

# Colne Engaine Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY363594
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 July 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Barbara Ann Greenley
<b>Setting Address</b>	Village Hall, 1 Station Road, Colne Engaine, COLCHESTER, CO6 2ES
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<b>Registered person</b>	Vanessa Szwandt
<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 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?

Colne Engaine Pre-school is privately owned and opened in 2007. It operates from a community hall situated in Colne Engaine, on the outskirts of Colchester. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open from 09:15 until 15:00 on Monday and Friday and from 09:15 until 11:45 on Tuesday and Thursday. All children share an enclosed outdoor play area. There are no pets on site.

There are currently 35 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 receive funding for early education. The group supports children with English as an additional language and has strategies in place to welcome children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children attend from the local and wider community.

The pre-school employs six staff. There are four members of staff, including the manager who hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two members of staff working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA), the local authority and the area special needs coordinator (SENCO).

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All the relevant information regarding children's health and medical backgrounds is on file. Children who become unwell during the session can rest quietly until their parents arrive. Accident and medication books are kept accurately and parents have given written permission for the staff to seek medical advice or treatment in the event of an emergency. These procedures assist staff to ensure that children are cared for appropriately. Four members of staff have completed first aid training. The premises are kept clean and tables and equipment are washed regularly. Children generally follow the group's hygiene procedures, for example, there is a simple hand washing routine with picture prompts in the toilets. However, some of the children are failing to clean their hands properly and then use a communal towel which potentially increases the risk of cross-infection.

Children eat and drink regularly during the morning and are offered a choice of fruit, vegetables, crackers and dips at snack time. Food is nutritious and meets the children's dietary needs. Children have some opportunities to prepare food and have made jam tarts, biscuits and fruit kebabs. A number of the children have also had the opportunity to plant tomatoes, beans and sunflowers and watch the growing process. Parents know what the children are eating each day and provide a packed lunch on designated days. Children's food preferences are on file and staff take care that any allergies are highlighted to avoid a child eating the wrong food. These procedures ensure that parents and staff understand the children's nutritional requirements and an adequate diet is provided. However, food is left uncovered for periods of time, giving insects time to land and passing children opportunities to put their fingers into the food. Without protection the food can potentially be contaminated.

Children have access to larger pieces of equipment that are set up outside each day and also use the adjacent grassed playground. Children clearly enjoy exercise and any time they can spend jumping and running. Staff use the facilities they have to organise a free-flow between the play room and the garden.

Children in receipt of funding for early education participate in group activities, such as construction work and using the larger pieces of equipment. The outside play area is used daily. Fine muscle skills are being developed through the use of tools and mark-making equipment. Children can cut and roll play dough and use scissors, pens and pencils confidently. They climb, run, jump and crawl with ease. They negotiate taking turns to avoid bumping into one another. They have some opportunities to listen and dance to music. Physical development features in the planning of daily activities and children are encouraged to use the resources during the sessions.

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

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a bright room that is organised and well-maintained. The group use the large playroom in the village hall plus a small kitchen area and toilets. The standard of decoration is good and the ventilation through the building ensures that staff and children remain cool during the hot weather. The room benefits from a number of windows that let in natural light. The walls are decorated with posters and children's artwork. Children enter the room happily, knowing where they can sit, the location of resources and that they are able to

start playing with toys straight away. They also benefit from the paved areas and large grassed garden adjacent to the building.

Children access a wide range of age-appropriate toys. They are in good condition and maintained well. They can easily make choices as toys are within reach, stored at child-height and labelled with words and pictures. Toys are varied and rotated to provide fun and challenge during the sessions. Equipment is child-sized and appropriate for their use. Children therefore have access to resources that interest and stimulate their imaginations.

