

Coldharbour Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141766
Inspection date	09 October 2007
Inspector	Sylvia Crawford
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Registered person	Coldharbour 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 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?

Coldharbour Pre-school opened in 1982 and operates from 3 rooms in a purpose-built children's centre. The building is situated next to Coldharbour Combined School in West Bletchley, Milton Keynes. A maximum of 60 children may attend the pre-school at any one time, of which no more than 20 may be under three years. The pre-school is open each weekday from 08.55 to 11.45 term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 85 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 45 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities although none currently attends and they are supporting some children who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 10 staff and three relief staff. The manager and most staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment. A member of staff is responsible for health and safety and she helps to ensure that staff follow current environmental health and hygiene guidance so that children remain healthy. Children are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care. They are learning the importance of good personal hygiene through following routines and appropriate support and guidance. For example, children wash their hands after using the toilet and are encouraged to wipe their own noses and dispose of tissues appropriately. The provision safeguards and promotes children's welfare through the staff's knowledge and experience in first aid, sick child procedures, the administration of medication and recording practice. However, not all records of incidents and pre-existing injuries are countersigned by parents.

Children have the opportunity to develop their physical skills. Weather permitting, they go outside during each session and have a choice of resources. For example, they ride in cars around traffic cones, traffic lights and a petrol station. They benefit from the planned activities which enable them to develop skills in climbing, balancing, catching and steering. When the weather does not allow for outside play the children enjoy playing indoors in the quiet room with soft play equipment or doing gym or music and movement.

Staff ensure they have relevant information from parents so they can meet the individual dietary needs of each child. They have very good procedures in place to ensure children with allergies have the right food. Children benefit from a variety of healthy snacks each day and receive regular fluids during the session to ensure they are not thirsty. Children enjoy a social occasion while they eat and are well supported and supervised by staff who encourage them to have good manners.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff organise and present the activities attractively before children arrive allowing them free choice and the ability to start playing straight away. The premises are light, airy and well decorated and children's artwork is on display, which contributes to their sense of achievement. Although the premises are large, children move around confidently and independently. They are able to select from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment. Resources are suitable and sufficient for the age and the developmental stage of children in the pre-school. Staff check the resources and equipment regularly to ensure that they remain safe and are stored appropriately.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised wherever possible through the staff being consistently vigilant during the children's inside and outside play. Risk assessments are carried out to reduce potential hazards and daily checks are made to ensure the premises remain safe. The premises are secure and staff and parents are clear about the procedure that is in place for children's safe arrival and departure. Staff remind children about possible dangers and they are learning to keep themselves safe, for example, not to run around in the room and to sit on chairs properly. Children practise fire drills regularly and have a good understanding of what to do in an emergency.

Children are protected because staff and management have a good understanding of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child. Most staff have completed child protection training. Parents are aware of the role and responsibility of staff through the well-written policy. This ensures children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff's knowledge of them as individuals. The group ensures they have good details of each child's needs through information taken at admission and afterwards through frequent communication with parents. This enables them to begin to meet children's individual needs from their first day in the group. Most children are settled and secure at the provision particularly if they have attended the afternoon sessions for the younger age group before starting at preschool. They form good relationships with the adults and other children within the group and play happily together. Staff demonstrate a very caring attitude towards all children and are always available to join in their play.

Children are beginning to be aware of the pre-school routine, for example, when the bell rings they line up to go into their key groups or to go outside. Staff encourage children to be independent, for example, selecting their own snacks or going to tell another key group it is their turn to have snacks. All children enjoy singing and action songs and many are confident to do so in the large group. Children sit quietly when appropriate and listen to stories with enjoyment. Children are learning to distinguish between right and wrong and are taking turns and sharing. This is particularly evident as children see if there are any bands available so they can go outside to play, if not, they wait until someone has finished playing.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children participate fully in the session and are motivated by an interesting range of activities and resource that support most aspects of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. They are making good progress in all areas of learning and benefit from the positive interaction and good use of staff questioning during free play and activities. Staff have a good understanding and knowledge of the stepping stones and early learning goals and how children develop and learn effectively. Staff plan the curriculum well to promote children's learning and they make regular observations to inform future planning; however, they do not fully record the next step in individual children's development. Staff know the children and their abilities very well; they are able to challenge them and give them one to one attention, for example, through the differential table.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and the staff on arrival. Children are eager to do activities; they concentrate well and listen attentively. They learn independence through everyday routines, such as using the toilet independently, getting on their own coats and lining up to join their key groups. Staff encourage children's language skills on all levels and skilfully support children who have English as an additional language to develop their vocabulary.

Themes are well resourced to ensure the children's interest and participation, for example, when they talk of autumn children bring in conkers, leaves and pine cones for show and tell. They are learning to recognise letters and the sounds that the letters make. There are opportunities during the session for children to recognise their own names such as when they are finding their place for snacks and at registration. Children take part in organised activities

where they can practice their writing skills. However, there are limited opportunities for children to practise their reading and writing skills during free play activities. Children are gaining good levels of hand/eye co-ordination through activities that allow them to use tools and smaller pieces of equipment such as scissors and shape cutters.

Children are good listeners and communicators. They are confident to speak and sing in a large group, they talk about their own lives and experiences with each other and staff. Children enjoy looking at books and handle them with care; they share them individually with staff together in small groups and in their key worker groups.

