

Cygnets Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY275703
Inspection date	29 November 2007
Inspector	Carole Argles
Setting Address	Cygnets Pre-School, Sandalwood Road, WESTBURY, Wiltshire, BA13 3UR
Telephone number	01373 827555
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Registered person	Cygnets 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?

Cygnets Pre-school was registered in 2001 and moved to its current site in 2004. The pre-school operates from an annex attached to Westbury Leigh Primary School, Westbury, Wiltshire and is managed by a voluntary trustee committee.

The pre-school is registered to care for 24 children aged two to under five years and usually accepts children who are aged over three. There are currently 47 children aged three and four years on roll, of whom 40 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Currently, there are no children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days a week during term times. Morning sessions run between 09.15 and 11.45 and afternoon sessions are from 12.30 to 15.00. There are seven members of staff who work regularly with the children, of whom four hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are effective measures in place to promote the children's good health and help to keep them fit. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of ways to minimise the spread of infection between children. They keep the premises hygienic, cleaning the toilet area between the morning and afternoon sessions, and they wear gloves and aprons when changing nappies. The children learn good hygiene routines and know that they must wash their hands before eating their snack. Their health requirements are met well because the staff make sure they have a clear understanding of any allergies or specific care needs. They take additional training where necessary and have systems in place so that all staff who are involved with the child's care are fully briefed. Most staff hold an appropriate first aid certificate and they obtain parental consents allowing them to administer medication or seek medical assistance if required.

Drinking water is readily available for the children to take when they are thirsty. There is no set snack time and the children can choose when they want to eat during the first half of the session. Parents provide healthy food which are shared between the children. They can choose what they want to eat selecting from a wide variety of fruits and salad vegetables. A member of staff sits with the children talking with them individually or in small groups and this creates a relaxed and sociable time. The children learn independence, fetching and clearing away their plates and cups. There are activities to help children learn about the importance of healthy eating and they often take part in cooking activities making a variety of sweet and savoury recipes. Staff encourage them to try new foods to promote their interest in eating a nutritious and balanced diet.

The children have exercise daily usually playing in the outside area where they have ample room to play and move around freely. They are developing good control and coordination of their movements. Staff plan activities to help them develop new skills, for example, games of hopscotch so that they learn to jump and hop in a controlled manner. The children use suitable outdoor apparatus for balancing and scrambling. They show a growing awareness of their own and others' space as they sit together on the mat at circle times and when they are carefully negotiating a course as they use wheeled toys or push buggies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are well maintained and bright and welcoming for children and their parents. There are many displays of children's artwork, posters and interest tables. Children can select toys and resources independently from where they are stored in boxes and low units. The staff make effective use of the space, creating areas for children to engage in quiet activities, looking at books, drawing or using the computer, and dedicated areas for art activities and pretend play. The outdoor space is well used not only for exercise but other activities for example, exploring the sand tray or painting with large brushes. There is a wide range of good quality furniture, toys and equipment which support all areas of the children's development. These are age-appropriate and safe for the children to use.

The risk of accidental injury to the children is reduced because staff carry out daily checks of the premises and implement additional safety measures such as having stops on heavy outside doors to protect the children's fingers. They ensure that the children are well supervised at all

times and there are always two members of staff present with any group of children. The premises are kept secure and staff are vigilant to ensure children do not enter the kitchen. Suitable fire safety measures are in place and the children have opportunities to practise the fire drill so they understand how to act in an emergency. The children are protected on outings because the staff carry out risk assessments and ensure that plenty of adults are present.

Staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding children issues and understand what action to take if they are concerned about the welfare of a child in their care. There is a comprehensive procedure which is made readily available to parents so that they understand the responsibilities of the staff. The children are carefully supervised to ensure that they are only collected by authorised adults and they have no unsupervised contact with people who have not been vetted. This contributes effectively to protecting the children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident and have a warm and friendly relationship with the staff. They part readily from their parents and carers and settle quickly at the activities. Staff sit with the children, providing support when needed, and asking open questions, encouraging them to think and talk about what they are doing. This supports their communication skills effectively. The children are encouraged to be independent, pouring their own drinks and putting on their coats for outdoor play. They are motivated to learn and interested in what they do. They understand there are times to sit quietly and listen to others, for example at the register time. The children develop good self-esteem because they receive praise and recognition for their achievements and the staff are interested in them as individuals.

