

Cygnets Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY267146
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Inspector	Miriam Sheila Brown
Setting Address	Langford Village Primary school, Peregrine Way, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX26 6SX
Telephone number	01869 369021
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Registered person	Cygnets Day Nursery
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?

Cygnets Playschool opened in 2003 and operates from a portacabin within Langford Village Community Primary School. The Foundation Stage unit within Langford Village School caters for three, four, and five-year-old children. The playschool is for children from two-and-a-half to three years. All children have access to the fully enclosed outdoor play areas attached to the school.

There are currently 25 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive their provision with Cygnets Playschool and nine are based in the school's Foundation Stage Unit. The Foundation Stage and playschool currently support a number of children with additional needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

Children based in the Foundation Stage unit attend for five sessions during term time. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.45 to 15.15 for three and four-year-olds. A lunch club from 11.30 to 12.45 is available to these children. The playschool operates from 12.15 to 14.30, Monday to Thursday.

Cygnets committee employ five staff who work with the children, most of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a local authority Early Years Advisory Teacher and works in close partnership with the school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children in the playschool and those part of the pre-reception group in the Foundation Stage unit, develop their awareness of good hygiene and keeping themselves healthy through thorough and effective routines which support good practice. Children wash their hands at all appropriate times and staff provide suitable and accessible resources to enable them to be independent in their personal care. Nappy changing is managed sensitively, respecting children's privacy, and the procedures used reduce the risk of cross infection. All staff receive first aid training enabling them to manage accidents appropriately. Accident, illness and medication policies provide clear guidelines for staff and parents. Records of accidents and administration of medication are well maintained and shared with parents.

Children thoroughly enjoy snack times. In playschool they sit together with staff and choose from a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables which are attractively presented. The Foundation Stage unit operates a café style snack time and children may choose when they want their snack during the free-flow session. Their understanding of healthy eating is supported by the range of fruits and vegetables offered. Drinks are provided at snack times in both areas and at other times children have easy access to fresh drinking water from their own bottles or, in the playschool, by asking a staff member.

Children benefit from excellent opportunities for physical play which are freely available to them each day. They use a wide range of outdoor equipment such as a climbing frame and wheeled toys, which assist in large muscle development and coordination. Playing games such as using giant counters to make lines of colours in a frame, help with hand-and-eye coordination and encourage children to stretch and balance as they reach to place the pieces. Throughout each day children use a range of small toys and equipment which assist in developing their small muscle control. These include jigsaws, art and craft equipment and sand and water utensils.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within an environment where safety is given high priority. Detailed and regular risk assessments are completed for the premises, equipment and activities. Staff are vigilant in supervising children at all times. Doors to rooms within the main school building have handles which are out of children's reach, and access to the playschool is secured after children arrive. High priority is given to meeting fire and safety requirements and evacuation drills are practised each term. This helps to ensure that in an emergency situation children and staff are able to respond appropriately. Children learn about keeping themselves safe because staff gently remind them not to run inside, to tidy toys away and to walk in pairs holding hands when moving from one building to another.

Pre-reception children in the Foundation Stage unit have a wide variety of areas in which to play safely and develop their independence and learning. They freely access resources which are stored on low shelves and in floor units. Premises are well maintained and invitingly decorated

with children's work, photographs and displays. Staff in the playschool organise the room and resources prior to children's arrival and children choose freely from the wide and varied range set out. Staff rotate activities and resources each day.

Children's welfare is further safeguarded and promoted through comprehensive staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. These are clearly documented in detailed policies that are available to both staff and parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages are happy and settled in the playschool and Foundation Stage unit. They are greeted warmly by staff and confidently join in with familiar routines such as group times and free play sessions. Throughout each session playschool children move freely from one play area to another, developing their ability to make decisions and grow in confidence. Playschool staff make excellent use of 'Birth to three matters' guidance to help them plan a broad range of exciting and stimulating activities. They have recently started to make regular written observations of children although these are not yet fully reflected in planning to assist children, through their play, to build on their understanding and skills. Children relate very positively to each other and staff. They play well together with a growing awareness of the need to respect and care for others, for example, waiting their turn for assistance from staff to help with outdoor footwear. Playschool children spend their time engaged in activity. They explore using their senses through activities such as playing with dough, drawing, painting and craft activities, outdoor play and construction. Children express their thoughts and feelings in a variety of ways and imaginative play is a firm favourite. For example, they enjoy dressing up in a belly-dancer costume and dancing round the room. They act out familiar scenes such as preparing dinner in the role-play area and calling staff when it is ready. The organisation of the playschool provides children with an intimate and safe first place to learn about being away from home. This positively assists their integration to the Foundation Stage unit.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate sound and professional knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use the stepping stones effectively to identify pre-reception children's individual needs and learning styles. The planning cycle is complete and is very well documented through long, medium and short term plans, observations and assessments. This helps staff to assist children appropriately and encourage them in their next steps in learning. There is scope in some instances, to develop this differentiation for the very youngest children in the pre-reception group. The play and learning environment is exceptionally well organised to offer stimulating play areas, organised around the six areas of learning. Information displayed in each area gives the purpose of the activity and offers suggestions for questions to ask children to develop their thinking.

