

# Cygnet Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	142775
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jacqueline Allen
<b>Setting Address</b>	c/o Swanmead Community School, Ditton Street, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 0BL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01460 57444
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Cygnet Community Pre-School
<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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Cygnets Pre-School opened in 1992. It operates from a detached building in the grounds of Swanmead Middle School near to the centre of Ilminster. Children attend from Ilminster and surrounding villages.

The provision is registered to care for a maximum of 20 children between two and under five years. There are currently 41 children on roll of whom 21 receive funded education. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00 with lunch in between. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties.

There are currently six staff working with the children, of whom three hold a level 3 and two hold a level 2 qualification in early years.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health is compromised as an effective system is not in place to ensure staff obtain parents' written instructions on children's medication needs and their written consent for staff to administer. Children's minor accidents are appropriately recorded and treated by trained staff and parents have given their prior permission for the staff to seek emergency medical treatment or advice as required, which benefits children's health. Sick children are excluded from the provision and tables are routinely cleaned using anti-bacterial spray, which reduces the risk of cross infection. However, although children are routinely encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after toileting, they are not learning effective hygiene procedures, as they wash their hands in shared water from sinks pre-filled by staff who add anti-bacterial soap to the water.

Children learn about healthy eating through the range of fruit provided at snack time, such as apples, bananas and raisins. Children bring healthy lunch boxes from home, which contain items, such as sandwiches, yoghurts and fruit, which benefits children's health. Staff are positive role models, who sit with the children eating their healthy lunch. They are aware of children's special dietary needs which are effectively collated. Children are offered a choice of milk, water or squash at snack time and can access water at other times, to meet their individual needs, from a lidded jug and cups which are available at a low-level.

Children have daily opportunities to partake in physical activities. For example, they go on regular 'welly walks', use balls to throw and kick, practise their balancing techniques on stilts and ably manoeuvre their way around the playground using a range of wheeled resources, such as pushchairs, scooters, ride-ons and tricycles, to develop their gross motor skills.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a clean, bright, well organised play room, where their work is attractively displayed around the room. Children freely access resources which are laid out on the floor, on table tops or on low-level storage units, by staff. They play with a range of age appropriate toys, such as a doll's house, dressing-up clothes, construction toys, books, craft materials, the water tray and painting easels. These are safe and suitable for children's use. Children benefit from low-level storage units where resources are boxed and labelled with pictures and words to ensure children are familiar with the contents.

Children are generally safe at the provision, as some potential hazards have been minimised. For example, heaters are protected with the use of fireguards, smoke detectors are available, a stair gate is used across the small kitchen area and the security of the premises ensures that children cannot leave unsupervised and visitors cannot enter unannounced. However, visitors are not consistently signed in and out and in the case of evacuating in an emergency an accurate register of all those present is not available. This impacts on children's safety. Staff routinely risk assess activities, however, although they are aware of the risks involved in children having access to very hot water, and have taken some steps to reduce this, this is not mentioned in their risk assessments. Children are only collected by authorised carers, as informed and recorded by their parents. Children regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedures with staff

only recording the date. However, by the second day of inspection staff had prepared a book to record more details in this area.

Children's welfare is generally safeguarded as staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care, which are in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

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

The provision is good.

Children under three have good opportunities to join in with all activities. They self select confidently from the range of accessible resources and are well supported by staff who encourage them to share and take turns. Staff plan effectively for their development and are aware when additional support may be needed. For example, staff support children who are learning to use scissors by using trainer scissors with them. They support children in finding their name and encourage them to match it when looking for their name at snack time.

#### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children sit and listen attentively during registration, they respond to their name and are beginning to sign 'good morning' in response to staff's actions. They speak confidently and enjoy sharing information from home and talking about items they have brought to share with the group. They enthusiastically self select from the good range of resources available and persist for quite long periods of time with activities of their choosing. They are forming good relationships with their peers who they seek out when playing with cars on the mats and in the home corner. Children have good opportunities to explore a range of media, such as play dough, gloop, paint and water. They practise pouring, rolling, writing their initial letter and forming shapes, as staff skilfully engage the children in conversations and use effective open ended questioning to encourage them to think and respond. Children choose particular colours as they paint, carefully making lines and talking about their painting.

Children have lots of opportunities to recognise and match their name, write their name on their work and count routinely. Staff are particularly skilled in weaving mathematical development into all areas of children's daily routine and play. For example, counting children, counting fish, checking children's understanding of shape, size and colour with items brought from home and discussing 'biggest' and 'smallest' routinely in activities. Although children are encouraged to be independent when putting on their coat and boots, they are not encouraged in this skill at snack time, when staff prepare the snack and pour children's drinks for them. Children learn about the days of the week and discuss the weather through daily group time activities. They enjoy listening to stories, looking at books and joining in with singing activities.

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan effectively to provide a balanced curriculum. Staff religiously observe children, take photographs and collate children's work to assess their achievements, however the current assessment system does not clearly show gaps or identify the next steps in children's learning. This means that children are not always sufficiently challenged in order to reach their full potential.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are respected and valued as individuals. Staff are aware of their individual needs and ensure these are considered. Children's self-esteem is promoted through daily greetings, for example, saying 'hello' and 'goodbye' personally to each child and encouraging consideration for others. For example, children are reminded to sit on their bottom at group times so that all children can see. Children learn about diversity through planned activities, such as celebrating Chinese New Year, Diwali, Christmas and Easter and through children's access to resources which reflect positive images, such as dolls, puzzles, books and musical instruments. Children with learning difficulties are supported by staff who gain information on their individual needs through discussions with parents and other professionals, as well as attending regular training. Staff are aware how to adapt the physical space and activities to ensure all children are included. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children generally behave well as staff give clear, consistent messages to 'be kind', 'share', and 'don't push'. Children are spoken to in a calm manner which encourages them to listen. Children are praised when they behave in a positive way, such as sharing, and receive gentle explanations when their hugs are a little over enthusiastic. However, children's behaviour incidents are not routinely recorded.

Children benefit from most parental consents being obtained, however accident and incident records are not always confidential and the group are unaware of the changes to the complaints procedure, which impacts on children's care. The partnership with parents and carers for nursery education is good. They receive information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and can view current planning which is displayed on the notice board. However, although they receive progress reports for their children every term, these do not identify the next steps in their child's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is inadequate.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care. Children's care is compromised due to the staff's lack of knowledge on regulations in the National Standards which has led to a number of breaches in regulations. For example, obtaining written parental consent to administer medication, maintaining accurate registers which clearly show times of arrival and departure, informing Ofsted of significant changes to the supervisor and ensuring the committee complete suitability checks promptly, and updating policies and procedures, such as the complaints procedure and the procedure to follow if allegations are made against staff.

However, this is a new staff team who are committed to improving the outcomes for children and who have made some improvements by the second day of the inspection. They work well as a team, deploy themselves effectively and attend regular training. However, only a basic induction system is available and staff appraisals have not yet taken place. Children benefit from consistently high adult to child ratios which aids the interaction and relationships between the staff and children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Children are placed with their own key worker who updates their assessment records. All staff are very involved in

planning the curriculum which aids their understanding of how children learn and the monitoring process. Staff have a positive view on change and are committed to improvement.

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

At the last care inspection one recommendation was raised relating to staff's knowledge of the group's policies and procedures. Staff are aware of the policies and procedures however not all of these have been sufficiently updated to meet the regulations, which impacts on children's care.

At the last nursery education inspection three recommendations were made relating to developing children's observation and assessment records to identify the next steps in their learning; use children's assessments to inform planning and provide sufficient challenge; and implement a system to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education. The cycle of assessing children and planning for their progress needs developing to ensure the next steps are identified and children are sufficiently challenged in all areas. Staff work well together and continually monitor and evaluate how they implement nursery education which benefits children's 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 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- devise and maintain a system to obtain written permission from parents before administering medication to children
- develop the registration system to show accurate times of attendance for children and staff
- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations and set in place a procedure to promptly notify Ofsted of relevant matters, such as changes to the supervisor and committee and ensure that robust procedures are in place to check their suitability

- ensure policies and procedures are updated in line with regulations, in particular the complaints policy and the procedures to follow if allegations are made against staff

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

### **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):

- develop children's assessments to clearly show their progress in all areas of their learning, which build on their existing skills and abilities, identify the next steps in their learning, promote their independence and provide sufficient challenge to support them in reaching their full potential.

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