There is a suitable routine for the sessions which includes a balance of child-selected and adult-led activities. The children understand the routines and respond readily to changes, for example, knowing that it is time to help tidy away when the music plays. The staff plan and provide an interesting programme of activities which are well supported by a good range of toys and resources. They frequently observe and make notes on what the children can achieve. However, the children's development records are not updated promptly so that this information can be used to best effect when staff are drawing up their short-term plans for the children's learning.

Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is good and consequently the children are progressing well towards the early learning goals. Most staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and this helps them to plan and monitor the children's learning. They carry out daily assessments of what the children can do and have systems in place so that they can identify those children who require extra assistance. Generally, they plan good levels of challenge for the children. However, because the children's development records are not updated promptly, they are less effective in planning the next steps for the most able children's learning. There is an interesting programme of activities which are based around a theme and support all areas of the children's development. Staff ensure that resources and activities are prepared before the children arrive so that the session runs efficiently and they make good use of time. They create a stimulating learning environment which has many pictures, labelled displays and objects for the children to explore and investigate independently.

The children relate well to others and play cooperatively together, some times collaborating in activities, for example, two children worked together deciding on the elements of a story they were devising using a computer programme. Most children speak clearly and confidently, taking turns in conversation and talking about real and imaginary events. They use their imaginations well in pretend play activities, having make-believe telephone calls and acting out what is familiar to them. The children readily express their ideas and talk about what they are doing. For instance, when a child draws a rainbow, three children talk spontaneously about when they have seen one and what colours they saw. The children understand that print carries meaning and they can recognise familiar words such as their names. They enjoy group stories and often choose to look at books with a member of staff. They are developing a wide vocabulary and can recognise words from descriptions, for example, suggesting the word 'frost' when talking with staff about cold weather.

There are many activities which help the children develop good hand-eye coordination and the muscle control required for writing skills. The children enjoy completing jig-saw puzzles and making patterns in peg boards. They manipulate and connect construction pieces to make models. They use their imaginations well and design with a purpose in mind or sometimes they decide to copy a diagram. The children enjoy drawing and painting and some are beginning to form recognisable letters and to write their names, naming their pictures. The children have free access to a variety of papers, collage materials, scissors and glue sticks and concentrate well making items of their own choosing. Although some art activities are adult-led, staff allow children to try out their own ideas and to use their skills, for example, asking them to draw the head and make a carrot-nose for a large snowman they were making for a wall display.

The children are beginning to count, competently linking objects to numbers; for example, they count out pieces of fruit for their snack or check the number of children present at registration time. They are beginning to learn the correct vocabulary to compare and describe objects and shapes. Some children can recognise numerals, for example, when playing hopscotch. Staff use practical activities to encourage the children to count, for example, asking a child to find the correct number of pieces to make his model. However, they give less emphasis in the curriculum on children's use of numbers and when planning the next steps in the learning of the most able children.

The children are interested in the world around them have many opportunities to observe nature and to explore a wide range of materials and objects to see how they work or change; for example, they investigated a large tray of ice cubes for observing what happens when it melts. They readily responded to questions from the staff which encouraged them to think about what was happening and suggest why, and to predict what may happen next. The children enjoy music and singing. They join in readily and work cooperatively together, for instance when matching the sounds of simple musical instruments to different types of weather, suggesting that the sound of drums could represent thunder and triangles frost.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They develop good self-esteem and are confident and secure. They are greeted individually when they arrive at the pre-school and their achievements are valued. The staff carefully display their artwork on the walls and the children proudly show others what they have done. The children enjoy helping and show concern for others, for example, when a child topples off a tricycle. They begin to find out about their local community and sometimes go for walks to the nearby shops. They

use a wide range of resources, including pretend play toys, puzzles and books, which show positive images of diversity in society. Staff help them learn about their own culture and traditions and as well as those of others through simple celebration of festivals including Christmas, Diwali and the Chinese New Year.

