

The Caterpillar Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	144322
Inspection date	02 November 2007
Inspector	Susan Mann
Setting Address	Ferndown First School, Church Road, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 9ET
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Registered person	The Trustees of The Caterpillar Club
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?

The Caterpillar Club Pre-School opened in January 1997. It operates from a classroom in the grounds of Ferndown First School and has a large enclosed outdoor area. The pre-school serves families from the local area.

There are currently 39 children on roll. This includes 30 funded three and four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The group opens each weekday during school term times. Sessions are from 08.45-11.45 Monday to Friday and 12:45-15:15 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. There is a lunch club that operates as required.

There are eight part-time staff who work directly with the children. Five staff hold an appropriate early years qualification and three are working towards such a qualification. The setting also employs an administrator and a cleaner.

The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are given lots of opportunities to promote their good health and fitness. They enjoy a variety of healthy foods at snack time, such as fruit and vegetables. They are enthusiastic about their snack because pictures are displayed showing what is on offer that day. It is a happy and sociable time, and children sit around the table talking and laughing with one another. Children learn how to keep themselves healthy. They know to wash their hands before they eat to prevent the spread of germs.

Children's good health is protected by a range of well designed policies and procedures that are effectively implemented. Medication and accident records accurately record doses and incidents. All entries are shared confidentially with parents so they are aware of this important information. Parent notices and the health and hygiene policy give clear guidelines on when to keep a sick child at home to limit the spread of infection for the protection of other children and adults.

Children's health is fostered particularly well by the continual opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air. They use a large and secure outdoor area every day, moving freely between indoors and out as children wish. The garden provides a very good learning environment, and is planned to provide opportunities in all areas of the curriculum. Here, children develop their coordination pedalling trikes or balancing on stilts. They enjoy stories and books sitting under a tree in a quieter corner of the garden. Some choose simply to run around to release their energy and enjoy the feeling of running before settling down to another activity. Children are accomplished in these aspects of their physical development because they have daily opportunities to practise them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure in this happy and welcoming pre-school. The pre-school room is organised well to provide children with plenty of space to play. There is lots of natural daylight, and displays of children's work adorn the walls. This produces a bright and colourful environment. Children choose from a wide range of inviting equipment that is regularly cleaned to ensure it is hygienic. Children can choose what they wish to play with, and this helps to develop their independence and self assurance.

Children are supervised well by vigilant staff who are deployed effectively. Members of staff work very well together as a team to provide a high level of support and care for children at all times. Children have regular opportunities to practise the fire evacuation procedure. This ensures they are sufficiently familiar with the process to leave the premises quickly in the event of a real emergency. However, one of the emergency exits is partially blocked by equipment and resources. This could delay a safe exit for all children and adults.

Children are protected from injury and neglect because the pre-school has robust and effective procedures in place to safeguard their welfare. Staff are knowledgeable about how to recognise and report any concerns. The provision is underpinned by a thorough child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well and become quickly absorbed in their play when they arrive at the pre-school. They play well and demonstrate friendly and cooperative relationships with one another. The session routine and resources are well organised to foster children's independence. For example, at snack time children clear away their own bowl and cup, and they know to put their art work in the 'finished work tray' when completed in readiness for taking it home.

Children have great fun at the pre-school. Staff are attentive and show great enthusiasm in helping the children and encouraging them to try new experiences. They listen carefully to what children say and show great interest. This helps children to become self assured because they realise what they say is valued by adults. For example, at circle time children of all ages speak with great confidence about items they have brought from home, and the other children listen attentively to what they are saying.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well towards the early learning goals. They enjoy a thorough curriculum that is mainly delivered through play and free choice inside the pre-school and in the garden. The learning environment is very well organised. Children enjoy a wide range of activities and play opportunities that are available to them each day. They develop their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning because the curriculum is planned and evaluated fully to ensure that it is comprehensive. Staff are well trained and regularly update their knowledge. All work is at the child's physical level and interact in a friendly manner that helps create the cheerful atmosphere of the pre-school. Staff obviously enjoy the company of the children, and give a very good level of support throughout the session.

Staff make some observations of children's learning so they can assess their stage of development. Keyworkers know their children well, and are able to differentiate activities to provide challenge and interest. This enables staff to identify children's next steps of learning which helps them to make good progress. However, the system of making written observations needs to be more robust to provide a comprehensive overview of what a child can do in all areas of the setting.

Children develop and extend their own play well to provide exciting and interesting learning opportunities. For example, a few children roll their cars down a slope in the garden, attempting to make the cars pass through two bollards at the base of the ramp. They experiment with widening the gap between the bollards and pushing their cars down the slope with varying degrees of pressure to successfully complete the task. They display great curiosity to learn, and are confident to explore why things happen.

Children spend the majority of their time in enjoyable free play where they choose where they play and what they do. Each child is invited to do an adult led activity with their keyworker. These activities are interesting to most of the children, and they have clearly defined learning objectives. However, all children would benefit from being able to access these opportunities to learn on a more flexible basis when they wish to do so. Some children would further gain if

these elements of the curriculum were presented in a variety of ways to suit individual preferences and learning styles.

