



Swiss Cottage Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY302576
Inspection date	10 January 2006
Inspector	Liz Corr
Setting Address	Swiss Cottage Community Centre, 19 Winchester Road, London, NW3 3NR
Telephone number	020 7916 7090
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Registered person	Pre School Learning Alliance
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Swiss Cottage Preschool is managed by the Preschool Learning Alliance (PLSA). A voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school, oversee the daily running of the group. It operates from a large play room in the Swiss Cottage Community Centre, in the London Borough of Camden. The premises include a large playroom, kitchen, office and toilet facilities. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time.

It operates each week day from 10.00 to 12.30 during term time. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area and a large indoor hall for physical play.

There are currently 14 children aged from 3 to 5 years on roll. All children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community. The preschool supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted by the adequate procedures in place. Staff follow good hygiene procedures before snack and after messy activities and the kitchen area is hygienic for the preparation of snacks. Children are learning the importance of personal hygiene as they are reminded to wash their hands before eating and after messy activities. They are able to wash their hands independently. However, individual towels are not available which means infection could be spread.

There are acceptable systems in place for recording children's personal medical details but parents' signatures in accident reports are not always obtained which compromises children's health. One member of staff has a first aid qualification but this is due for renewal.

There are opportunities for children to enjoy fresh air as they play in the garden. The large hall is used to help children develop good progress in their physical development as they climb, run, slide, roll and balance. They move confidently, negotiating space as they steer wheeled toys including bikes both inside and out. Children enjoy a relaxed snack session which includes a satisfactory range of healthy food including fresh fruit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are made to feel welcome in this child friendly environment and are generally safe and secure. For example, they are supervised well and have access to an organised play space where they can move around freely. After completing a group activity they can choose from a selection of resources including the book area, home corner, mark making and small world equipment.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they access the large hall for physical play. Staff remind children to hold onto the safety rail as they walk safely together.

Children's safety is not fully protected as they are able to access the kitchen area where cleaning materials are stored. Emergency evacuations are practiced regularly with the community centre but the preschool staff do not keep their own log. An emergency evacuation procedure has not been displayed in the preschool for

everyone to see. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues including how to report concerns where allegations are made against staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from good interaction and communication with staff which encourages their language and confidence. Children settle well and are familiar with the routine. Staff make the best use of premises by rotating resources daily. However, as most of the equipment is stored in a separate area, children have fewer opportunities for self-selection of play equipment. Children relate well to staff and each other. They enjoy supervised activities and group times including reading stories and singing songs together which they know well. They are increasing their independence as they are helped to pour their own drinks, take turns to share snack and independently use the toilet and washing facilities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Appropriate teaching methods are used and children enjoy a good range of activities in an organised environment. Their language is encouraged by staff as they talk to the children about what they and the children are doing.

The staff take opportunities to talk mathematically as children take part in every day activities. For example, staff encourage children to count using their fingers from one to ten during stories. They count objects in the home corner as part of their play and toast is cut into square or triangle shapes which they choose. At snack time staff count the cups with the children and ask how many they will need. Staff introduce games that teach children about opposites such as light and dark.

Children mark make using a range of materials and are encouraged to write their names on their finished work. They are linking sounds to letters as they repeat their names. Staff make good use of props to support stories. For example, when children became distracted in the story about Elmer the Elephant, they were encouraged to hold the elephant props. They are learning about the components of books as staff name the author, the front cover and the spine of the book. Large books are used to read to groups of children ensuring that all children can see clearly.

Children are developing a good knowledge of colour, texture and shape. While making dough staff demonstrate how to make the mixture thicker using more water. They learn about the texture and how to make it less sticky using more flour. They enjoy opportunities to sing a range of songs from memory at circle time and are encouraged to choose songs they like.

Children are developing good physical skills as they participate in regular use of a range of apparatus both inside and out. The setting makes good use of the large indoor area where children can engage in robust physical activities. However, the outdoor area is not used to include all six areas of learning.

Planning and evaluation systems are in place but these are not yet fully developed. Children's observations are not clearly linked to the stepping stones. Information gained from the observations is not used to identify and plan for the next stage of children's development. As a result activities are not tailored to children's individual needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy because their individual needs are met. Staff know the children well but little information is formally recorded about each individual child. Most children are valued and included but staff do not have key words for all children with English as an additional language, which means they are not fully supported. There are adequate systems in place to identify and meet children's special needs.

Children benefit from the calm and consistent approach used by staff. For example, when children become distracted at story time, staff use story props and encouragement to keep their interest. They behave well and understand the boundaries. Praise and encouragement is used throughout the session and staff photograph children's achievements which increases their self-esteem and confidence. This positive approach fosters the children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents feel confident to discuss their child's progress at any time. A daily parent rota helps promote children's self-esteem as this becomes the child's "special day" and children are given extra responsibility such as ringing the bell for snack and sharing the fruit. This also increases parental involvement in their learning as they see first-hand what their child is doing. Parents take part in outings such as the science museum, local city farm and library. However, parents of children receiving nursery education do not receive clear details of the early learning goals and how children will move on to the next stage. Clear records are not kept detailing what the parents know about their child and what they can do when they begin preschool.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a well planned physical environment but documentation to support the smooth running of the preschool is not well organised. Adequate policies and procedures are available but they have not been adapted to meet the specific needs of the preschool. Basic records are kept to record children's personal details but some lack the necessary detail. For example, parents have not given permission for staff to use sun protection or take photographs. Daily records of staff and visitors are not kept. Therefore children's health and welfare is not fully promoted.

The leadership and Management of the setting is satisfactory.

The Play Leader has a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Early Learning Goals and is being supported by the local Early Years Advisory Teacher to implement areas for improvement. There are adequate communication systems in place. For example, staff have daily discussions regarding the weekly plans. A recent training day with the Advisory Teacher has identified the need for improving records of children's progress and how to plan for the next stage of their development. However, staff have limited opportunities for non-contact time to plan and maintain developmental records. The Preschool Learning Alliance management team have identified that staff need more support and have plans to employ another member of staff. Presently, staff are not identifying the children's next stage of development and this impacts on the progress children make.

The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting has made some progress in addressing the recommendations made at the last inspection however, some areas have not been fully addressed.

An information sheet is available for parents about the setting. However, there is limited information regarding the curriculum and how children are progressing in their development. There are no systems in place to meet with parents to discuss children's individual progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Planning has been improved to reflect the six areas of learning but children's records have not been improved to identify their next stage of learning. However, staff are now working with the local Early Years Advisory teacher to improve systems for record keeping and identifying the next steps in learning

Policies and procedures have been updated but are not specific to the setting and could not be located on the first day of the inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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

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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 policies and procedures by making them specific to the preschool. Ensure a daily record is kept of staff and visitors and relevant permissions are given by parents.
- ensure that the emergency evacuation plan is displayed clearly at all times and record emergency evacuation procedures
- improve safety by ensuring that toxic materials are out of children's reach
- make sure children have access to individual towels to dry their hands

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 planning, evaluation and recording of children's development to ensure children's next stage of learning is identified and how they will be supported in this, ensure these are shared with parents
- ensure that children with English as an additional language are fully supported

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