Most children know their primary colours and they have access to a variety of activities to help them develop their creative play, such as, painting, drawing, chalking and play dough. The children produce some lovely artwork and staff ensure that their work is valued which promotes their self-esteem. Children enjoy a very comprehensive range of imaginary play. They enjoy the well presented home corner each day and have a different second area each day for example, a bakery or a post office. Children do not have regular access to the computer so that they can improve their skills in information technology.

Children are developing their mathematical skills and staff use all opportunities to encourage children to practise counting. The older children can count to 10 with ease and are beginning to count to higher numbers in their key worker groups each morning as they do the registration numbers. Most children know the basic shapes and are beginning to use mathematical language confidently. However, children have few opportunities to practise their skills in calculation. Children enjoy learning about the living world through their trips to the woodland and organised activities. They plant seeds and plants and watch them grow. The children have regular access to physical play both indoors and outside so they can develop their gross motor control. For example, they ride in the cars around the traffic cones stopping at the traffic lights. They listen to staff and learn how to do all these activities safely.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a high regard for the wellbeing of all children, giving good levels of individual support, care and concern. Consequently, children form good relationships with the adults and other children within the group and generally play happily together. The group have good procedures in place and well trained staff to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities although none currently attend. Staff give very good support to children with English as an additional language. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children learn to respect one another's views and are introduced to different cultures, beliefs and traditions. For example, children participate in activities related to Diwali and Chinese New Year. They have access to a wide range of equipment, which promote positive images of diversity in the wider world. Children are beginning to be aware of their local community as they visit the post box and go for a walk in the woodland. They also benefit from close ties with the local school; this means that children settle well into school when they leave pre-school.

Children's behaviour is extremely good. Staff manage children's behaviour very positively and children are supported to understand what is acceptable. Staff are very good role models; they remain calm and patient and help children to learn self-discipline and consideration of others. Staff manage any disagreements in a sensitive way and consequently this helps children to

understand about right and wrong and to learn to take turns and share. The staff use praise and encouragement to promote good behaviour as well as a very effective sticker system.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are made very welcome into the setting and feel very supported by staff. This positive relationship reinforces children's sense of belonging and promotes continuity of care. Parents receive information in a variety of ways about the setting and the nursery education provided. They have the opportunity to attend regular parent's mornings where they can see how the group runs, talk to the key worker and see their child's profile. All staff are available, on a daily basis, to discuss any issues to do with their child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school environment is warm, welcoming, safe and secure for children. Staff organise the large premises very well to promote an environment where children are able to participate in a wide range of age appropriate activities. This enables children to build their confidence and self-esteem. Staff ratio and deployment of staff all contribute to children's good health, safety and enjoyment. The key worker system works extremely well; it provides the children with a sense of belonging and ensures that their individual needs are met.

The recruitment and vetting procedure ensures children are well protected and are cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development and most staff have an early years qualification. The induction procedure is good and ensures staff are clear about their roles in the setting and are able to act in the interest of children's welfare and safety.

The operational plan is a comprehensive working document and along with the policies and procedures is reviewed annually. All required documentation and parental permissions are in place and most records are shared appropriately with parents. The documentation is well organised and easily accessible. Staff obtain all necessary children's information and keep it secure to ensure children's confidentiality.

Leadership and management is good. This contributes to children's good progress towards the early learning goals. Regular staff meetings take place and staff work very well as a team to promote children's enjoyment at the setting. They have individual training development plans and are supported to attend on going training, for example, risk assessments and child protection. The manager has a very good understanding of her role and responsibilities and a commitment to develop the pre-school. She supports staff both professionally and personally. Staff make observations, monitor and record children's achievements, which are shared with parents. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last care inspection the group were recommended to develop a written recruitment procedure to be followed in the employment of all staff. Ensure arrangements for staff induction are effective and all staff are clear about their responsibilities. Ensure all staff are familiar with the policies and procedure that are in place and use them to gain consistent practice in the setting.

Since the last inspection, the group now have a rigorous recruitment procedure which they adhere to when employing staff. Staff are given an induction booklet and have to complete an

induction programme. This ensures they understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff sign to confirm they have read and understood the policies and procedures and they also sign a confidentiality document. This helps to promote consistent practice in the setting.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection, the group were recommended to develop the plans to record how activities can be adapted for children of different abilities including further challenges for the older children, especially in the areas of writing and linking sounds with letters, and creative development. Record in the children's development profiles the children's next steps of learning.

Since the last inspection, the group have instigated a differential table, which is manned by a consistent member of staff offering one to one support for children of different abilities. A wide variety of activities are offered including creative, writing and linking sounds to letters. A system has been devised so that it is easier for staff to record children's achievements in their profiles. However, they are not yet fully recording individual children's next steps of learning. Consequently, a recommendation has been raised at this inspection for the group to further develop this area.

Complaints since the last inspection

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

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

- ensure that written records of incidents and pre-existing injuries are brought to parents attention.

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):

- continue to develop effective use of observations in order to identify individual children's next steps in learning and use any information gained to inform the planning of activities

- develop the plans to increase the opportunities for children to use the computer and promote their skills in information technology
- enhance the planning to give children the opportunity to practice writing skills during free play activities and to develop their skills in calculation.

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