



Mini Cowpers

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY292484
Inspection date	11 October 2005
Inspector	Lindsay Hare

Setting Address	Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School, Birch Green, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 2LR
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Registered person	Hertingfordbury Cowper Preschool Committee
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Mini Cowpers pre-school opened in 2004 and operates from a single storey building in the grounds of Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School. It is situated in a village on the outskirts of Hertford. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 during school term time. There is a lunch club which operates 3 days a week from 11:45 until 13:00 and is also attended by children from the nursery class in the school. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 6 children

receive funding for nursery education. Children can attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs three members of staff, of which two including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well organised routines and activities. Staff's explanation helps children understand that washing hands after visiting the toilet and before eating reduces the risk of passing on germs. Children are protected from the spread of infection because staff follow good hygiene routines and are well informed about children's health care matters. All the necessary documentation regarding written consents, policies and procedures are in place. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate. This means they can give appropriate care if there is an accident.

Children benefit from a healthy diet and receive plenty of drinks. They enjoy a broad range of nutritious snacks including bread and fruit encouraging them to develop healthy eating practices. Staff carefully monitor the food provided to ensure that they offer variety as well as catering for all tastes and dietary needs. There are effective storage facilities for the lunches, provided by parents, to prevent spoiling.

Children enjoy regular physical activities that keep them in good health. Large play equipment, such as the parachute in the outdoor area gives children the opportunity to practise and develop control of their bodies. Children use a range of small tools when playing with the play dough. They use pens and pencils effectively and enjoy the sensation of sand running through their fingers. This contributes to their fine motor skills and hand and eye co-ordination. Children can be active or rest according to their needs. The daily routine for each session and organisation of the room offers space and appropriate areas for quiet activities, such as the book area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from playing in a spacious well-organised environment. This allows them to move around and play safely. Staff deployment is good and guarantees children are well supervised and safe at all times. There are effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. Staff supervise children closely when playing outdoors, which means that they are able to play safely and enjoy the fresh air. Children practise the emergency evacuation procedures termly. This helps the children who regularly attend become familiar with the routine in the event of a fire. However, the procedure for emergency evacuation of the building is not displayed and a record is not kept of fire drills carried out. This means that some

children and any visitors may not be aware of the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency.

Children use a varied range of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate resources which are cleaned and checked frequently to ensure that there are no broken parts that could harm a child. Good routines and gentle reminders help children learn about safety within the setting. For example, staff always stand by the door as children leave, reminding them to hold hands and mind the step. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through topic work and activities. For example, children made their own zebra crossing and then role-played crossing the road safely.

Children are well protected from the risk of harm because they are neither left alone with persons who have not been vetted or released to adults unless the nursery has parental consent. Staff are aware of the child protection policy and understand the procedures to follow if they have concerns. This supports children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in a supportive and caring environment where positive relationships between children and staff are good. They enjoy their time at the pre-school and take part in a broad range of interesting and stimulating activities.

All children acquire new knowledge and skills and respond to challenge because staff show an interest in what they do, talk and listen to them and ask questions to make them think. For example, some children are able to recognise letters or their name when the printed cards are shared at registration time. Children's hand and eye coordination and fine motor skills are developed, as they use a range of different mediums and tools for craft and mark making. Children develop simple counting skills as they participate during songs, action rhymes and daily routines, such as using the number line. They enjoy singing favourite songs and benefit from the weekly music session. Children become involved in their play, particularly role play as they make tea for staff and do the ironing. Staff understand and meet children's needs well because they have a good understanding of children's different stages of development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase children's awareness of diversity. All children receive a warm welcome and take part in the full range of activities.

Children work harmoniously together as they learn important social skills such as sharing and listening to each other. Staff manage children's behaviour effectively through distraction and simple explanations that are appropriate to the age and

understanding of the child. Children develop respect for each other as staff encourage children to understand that their behaviour may have an impact on others. They benefit from appropriate support from staff who know the children and their care routines well.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are welcomed into the pre-school and provide appropriate and relevant information about their children to the staff. This helps to ensure children receive individual care and attention. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage, which outlines what and how the children will learn. This ensures parents understand that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from qualified and experienced staff who are very caring. The staff are committed to attending further childcare training and development courses. This will help them to reflect, monitor and improve the quality of care and education they offer to all children. There are suitable contingency plans to cover for absences to ensure children always have appropriate supervision. However, there is no formal recruitment procedure in place, which may result in unsuitable staff being employed in the future.

Staff deployment is effective and ensures children are well supervised at all times. Children receive good support from staff who know them well. Children enjoy whole group times, such as snack and story times, when they join in an experience together. Throughout the session they benefit from the free choice and organisation of resources which enable them to sometimes choose their play independently.

There are appropriate procedures in place for uncollected children and lost children and staff are currently in the process of updating all their policies and procedures. This promotes children's welfare. A system is being devised for the continual assessment and development of staff. All documentation required for the safe and effective management of the nursery is in place, although some lack detail, such as the attendance register and therefore may not always contribute to the welfare of the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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

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.

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 fire procedure is displayed at all times and a log kept of drills carried out
- ensure that there are robust recruitment and induction procedures in place which are implemented
- ensure that all records include the necessary detail. This refers to the record of children's and staff's attendance and the consent for seeking emergency medical treatment.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk