'free-flow' policy whereby the children are able to move between the two rooms and the outside area at will.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by the pre-school's exceptional organisation. Children's care and learning is reinforced by the effective deployment of staff and outstanding leadership and management of nursery education. Staff working with the children are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and consistently promote the children's well-being in line with the comprehensive and robust policies and procedures. All relevant documentation is in place and maintained to a superb standard.

Staff observe children's development and learning and keep detailed records that help meet their needs. Children's records are openly shared with parents and their contributions valued.

Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities with relevant induction procedures and opportunities to receive further training available. This is used to help develop their skills in organising a provision that meets the children's needs. The staff promote the idea that they should conduct themselves kindly towards each other, as well as the children. This provides an excellent role model for the children and makes the working environment for all staff much nicer.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The manager is very enthusiastic about the pre-school and early years, which results in a happy team who work effectively together where children feel safe and secure in their environment and make good progress towards the early learning goals. The manager and her deputy aim to make the communication between themselves and the staff as effective as possible. Staff have regular appraisals which is an excellent way to identify their needs, progress, any concerns or further training needs. The manager and the team's vision of the quality of early years care and education is evident through its aims, genuinely warm and friendly relationships with children and their parents and carers and has a positive impact on the children's learning. There is a strong commitment to improvement,

training and development of the staff, which enhances and maintains the outstanding care, learning and well-being of the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection, the group were asked to develop a system to record the daily risk assessments which are carried out.

An excellent system to record the daily risk assessments which are carried out has been developed and meticulously completed at regular intervals.

These measures contribute to ensuring children's continued health, safety and well-being.

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 outstanding. 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

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

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