Children benefit from the high priority given to developing their communication, language and literacy skills. They enjoy superb story times that are delivered proficiently and with great enthusiasm. Children listen well, and demonstrate clear understanding of the stories being read. For example, a group of children are enthralled as they listen to a member of staff read 'The Gruffalo'. They participate in the story, joining in with key phrases and making relevant comments on the story which demonstrates their comprehension. Children learn the phonic sounds of letters of the alphabet. They enjoy group time when they sing rhymes and make the sounds of letters to enhance this learning. Children have opportunities to make marks and write throughout each session, both indoors and outside. For example, a group of children cluster around the easel outside, drawing colourful rainbows with chalks and commenting on the colours they are using.

Children develop their mathematical understanding. They count the number of children at circle time. They demonstrate knowledge of number and shape during adult led activities. They extend their imaginations through playing creatively in the role play area. For example, a child is completely absorbed in 'cooking' food in the toy microwave. He sets the timer and waits for his food to be ready. Outdoors, some children laugh and chatter as they enjoy a tea party. They pour one another drinks from a jug and hand out imaginary food on plates. Children enjoy a range of interesting art and craft activities which allow them opportunities to explore a wide range of textures and media. They are fully occupied as they play happily with one another. Staff are always on hand to explain and suggest new ways and means to develop their interest and understanding further.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the inclusive environment of the pre-school. Members of staff implement the setting's written policy on equal opportunity well. They are dedicated to ensuring that all children are kind to one another and feel a valued part of the group. Children learn about our diverse society through playing with a suitable range of resources that reflect a wide range of cultures. They also enjoy some activities that help them to understand special celebrations and festivals of religious belief. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They demonstrate a strong sense of community within the pre-school, and are knowledgeable and confident about the expectations and overall ethos of the group.

Children manage their behaviour well. They are busy and engaged in what they are doing throughout each session. Staff are well deployed to provide children with a high level of support. Any unwanted behaviour is properly analysed to determine a possible cause. Suitable strategies are used to help children understand what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Staff are very good role models for the children to follow. This part of the provision is supported well by a policy on behaviour management. This is shared with parents to promote consistency between home and pre-school.

Children benefit from the good relationship between the pre-school and their parents. Parents are welcome to talk to staff at any time. Some are members of the setting's management committee which ensures that the pre-school meets the needs of the families who use it. Staff and the management committee value the opinions of parents and regularly seek their opinions

on the service they provide through asking them to complete satisfaction questionnaires. These are processed and issues that arise are dealt with to develop the provision further.

Partnership with parents is good. Children's education is enhanced by the effective involvement of their parents in the process. Parents complete a home profile before their child starts in which they can summarise their child's level of development. This provides a helpful starting point for keyworkers and staff. They know what a child can do from the outset, and so can plan their next steps of learning effectively to enable them to make good progress. Parents are given a great deal of information on what their child learns at pre-school. There are displays on the wall that illustrate the Foundation Stage curriculum. Newsletters keep parents up to date with topics and events. Children bring in objects from home to participate in phonics activities. These opportunities help children to extend their learning at home with their parents.

Parents have regular meetings with their child's keyworker to discuss the progress being made. These can be informal meetings, or planned appointments. Parents look at their child's assessment folders and discuss what the intended next steps of learning will be. These discussions enable parents to be fully informed about what their child will be learning and provides them with the opportunity to support their education at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the efficient organisation of the pre-school. All required documentation is accurately maintained and stored, such as registers of attendance and children's records. A comprehensive set of written policies and procedures provides a robust framework for the management and operation of the pre-school. The pre-school administrator efficiently carries out her role to enable the business side of the provision to run smoothly.

The pre-school is managed effectively by a committee of parent volunteers. They receive appropriate checks to ensure that all adults who are involved with the setting are properly vetted to ensure they are suitable. They are enthusiastic in their approach. In particular, fundraising initiatives have been successful in providing additional resources for the group. However, there is no organised induction process to support new committee members. This means that they are not always made fully aware of their roles and responsibilities when they join the committee. All adults involved in the running and management of the pre-school collaborate with one another well to produce a coherent approach to providing care and education for the children who attend.

Leadership and management are good. The pre-school supervisor oversees the provision of nursery education effectively so that it successfully enables children to make good progress. She is experienced and knowledgeable about how young children learn and develop. She is forward thinking and works well with her team and the committee to plan and implement changes to develop the provision further. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the pre-school was asked to address one issue surrounding the provision of care, and consider two recommendations regarding the provision of nursery education. All have been fully addressed. The staff induction procedure has been developed to cover issues surrounding child protection. This ensures that all staff are fully aware of their

role and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children's welfare. The pre-school has reviewed the opportunities for children to enjoy books and music as a regular part of their curriculum. The book corner now provides an exceptionally well resourced and inviting area for children to enjoy books and stories, either with an adult or on their own. Children are able to choose from a variety of musical instruments that are presented for them to use whenever they wish as part of their free play. They also enjoy songs on a regular basis which helps them to develop their sense of rhythm and ability to remember lyrics and rhymes.

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):

- keep all emergency exits clear
- develop a system of committee induction that ensures that all new members are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities

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 the way adult led activities are presented to allow children to access them as part of their free play
- further develop the system for making regular observations on children's learning to ensure it provides a comprehensive measure of their progress.

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