Children are making very good progress in all areas of learning and are actively involved in play throughout the day. Small group times offer excellent opportunities for them to relate to each other, helping them to gain confidence and a sense of belonging within the larger unit. Children thoroughly enjoy story times and confidently point out to the staff member that she is holding the book the wrong way round. They join in with familiar phrases and offer their own suggestions to describe what is happening in the story. Many children successfully identify initial sounds in their names and some are writing their names with assistance. Children count, match and weigh in planned activities and consolidate this knowledge in child-led play.

Children's understanding of everyday technology and the world around them is supported through their use of, among other things, computers and interactive white boards. These are used with confidence and enjoyment. Role play areas enable children to act out real life situations, such as doing the washing, whilst incorporating their other learning experiences. Information for adults displayed nearby, reminds them to help children use capacity words such as more, less, empty and full. Physical development is very well supported through free access to outside areas throughout the year.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and parents are warmly welcomed to the setting at each session. Children demonstrate their confidence by settling quickly to group routines such as registration, story and snack times. They are well known by staff who efficiently record individual details and highlight specific needs to ensure these are met effectively. Children in the playschool increase their knowledge of the local community as they share resources with the main school and join in with some of their activities. Visitors to the group such as the road safety unit and a fire officer, further enhance this knowledge. Children play with a variety of different resources which support and enhance their increasing awareness of the wider world. For example, small world and role play equipment reflect different cultures and lifestyles and during the 'weather' theme children use a map of the world to plot different types of weather shown in newspaper weather reports. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of children's additional needs, helping them to effectively support those who attend the group.

Children are skilfully encouraged to be well behaved, for example, to share equipment, take turns in their play and listen to each other. Staff ensure they are consistent in their expectations for behaviour and offer frequent, meaningful praise. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with comprehensive information about all aspects of care and learning. This includes a booklet on how they may help their children at home which details specific ideas about sharing shopping trips, walks, singing songs and reading books together. Information about the Foundation Stage curriculum outlines how it is used to support children in their development. Staff are available each day to discuss children's activities and progress. More detailed feedback is provided through open evenings, written assessments or by special arrangement with staff. Discussion with parents demonstrates very strong support for the playschool and the Foundation Stage unit.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for because staff are appropriately trained and supported in their work. Minimum ratios are met or exceeded in all areas throughout the day. The organisation of rooms used by pre-reception children helps to ensure that each child has a sense of belonging without feeling overwhelmed.

All aspects of documentation is of an extremely high quality. Policy and procedure files are readily accessible and comprehensive, providing both staff and parents with clear information about all aspects of the provision. Children's details are stored appropriately to maintain

confidentiality and regularly updated with parents. Records of activities, accidents, medications and anecdotal observations for each child are effectively maintained by staff concerned.

Leadership and management of the provision is outstanding. The staff team are exceptionally well supported by the manager of the Foundation Stage unit and the playschool leader. Regular meetings, appraisals, induction and training offer staff a firm structure to develop their practice and expertise. The committee support staff through fund raising and assisting in developing policy, for example, creating a lunch club to extend each session and assist in children's transition to full time education.

The local authority Early Years Advisory Teacher and the reception staff in the main school provide support for pre-school children and staff. Recommendations from the last inspection have been successfully addressed and discussion with staff demonstrates a strong commitment to providing high quality care and learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to provide the regulator's telephone number on the complaints procedure and extend information on the register to include staff details and times of children's attendance. They also agreed to ensure children in the playschool had access to fresh drinking water. The setting has made good progress in each of these areas. The complaints procedure offers parents detailed information about how they may contact the regulatory body and staff details and children's times of attendance are recorded. Drinks are visible to playschool children and they confidently ask staff to pour them a drink if they are thirsty.

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):

- continue to develop the use of observations to inform assessments and planning to assist children, through their play, to build on their understanding and 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):

- ensure challenges in adult-led activities are appropriate to the ability and age of children involved

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