



Cygnets Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY300796
Inspection date	31 January 2006
Inspector	Sue Taylor
Setting Address	Egerton Road, Bexhill-On-Sea, East Sussex, TN39 3HY
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Registered person	East Sussex County Council
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?

Cygnets Childcare Centre is a neighbourhood nursery, opened in 2005 and is situated on the park level of the Family Learning Centre in Bexhill. It operates from purpose built premises in Egerton Park. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 75 children aged from birth to under 5 years on roll. Of these 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children mostly come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 11 staff. Of these, 10 staff members, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications; 3 staff members are working towards a higher level qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a clean and warm environment with good natural light. They learn the importance of good personal hygiene through the effective daily routines carried out by the staff as nappies are changed or tables prepared for meals. Children understand the importance of hand washing, with the use of paper towels and liquid soap helping to prevent cross infection. The older children know to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. They do this with little prompting from staff. Documentation sharing with parents regarding the care of sick children helps prevent the spread of infections.

Children have access to drinking water throughout the day. The older children have a jug and cups available for them to use as they wish. This helps them control their own thirst needs and prevent dehydration, particularly after physical play. The staff ensure younger children have regular drinks. All children benefit from the very healthy and nutritious snacks of fruit and raw vegetables. The nursery provides useful information to parents about healthy packed lunches. Following home feeding routines, in agreement with parents, helps babies feel settled and content.

There are very good opportunities for energetic physical play in the fresh air. All children use the outdoor play area regularly and develop good skills. Babies and toddlers use the area daily, with babies wheeled about in buggies if it is not suitable weather for them to crawl or roll around. Older children use equipment such as ride-on toys with confidence. They develop physical skills such as running, jumping and ball control. They show good coordination and balance as they clamber on the fixed equipment or run around chasing bubbles or playing with scarves and ribbons.

Children's spatial awareness develops as they play with large boxes or negotiate space when playing with others in the role play areas. Indoors, the older children easily access equipment such as pencils and scissors. Resources and activities help support their hand eye coordination. This in turn helps develop their pencil control and pre-writing skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children benefit from a very secure environment, with staff who supervise them well. Assessing potential hazards ensures risks are minimised. The use of CCTV, safety gates, easy view door panels and a safe playing surface outside contribute positively to the overall safety of the premises. The nursery is very well organised with children cared for in age appropriate rooms. In the baby room, the use of domestic style and low-level furnishings help babies as they pull themselves up or start to balance and walk. All children can explore their rooms safely and this helps develop independence. Staff monitor sleeping children to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

All children use good quality resources and play materials, appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children make their own choices for play from the varied activities laid out by staff or from small, clear boxes stored at low level. Good explanations and support from staff promotes children's developing knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. The older children's understanding of safety enables them to have free access to items such as scissors alongside pencils and crayons.

The nursery has clear and detailed procedures in place to help safeguard children's welfare. The effective recording of accidents and medication administration ensures parents are well informed and that children are appropriately cared for. The staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and know how to act if they have a concern about a child in their care, helping to keep children safe from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children arrive happy and settle very quickly. They enjoy their time at the nursery and are very interested in the available activities and toys. They have opportunities to take part in quiet and active games, both indoors and outside. Babies and toddlers enjoy lots of positive interaction with key staff, giving them confidence to try new challenges. Staff work well with babies and toddlers to support their early development. The nursery uses the Birth to three matters framework effectively to plan daily activities and routines. The use of treasure baskets, that contain an interesting range of objects, motivates children to explore and examine the items with staff. The children's development records relate clearly to this framework.

Babies and children spend time concentrating well with self chosen play and are willing to take part in adult led activities. Easily accessible toys and resources allow children to make good choices about their play. Throughout the nursery, the staff note and follow children's own interests. These are, at times incorporated in the plans, for example, one such activity involved children noting how many birds they could see in the park. This helped develop their mark making and counting skills. Children learn to enjoy books from an early age and share these with friends or staff, in addition to the older children listening well at group story time.

Warm and caring relationships that staff develop with children gives them confidence. This helps motivate children to want to learn and achieve. The key staff know the children well and use this knowledge in supporting individual children. However, detail about an individual's next steps are not always clearly recorded to enable all

staff to fully support or challenge children. Activities such as dressing up, re-enacting stories and role-play help support children's creative development. Babies and toddlers explore a range of different textures such as shiny paper or baked beans. The daily routine ensures all children are involved in activities that help develop their physical, social and emotional capabilities. The staff work well with the children's transition from using Birth to three matters to the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A well balanced curriculum with easily accessed resources, ensures children have a wide range of experiences that supports their learning in all areas. The planning of the focus activities is clear about the links between the proposed learning objectives and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff interact effectively with the children, supporting their learning. They manage children's behaviour efficiently and sensitively, enabling children to concentrate on their learning and play without disruption.

Staff ask good open questions and this positively challenges children's thinking skills. The observation and assessment system in place maintains a record of children's achievements and shows their progress towards the early learning goals. Good observations help identify each child's individual stage of learning so that key staff can plan for their next steps. However, this detail is not always easily available to all staff.

Children respond very well to adults and form caring relationships with them. They develop very good independence, for example by pouring drinks, accessing the toilet as they need and being able to make free choices about their play. Staff promote children's confidence and self-esteem as they are valued as individuals. All children communicate easily and effectively with staff and others. Children enjoy sharing books, both factual and fiction. Books and other forms of print are used effectively to support topics and activities. Children have easy access to equipment and tools that encourage pre writing skills and are encouraged to use these in other situations, such as role-play.

Children enjoy number of activities and sometimes count independently during play. Children's understanding of simple addition and subtraction is well promoted throughout the day. The majority of children have a good awareness of shapes and can identify these around the room. Whilst playing with water or cooking they explore measuring and weight. They get to investigate textures such as cornflour, noting the changes as they add water. They gain a sense of time and interest in the natural world as they plant seeds and observe nature around them. Children have opportunities to use the computer and enjoy using the remote control car.

Varied activities, both indoors and outside promote the children's physical abilities and creative development. They learn about the effects of physical activity on their bodies and the advantages of healthy eating. Children have great fun as they use the role play areas and create imaginary situations amongst themselves. Children sing enthusiastically and enjoy exploring sound with musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children develop good self-esteem and confidence, well supported by positive relationships with staff. The staff acknowledge and value children's individual needs and differences, for example, following babies' home routines for feeding and sleep. Children have access to a wide range of resources and activities that positively reflect the local community and helps children's growing awareness of the wider world. Children gain a good sense of belonging as they use their own coat pegs, know the daily routines and are cared for by consistent staff. The staff have recently started using Makaton signing as a means of improving communication.

Behaviour management is very good. The staff use descriptive praise that helps children understand what they did well. Children learn to treat others with respect as the staff act as good role models themselves. Children willingly help tidy up, learning responsibility. They listen to staff and respond very positively. The staff know the children well and use appropriate approaches with individual children. As a result, children are happy and relaxed. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The nursery staff build positive relationships with parents who receive good information about the nursery. Obtaining useful detail from parents helps ensure the nursery meets the children's individual needs. The parents and carers of babies and young children receive a written daily sheet that keeps them informed of their child's day. These and progress reports include some detail of individual achievements and experiences, showing how they link to the Birth to three matters framework.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They have good information about the Foundation Stage that shows how children learn through play. They receive activity ideas of how they can support their children's learning at home. As part of the assessment system, parents can view the Stepping Forward profiles. As a result, they are well informed about the progress their child is making towards the early learning goals. Progress reports are informative and parents are encouraged to contribute to the assessment profiles.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are cared for in a very safe and well organised environment. A rigorous and comprehensive recruitment process with ongoing staff support is in place to help ensure the suitability of staff. Staff are very aware of their roles and responsibilities, working effectively as a team to give children a good range of experiences. The children benefit from the good adult to child ratios with staff, who interact enthusiastically with them.

The key worker system is effective and the staff get to know the children extremely well. The staff are skilled at interacting with the children, responding and listening to

their ideas. They give children excellent support and encouragement, as a result they are secure, happy and content. The children are very well cared for through the staff implementing the clear and detailed policies and procedures. The registration system is thorough and detailed, though the method of recording where staff work within the nursery is not always clear to everyone.

Leadership and management are good. The staff team are well supported and work effectively together to provide a stimulating, well balanced curriculum. Staff are eager to attend training courses and share information with colleagues. A comprehensive supervision and appraisal system helps identify individual training needs. The nursery has a very good understanding and awareness of its strengths and plans are devised to show how the nursery intends to develop. The planning and assessment system is closely monitored and evaluated to help ensure children continue to make good progress. The whole staff team have a strong commitment to the nursery and are keen to develop their practices. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. 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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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):

- improve the registration system to clearly show where staff are working.

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 ways to show how planned activities can be used to extend or support individual children's learning needs (also applies to care).

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