Staff are aware of the comprehensive safety policies. Written risk assessments are completed to ensure that the premises are safe and this also applies to any outings that are taken. The outside area is monitored for hazards, there are no poisonous plants and it is securely fenced. There is a clear fire evacuation procedure and this is practised with the children at regular intervals. The door is alarmed to alert staff if someone is accessing the building. Staffing ratios are maintained and at times exceeded, ensuring that children are well-supervised. There is a secure collection policy to ensure children only leave with the correct designated person. Children are learning about staying safe and are given clear, consistent instructions from the staff. There are very few accidents as children do not run around inside and they take care when carrying objects.

There is a comprehensive child protection policy in place. Staff have completed training and feel confident about the referral process, signs and symptoms. Parents are aware of the staff's responsibility for safeguarding the children as the policy is made accessible to them. Updated information, knowledge and understanding by the staff members assists them in protecting the children.

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

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and settled quickly to start their play. They become very interested in the various activities laid out around the room and particularly enjoy water play measuring and pouring the liquid in containers. Children are invited into a quieter area with a member of staff where they can talk about topics such as 'feelings' and make attempts at letter formation in a tray of flour. Staff ask open questions and encourage conversations.

Children demonstrate the ability to concentrate for extended periods and will use books for reference, for example, 'where does the bug live?' and 'let's look for the picture of a bug'. Children will take time to complete a task such as forming and re-forming puzzle blocks in a tray. Then using the blocks to build a wall around a train. Children show excitement and recognise toys that appear on the television such as 'Peppa Pig', playing with the house and accompanying furniture with friends.

Staff show lots of enthusiasm and give praise for children's achievements. They laugh freely together talking about animal sounds and experimenting with words and alliteration like 'wet wiggly worm'. Children like to make up songs with the good range of musical instruments, trying to be rhythmical with shakers, bells, rattles and triangles. They are learning new songs and practice them each day for their forthcoming performance for their parents. Children are beginning to understand the principles of sharing, cooperation and taking turns.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff members have a broad understanding of the Foundation Stage and use their knowledge successfully to implement the six areas of learning. All of the team take responsibility for delivering the curriculum. All areas of learning are covered in the planning. It is clear from the activity plans what the children are intended to learn and the purpose of the task. There is sufficient challenge and the more able children are extended as plans are adapted. Plans are inclusive; all children are welcomed and resources are acquired to meet their needs. Staff present new experiences well, patiently taking time to explain how tasks can be completed. Children behave very well and staff are aware of setting boundaries. Children are spoken to kindly but firmly. Staff members spend the majority of the time working directly with the children. There are regular assessments and observations completed on the children and these are incorporated into their development plans. This information allows staff to help children to move on to the next stage.

Children enjoy singing songs at circle time and are learning rhymes and how to sing harmoniously. They can mix colours and show delight at the results. They use a variety of materials to produce collages and pictures from their own imaginations. Children are encouraged to explore unfamiliar materials and use a combination of resources to produce an effect. Children are beginning to count using their toys, for example, cars and bricks, as well as their own fingers to demonstrate simple numbers. Games are used to help number recognition. Staff are initiating children's interest in numbers and counting by using mathematics in everyday routines and songs such as '5 fine bumble bees' and '10 fat sausages'. Opportunities are made to learn about shapes, size and weight. Children display an interest in stories and rhymes. They communicate well, using words confidently. They make rudimentary attempts at writing letters and are able to hold mark-making materials correctly. A well-stocked reading area is under-used and this limits the independent use of books by the children.