The children's individual needs are well met by the staff who establish good communication with their parents. There is an effective process to help new children settle quickly and staff meet with parents to share detailed information to ensure that the child is comfortable and secure. Each child has a named key person who is available to liaise with parents and they talk about the children frequently. Parents receive comprehensive information about the pre-school and have the opportunity to serve on the management committee. They are encouraged to help in the sessions so that they learn more about what their child is doing. Any children who have learning difficulties or disabilities receive able support from the staff who work closely with their parents and others to ensure that they have a good understanding of the child's needs. Together they plan and review their development and, when appropriate, additional adult support is provided to enable children to participate fully. At present, a speech and language therapist attends one session a week to work with those children who require additional support.

The children behave well and play cooperatively together, sharing fairly and taking turns. Staff help them learn what is expected of them explaining why sometimes their behaviour is unwanted. Strategies are in place to help children learn to manage their own behaviour effectively. For instance, there is a pictorial chart showing simple 'Golden Rules' for their behaviour and staff use a puppet to show them how to sit and listen at circle times. A reward chart is used when children are particularly helpful, for example, by tidying up, and they look forward to the opportunity to use the special toys that this brings.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Plenty of information is available for parents to encourage them to become involved in their child's learning. They are given clear information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and other topics so that they understand what their child will be doing and why. The activity plans are displayed and staff suggest and loan activities that they can do together at home. The staff are approachable and more than willing to discuss the children's progress, showing parents their child's records, photographs and examples of what they have been doing. Parents' comments are valued and they are encouraged to contribute to their child's profile through comments on an observed activity. This partnership supports the children's learning effectively and contributes towards them making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The children benefit from the good organisational skills of the staff. All the policies and procedures necessary to support the children's safety and welfare are in place and reviewed regularly. This includes sound procedures to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with the children. All adults working in the pre-school receive a thorough induction so that they understand what is required of them. Regular appraisals are carried out to help identify staff training and development requirements. The qualification requirements are met and staff continue to undertake training to increase and update their knowledge and understanding of childcare issues.

The required records and consents are maintained, although systems to ensure children's development records are updated promptly are still to be fully established. Staff work cooperatively together and know their roles and responsibilities so the sessions run smoothly for the children. Good ratios of adults to children are maintained ensuring that the children receive plenty of attention and support.

The leadership and management is good. There have been recent changes to the staff team and they work well together and are enthusiastic and committed. With the committee, they have identified some areas for further development and are implementing strategies to address these. They have begun to establish systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education provision. They meet regularly to evaluate the activities and to monitor and plan the children's progress. Although at present, delays in updating the children's records mean that this is not always fully effective. The manager briefs her staff at the beginning of each session and this ensures that they are well deployed and know their roles and responsibilities. As a result, all runs smoothly and the children's learning is well supported.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the provider agreed to share the behaviour management policy with the parents and to devise a system for parents to acknowledge entries in the incident book. A point for consideration arising from the Nursery Education inspection was for staff to check that the learning opportunities for older and more able children are well balanced across all six areas of learning.

Since that time, the provider has made all policies and procedures readily available for parents to read and there is a comprehensive induction for all new parents so they understand how their children, including their behaviour will be managed. The format of the records has been amended so that parents can sign and acknowledge entries. This action has enhanced the partnership with parents and carers.

Generally, the staff provide satisfactory levels of challenge for the more able children extending their learning across most areas of the curriculum. However, there is less emphasis on children's mathematical development and this remains an area for further consideration.

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

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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):

- review the systems for tracking children's progress to assist staff when planning the next steps in their learning (also applies to Nursery Education)

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):

- provide further opportunities for children to use numbers in practical activities

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