

# Midcounties Co-operative

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY282250
<b>Inspection date</b>	31/07/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Janet Witts
<b>Setting address</b>	70 Westward Road, Cainscross, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01453 758103
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## Description of the setting

Imagine Co-operative Childcare opened in 2004 and is managed by the Midcounties Cooperative Limited. It operates from a purpose-built, single-storey building next to the Co-op Store in the Cashes Green area of the town of Stroud. The nursery has four play rooms, a kitchen, milk kitchen, communal play area and associated facilities. There is an enclosed outdoor area with patio and impact-absorbent surfaces for outdoor activities. A separate outdoor area is available for children aged under two years. The premise has disabled access.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 85 children from birth to eight years may attend the nursery at any one time. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcome, as are children for whom English is an additional language. There are currently 130 children on roll, of these 30 children receive funding for nursery education. These children are all in the early years age group. The nursery is open each week day between 07.30 and 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery employs a team of 22 staff, most of whom hold recognised early years qualifications. These are at level two and three. The manager and another member of staff have completed level four qualifications relevant to their roles. The setting receives local authority teacher support.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. There has been significant improvement in all aspects of the provision since the last inspection and there is commitment to ongoing improvement. Children enjoy their time at the setting and overall make progress in their learning and development. Children's care and well-being is promoted well. A strong partnership with parents is established and this contributes significantly to the well-being of the children. Links have been established with schools that children will transfer to but partnerships with other settings children attend in addition to this nursery have not been established.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- use information gathered through various observation techniques effectively to ensure that each child is helped to progress in their learning and development. Ensure that more able children are suitably challenged
- ensure that activities planned, or those that respond to spontaneous events, successfully cover all aspects of each area of learning, with particular attention to problem solving reasoning and numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world
- develop effective communication with other settings that children attend.

Ensure that practitioners from each setting regularly share the children's development and learning records and any other relevant information

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

The new nursery manager has made a positive impact upon the nursery provision. Together with support from her line-managers she has worked to motivate and enthuse staff to embrace training opportunities and to look at new ways of working. The manager monitors the work of her staff and offers support that promotes effective practice. The organisation has taken action to bring about change following the concerns raised at last inspection and heeded advice given by local development officers and early years consultants. The setting is implementing a system of self-evaluation, bringing in managers from other Imagine settings to assess the provision and help identify areas for further improvement. Staff have some involvement in this process but as yet parents and children do not have an input.

The leader and staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They work well together, helping to create a friendly atmosphere and child orientated play spaces for babies and children of all ages. The key carer system serves to support children in their care and learning and to promote two-way communication with parents. Parents have been kept fully briefed about planned changes and parents' evenings have been well attended. There is readily available information set out for parents in the entrance hall and notice boards outside each of the play rooms display details of children's key carers and planning for the EYFS. Information about children's progress is recorded and shared with parents. A system using 'wow' vouchers for parents to record children's achievements that take place at home has been initiated but such contributions to children's progress records are not actively encouraged.

The play spaces are attractive and set out so that children can move around safely and access many of the resources for themselves. Outdoor play areas are available. Adaptations have been made to improve these and further improvements to create more natural environments are planned. Pre-school children can choose to play outdoors if they wish but access for younger children is more restricted. Some outings are undertaken but these tend to be only when the number of children in groups is low.

Staff use observation to identify activities children enjoy and to assess developmental progress. They note evidence of children's achievements during the course of their play. Staff consider children's interests when planning activities but do not always actively respond to these when they become evident during play. Also, more able children are not always challenged in their learning and this sometimes results in displays of unacceptable behaviour. Overall, in each age group children are offered a suitable range of activities but these do not effectively cover all aspects of each area of learning within the EYFS.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are suitable and many of the staff hold

relevant childcare qualifications or are working towards qualifications. The premises are secure, staff supervise children well and they help them to learn to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments are in place, as are suitable policies and procedures to safeguard children's welfare. Suitable hygiene procedures are implemented. A varied menu of snacks and meals that children enjoy is offered. These are freshly prepared by the nursery cook and promote healthy eating.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children are well cared for. They come into nursery enthusiastically, are settled and relaxed in the company of staff and their peers. Staff are aware of children's likes and dislikes and mostly recognise each child's stage of development. The staff show warmth and affection towards the children in their care and show interest in what children have to say and are responsive to their needs. Development in communication language and literacy is promoted successfully. Staff are responsive to babies' babbles and model the use of language well. In older age groups, children are encouraged to talk about what they are doing and to make their needs known. Individual staff in the two to three year age group have recently completed Makaton sign language training to aid children who find verbal communication more difficult. Signing is not used with all children as an alternative means of communication or to help them to communicate with children who rely on signing. Most three and four-year-olds are very confident speakers. They use language to ask questions, to communicate ideas and to recall their experiences. Mark making opportunities are provided and the re-designed book areas with child-size seating and cushions encourage children to look at books. They like to look at them on their own, with friends or snuggled up with a member of staff.

Creative activities are planned in each age group and these encourage children to explore different textures and creative techniques. Children's art work is displayed and children take pride in their achievements. Achievements are shared with parents, verbally or recorded in children's individual progress files. Also in recognition of what children achieve in nursery a graduation ceremony is held for children transferring to school. Each child wears a gown and mortar board for the presentation and parents are invited to share in the celebration. Role play is popular particularly with the children aged over two years. In the pre-school room the range of dressing up clothes does not support role play when more than one child wishes to take on a similar role. For example, two children decide to be police officers but only one police hat can be found.

The baby environment supports babies in their quest to become mobile. They stretch and roll on the floor, push themselves up onto their hands and knees and crawl around with confidence. They use furniture and the support of adults to pull themselves up to stand and to practise walking, beaming with confidence, reassured that their carers are on hand to help them as needed. Children are physically active. Toddlers have their own indoor climbing structure which is frequently used. They and the older children like to run freely outdoors. The younger children have suitable equipment in their own outdoor area. Children over the age of two use a larger area where they use wheeled toys, learning to propel them at speed and manoeuvre them skilfully to avoid obstacles. There is a lack of

physical challenge in the available equipment. For example, climbing equipment is low level and some children are too big for the rockers provided. Children practise their ball skills and use small equipment to develop their coordination. They fill containers with sand and water and transfer the contents successfully. The children experiment with, and watch the movement of, water. They watch as they pour it down wall mounted guttering, fascinated as it flows down one piece and falls onto another and then gushes out over the ground. Children jump in the puddles created and are keen to splash any onlookers.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world and development of skills in problem-solving reasoning and numeracy are weaker than in other areas of learning. They have few opportunities to learn about the local and wider community and to explore natural environments. They rarely leave the nursery and visitors to help children to learn about community roles are not planned. Alternative means of aiding this part of children's development have not been considered. Children can see some numerals and they may count spontaneously for themselves. Staff set out some mathematical activities such as, resources to compare and sort according to size and colour. However, staff are not proactive in their use of mathematical language and use of routine or spontaneous activities to get children to calculate, problem solve and understand mathematical concepts.

Children learn to keep themselves safe. Staff remind children of possible consequences of risk taking and redirect younger children if their actions are likely to endanger themselves or others. Children are encouraged to be independent and routine activities such as, hand-washing and cleaning teeth after meals, help children to learn about personal hygiene and keeping healthy.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	3
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met