

Fairways Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY356603
Inspection date	18 July 2008
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	The Old Schoolrooms, The Street, Stisted, Braintree, Essex, CM77 8AN
Telephone number	01376 339477
E-mail	fairwayscc2@aol.com
Registered person	Fairways Childcare Centre Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Fairways Childcare Centre is one of two privately run settings run by the same owner. It was established in 2003 and moved into the current premises in 2007. The childcare centre operates from the converted old schoolroom near the church in the rural village of Stisted, Essex. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting opens five days a week all year round. Opening times are from 08:00 until 18:00.

There are currently 54 children aged from two years to five years on roll. Of these, 33 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions or full day care. The setting serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting employs five staff to work with the children, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting also employs an office manager and a specialist teacher joins the setting for dance and music activities. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment where they develop good personal hygiene routines and self-care skills. They automatically wash their hands after playing in the garden or visiting the toilet and understand the importance of this. Liquid soap and paper towels are provided to reduce the risk of cross-infection. The nappy changing arrangements offer children privacy to preserve their dignity and self-esteem. The sick child policy is clearly written so that parents are aware that they cannot send their children when they are unwell. Information about common childhood illnesses and exclusion periods are easily accessible on file. There are always staff with appropriate qualifications in first aid to deal with children who may be sick or injured. Any accidents are recorded and parents are asked to sign to acknowledge the entries.

Children have very good opportunities to make healthy choices when they join the snack bar. They choose from a range of fresh fruit, vegetables and bread sticks. Water and juice is provided in accessible containers so that children help themselves whenever they feel thirsty, alternatively children can pour themselves a drink of fresh milk from a jug. At lunch time children are offered a selection of light meals, sandwiches and some freshly cooked children's favourites such as spaghetti hoops, chicken nuggets and smiley potato faces. Information is gathered about any allergies and special dietary requirements to ensure that individual children's needs are met. Staff have attended food safety training and the Environmental Health Officer has visited to check the kitchen. However, staff are not keeping a record of the food the children eat and consequently, parents are not shown the menus each week.

Children have boundless energy and love to play in the garden. Mature trees provide plenty of shaded areas to allow children to play outdoors in comfort on hot summer days and staff ensure that the children always wear their sun hats when they sit in the sun. Children develop their physical skills playing on wheeled toys and scooters and enjoy jumping on the trampoline. Children are taken to nearby parks to practise their climbing and balancing skills. Each week the children take part in energetic and active games within their 'KindaRoo' music and drama session. Children find out that their heart rate gets faster as they start jumping and they particularly enjoy taking part in parachute games by lifting the parachute and allowing it to fall quickly or slowly. They develop hand-eye coordination as they practise throwing and catching the ball. At the end of the session children take part in wind down exercises such as relaxing and listening to soothing music to reduce their heart rates.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a warm, vibrant and safe environment that has been specifically adapted for the needs of pre-school children. The staff make the playroom extremely inviting for children and their parents by displaying posters and artwork linked to the children's recent learning experiences. The secure garden adjacent to the building gives children the opportunity to flow freely and choose whether to play indoors or outside. The garden gate remains locked at all times and a buzzer with an intercom system alerts staff when visitors or parents arrive. All visitors to the premises are closely monitored. Identity documents are scrutinised and they are asked to sign in the visitors' book and wear an appropriate badge.

Children are protected because staff undertake regular risk assessment to ensure that potential hazards are removed or made safe. Staff ensure that children are kept safe on outings by carefully checking the venues and arrangements for transporting children. Children learn about their own personal safety. In the event of a fire children and staff all know how to evacuate the premises safely because they practise the drill on a regular basis. They learn about road safety when they go on walks and know to take care with tools when they dig in the garden and sand pit.

Children have access to a wide range of equipment, furniture and play materials, which are both safe and very clean. Good systems are in place for checking items for damage or cleanliness and replacing them when necessary. Play materials are rotated throughout the day to provide added interest. Toy boxes and drawers are stored at child height so that children can make choices and take decisions about their play. The provider has already identified improvements to make relating to the premises and an action plan to enhance storage in the outdoor area and to increase the number of hand basins available to the children has been agreed.

Children are safeguarded because the staff understand their child protection responsibilities. There is a clear safeguarding policy and there is a designated person who has responsibility for liaison with child protection agencies. The child protection handbook from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is accessible to ensure that staff act in the best interests of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children relish every minute they spend in the setting. They are extremely happy, confident and delightfully enthusiastic about every new experience. Children are very keen to share their experiences with staff who clearly value conversation. Extremely stimulating and hands-on, purposeful activities make learning fun. All children are busy and engrossed in activities throughout each session. Children constantly question as they explore in the garden showing great excitement and delight at their findings. Staff use spontaneous events such as beetle and worm hunting to spark children's curiosity and interest. Children are dynamic in their learning. They carry cameras so that they can take photographs of everything they do. When they play in the sandpit they ask for the cranes, diggers, trucks and small world people so that they can create a mini construction site. Children particularly enjoy playing with sensory materials where there is no desired end result. Staff make a sticky, slimy dough for children to investigate. A super sensory area has been created where children explore different textures, sounds and light sources. Staff effectively integrate all ages and abilities and use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to actively support younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the principles of the Foundation Stage and know how young children learn best. Staff plan and provide topics which are thought provoking and inspire children to learn. All areas of learning are covered within the planning. Focussed activity plans include clear learning intentions, the resources that children use, questions to ask and information about how staff offer additional support or challenge. Good use is made of time and resources to support children's learning. Exceptional use is made of the outdoor area as an extension to the classroom. However, opportunities are not fully maximised during the core everyday activities. Sometimes writing materials are not

provided within role play and mathematical problem solving is not extended with the older and more able children during routines such as snack and lunch time.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points and capabilities. Staff very effectively observe children as they play to chart their progress and achievements in relation to the stepping stones. Assessments are very clear and beautifully presented with an abundance of photographs and positive observations. Evaluation of activities enable staff to expertly inform future planning to prepare for the next steps in learning.

Children develop their confidence as they work and play purposefully, either alone or with others. They concentrate well and persevere with their tasks. Children communicate effectively by using complex sentences and show curiosity by asking visitors questions. They easily recognise their names and mark-make on pieces of paper on the writing table. A raised platform provides an interesting and comfortable area for children to look at books. Children show pleasure in stories. They listen to 'The Gruffalo' on a story tape and then ask for the book to be read again by staff with props to represent the characters. There are plenty of labels in the environment to help convey that words carry meaning. Children learn about letters and sounds through the 'Jolly Phonics' programme and an interactive display linked to the letter of the week.

Children count and recognise numbers confidently. Older children easily count to 10 in readiness for cool down after their physical activity. Mathematical problem solving is incorporated into many activities. For example, children are challenged to grade, sort and discuss shapes such as hearts during an art activity. Capacity and volume is explored when playing with sand or water.

There are excellent opportunities for children to learn about information technology. They independently access the computer and confidently use the mouse to play with educational software. Children use digital cameras and show great excitement when they see their photographs on screen. They listen to story tapes wearing headphones and use toy telephones and tills in their imaginative play.

Children have some wonderful opportunities to explore and investigate the natural world. They grow tomatoes in the garden, observe stick insects, feed fish and collect worms. Children animatedly discuss how to care for the rabbit and guinea pig. Staff bring eggs to incubate and children are fascinated to watch a chick hatching. Many nature walks are made around the village and outings are made to venues such as Jimmy's Farm to observe and explore larger animals and farm machinery.

Children's imagination is developing well. They have fun playing in the home corner, making cups of tea for their friends and visitors. They take the trains on imaginative journeys and adventures, playing alongside others with the same theme. Children paint freely, creating highly original pieces of work and help to make the palm trees for display at the leavers' party. Their pictures are displayed so that they know their efforts are appreciated and valued. Children use their senses as they touch and feel shapes without seeing them and then match them to game cards.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children flourish because they are closely supported by staff who get to know them extremely well. They are very happy, confident and settle well at the nursery. Children are encouraged to bring things such as comforters and drinking cups from home because adults recognise and

understand that this may help young children move between home and a new setting. Each child has a key person who builds personal relationships and liaises with parents. All children and families, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included and extremely well supported. The special educational needs coordinator meets with parents, relevant professionals and support workers before children start to ensure that the provision is tailored to meet children's individual needs. One-to-one adult support is offered and specialist equipment is supplied to meet individual development and welfare requirements. `

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They show awe and great excitement watching the newly hatched chick and are very eager to share this discovery with parents and visitors. Children learn to respect others when they play with toys and look at books that show positive images of diversity. Festivals and traditional events from the cultural calendar are celebrated. Resources reflecting varying abilities are borrowed from the area special educational needs coordinator. Children are very willing to assist each other as well as helping staff with simple tasks such as collecting up cushions or pouring drinks for their friends.

Children behave well and play harmoniously and cooperatively together. Staff have developed effective strategies in the behaviour management and use a 'high five' sign to prompt children to stop and listen. Effective use of reward schemes such as stickers and stamps for sitting and listening as part of a group help to raise children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children benefit from the close links with the local school and village community. Staff liaise with teachers and children visit their classrooms to assist their smooth transition into the reception year. Children visit the nearby church and take regular walks around the village. They show great interest when they observe a wedding celebration.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Written information is displayed on notice boards and newsletters are regularly distributed. An introductory welcome pack explains the educational provision and the care provided. Parents meet with key persons each term to discuss children's achievements, progress and targets. They become involved in their children's learning when they take a teddy bear on holiday and take photographs and record their adventures. Parents are actively involved with the staff in fundraising for a new all weather play surface for the garden. There is a complaints policy and a system in place for recording any compliments or complaints made by parents. Most parents speak positively about the nursery and appreciate the bright learning environment and the welcoming staff. Although verbal feedback is given to parents at the end of the session, some parents feel that they are not offered sufficient information about the activities each day.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and learning is closely supported by the effective staffing levels. They are cared for by a skilled, dedicated and well-qualified staff team. Robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children. Staff morale is high with a strong team spirit. All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and provide consistency and continuity in the care they offer. Indoor and outdoor space is organised to provide a child friendly environment with plenty of play experiences. There are plans to extend the care provided for children and families in the community. The provider has requested a variation to her registration to allow children aged from five to eight years to attend a holiday club and this has been agreed.

All the essential regulatory documentation that supports the smooth running of the pre-school is in place. The office manager ensures that records are systematically organised and easily accessible for inspection. A high regard is given to confidentiality as paperwork containing information about the children is securely stored. The policies and procedures promote children's welfare and safety and the operational plan effectively explains how the setting runs. However, the registration system is not always consistently completed as staff do not routinely check that parents have signed their children in each day.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. A strong commitment is shown for improving outcomes for children. The owner works closely with the staff team to implement action plans to move the nursery forward and improve the quality of care and education. Focussed activities are routinely evaluated. Regular staff meetings ensure that new ideas are developed and children can experience many interesting activities each day. All staff take an active role in planning and delivering the curriculum. Staff appraisals are used to identify any training needs and staff are keen to work towards higher qualifications.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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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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 that the registration system is consistently completed
- keep a record of the food provided to children and make the menu available to parents.

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 more information for parents about the daily activities so that they can become involved in their children's learning in meaningful ways
- review how the everyday activities and routine maximise learning and provide challenge so that the older and more able children learn as much as they can, particularly when calculating and practising their emergent writing.

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