There is excellent use of the outside area. Children play with an extensive range of equipment and thoroughly enjoy their time in the garden. They have ample opportunities to exercise and benefit greatly from the staff's admirable approach to using the playground fully. From observation it is evident that children are able to use everyday technology and complete topics on countries of the world and festivals. They are able to talk about their home-lives for example, younger siblings. Children are learning about the world through a variety of media, conversation and investigation such as a bug hunt through leaves, shells and earth and use of a computer with age-appropriate programmes. Children's personal, social and emotional development is strongly promoted. Having only attended the group for a short time, a number of children are already negotiating turns with the toys, working collaboratively to construct models and grouping with others with whom they feel comfortable. They understand the group's rules and the consequences of their actions. Their independence is promoted, taking responsibility for personal hygiene and selecting toys. Overall, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing sound relationships with adults and other children. They are aware of respecting each other's choices and can work together when completing tasks. Children access a sufficient range of equipment that reflects diversity in the community. Children are beginning to learn about the wider world through topic work on festivals. Boys and girls are able to have equal access to resources. The setting has a sound equal opportunities policy and a designated member of staff in place responsible for disseminating information to the team.

There is an awareness of the needs of children who require additional support and the designated member of staff has completed training. The group has a copy of the Disability Discrimination Act on site to increase their awareness of issues that may cause concern. Children and adults can access the building and staff are able to adapt resources to meet their requirements. At present there are no children attending who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children understand the boundaries set by the staff and consistently behave well. Staff members are calm in their approach and their firm manner commands respect from the children. Parents are aware of the group's behaviour management policy and the methods that are employed by the staff. Children respond positively to the staff and their good behaviour is acknowledged and praised.

Children and parents are welcomed by the staff members at the start and end of each session. Time is made to talk with parents should they wish to have additional information about their child's day. Parents are aware of the group's policies and receive information about the daily routine through newsletters and notice boards. However, the complaints procedure does not reflect current guidelines. Staff listen to parents' views and this liaison assists them to provide consistent care for the children.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Written information about the curriculum and the six areas of learning is provided for them, however, parents remain unsure about the aims of the Foundation Stage and the role they play in the education of their children. Information regarding children's prior learning is sought from parents to enable staff to plan activities to capture the children's interest. Opportunities are created for parents to meet and discuss their children's progress with their key persons. Parents expressed their satisfaction with the provision and would recommend, 'the friendly staff and the facilities', the 'free flow play and the fact there is plenty of toys', 'the influence of the manager and the relaxed, open approach to the care of the children'.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are beginning to learn about beliefs and cultures different from their own. They express surprise when looking at the natural world. Children have opportunities to listen to music and read quietly. They are beginning to control their emotions and are learning right from wrong.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The manager has been in place for two years and has been a qualified teacher since 1998. She is experienced, motivated and enthusiastic about her work. She wants the best for the children and the staff. She has a current first aid certificate and continues to train. The manager understands her responsibilities and the need to operate in line with the guidance in the National Standards. Children benefit from the commitment of the manager to improving the standards at the pre-school.

Staff members work well as a team. They have a number of qualified staff and are committed to further training. They share their knowledge and understanding of childcare with each other. The group has a robust recruitment policy ensuring that children are safeguarded. The management team is strong and has a vision of where development opportunities lie. Children have key persons who understand their individual needs. Staffing ratios are maintained to ensure children are well supervised and receive individual attention.

Children and parents benefit from a range of policies and procedures implemented by the staff. Parents can access information about the group through posters on the notice boards, talking with the staff and newsletters. Records are in order and kept confidential; the daily register reflects the times of arrival and departure of the children accurately and consent forms are in place. The group's operational plan is used actively and is reviewed in order for the document to remain relevant.

Leadership and management of early education is good. The manager has a clear aim which is 'for children to enjoy and achieve'. Staff meetings take place to discuss the curriculum and define individual roles and responsibilities; minutes are taken. Strong links are fostered with outside agencies and the local school. The manager regularly monitors and evaluates the quality of the nursery education on offer. The team identify their own strengths and weaknesses and put together plans to address the issues.

Overall, children's needs are met.

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

Not applicable

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints since registration 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 all health and hygiene criteria is addressed
- revise the complaints procedure to reflect current guidelines.

#### **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 strategies to improve parent's knowledge of how the setting operates and their role as the first and most enduring educators of their children
- arrange the books to encourage the children to use them independently.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)