



Cold Norton Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	204049
Inspection date	09 February 2006
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	Cherry Blossom Lane, Cold Norton, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 6JQ
Telephone number	01621 828845 (village Hall am)
E-mail	
Registered person	Cold Norton Pre-School
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 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?

Cold Norton Pre-School is run by a committee. It opened in the current premises in 1985. The pre-school operates from the village hall situated within walking distance of the local primary school in Cold Norton. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00.

There are currently 31 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special needs.

The pre-school employs seven staff, of whom five of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and the Dengie Cluster Group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive because staff follow effective procedures which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. All documentation relating to health or hygiene issues is in place and parents are kept fully informed of any minor accidents or incidents. Children are protected as staff have attended first aid courses and have obtained parental permission to seek any necessary medical advice or treatment. Children effectively learn the importance of good personal hygiene. They always wash their hands before eating or after using the toilet and they carefully dispose of used tissues after wiping their nose.

Children have developed a good awareness of healthy eating. They enjoy trying a wide variety of different snacks and are encouraged to make healthy options such as eating fruit. Staff are well aware of any allergies or dietary requirements so that they meet individual children's needs. Drinking water is available throughout each session to ensure that children do not become dehydrated.

Children enjoy energetic activities that provide opportunities to keep them fit and healthy. Children have daily opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air. Indoor space for physical play is also provided. Children play confidently using the bikes and play circle games with enthusiasm.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, comfortable environment. The risks of accidental injury to children are minimised as a result of the good procedures in place. The staff check the premises each morning and encourage children's awareness of how to keep themselves safe. A representative of the committee undertakes the formal risk assessment of the premises. Children learn about their own personal safety as they practise emergency evacuation procedures. However, insufficient details are recorded in the fire log about the effectiveness of the fire drills. Children's safety could be compromised as there is no written outings policy.

The premises is made bright and welcoming for children. Although staff cannot permanently display artwork or posters, they make good use of equipment and temporary wall coverings so that children feel welcome. Children use safe equipment that is of good quality and well designed. They are able to freely select from the toys and resources on offer and they learn to use tools such as scissors carefully and in safety.

Children are safeguarded as staff are fully aware of their child protection responsibilities. A child protection policy is in place and staff update their knowledge of procedures through training or by reading the current recommended literature. Staff are vigilant about the children's security. Any visitors are carefully monitored and internal doors are alarmed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children have a lot of fun whilst learning in this vibrant setting. All children arrive happy and eager to participate. Those who are new to the pre-school are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive regarding their individual needs. Children are purposely engaged throughout each session. They are animated and enthusiastic as they work and play, either alone or with others. Children behave exceptionally well and are developing a very clear awareness of right and wrong. The staff are sensitive and caring and are interested in what the children do or say. They use conversation and carefully framed questions to develop the children's knowledge and vocabulary. An efficient key worker system operates and staff know the children extremely well. Staff adapt activities for the youngest children attending the setting and are now starting to use the approach in the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have a very secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and work effectively as a team to deliver a purposeful range of activities using innovative teaching methods. Children are captivated by the extensive range of stimulating, relevant activities and have access to a good range of well chosen resources which support their learning. All children are eager to learn and confident to try new experiences. They remain totally absorbed in the activities and show great pride in their achievements. An excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. The short-term planning is excellent and ensures that staff provide challenge and children make rapid progress. However, the long-term planning does not yet ensure that all aspects of each area of learning are routinely covered.

Children show high levels of independence. They know the routine and quickly find their name cards for self registration on arrival. Children can put on and take off their own coats and boots before going outdoors to play and write their names on artwork. They enjoy pouring their own drinks and making choices about their snacks. Children observe the weather each day then record this in their own books. They play imaginatively together in the well-resourced role play area and expressively paint or print pictures.

Children respond enthusiastically to challenge when problem solving. They work out simple number problems with small cubes then show initiative by recreating the problem with building blocks. All children count easily to ten and some much higher. Children are inquisitive and take pleasure when developing their knowledge and understanding of the world, for example, when finding out about Egypt. Their investigative and exploratory skills are well used when playing in sand and water. Children explore 3D shapes when playing with the pyramids and gently push small boats along the River Nile. Innovative methods of mark making are introduced to the children as they practise their Egyptian writing in salt dough.

Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals as staff use highly effective systems to observe, assess and record their achievements and use this information to inform the next steps in learning. Continual and rigorous evaluation and monitoring procedures enables the staff to maintain the high standard of teaching.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel a strong sense of belonging as they play a very productive part in the pre-school. Staff ensure that they are valued and develop a high self-esteem. There is a very effective system in place to support children with special needs and staff ensure that they are included and participate fully in the life of the setting. The appointed Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is enthusiastic about her role and committed to attend further training. There are very strong links with the local community and children are taken on regular visits to the nearby primary school.

Children's behaviour is exceptional. They understand responsible behaviour and play very happily together. Children confidently demonstrate excellent social skills and take turns during games and cooperatively share resources and equipment. They are given plenty of praise and encouragement to raise self-esteem. Staff have developed very positive strategies for behaviour management and as a result children immediately stop and listen when staff need to gain their attention.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about wider society. They view many positive images of diversity so that they respect similarities and differences. Festivals are covered within the planning and topics and projects about countries around the world provides exciting opportunities for children to meet people and learn about travel. Good quality artefacts, equipment and resources ensure that children gain a well developed respect for others and their beliefs, cultures and traditions.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. This contributes significantly to each child's well-being in the pre-school. Fundraising is extremely successful. A wealth of information is displayed for parents and frequent newsletters are sent out. Staff hold regular consultations to ensure that all parents know how their child is progressing and developing. Thorough and highly individual written reports are shared with extensive scrapbooks of artwork and photographs. Family members visit the setting and take an active part in enhancing the children's knowledge of the world around them. Several parents were spoken to during the inspection. They are all

extremely happy with the care and education their children receive in the pre-school.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a caring, stable, well-qualified staff team, who have all been vetted and cleared. The pre-school management is now making sure that future recruitment procedures are robust in accordance with changes to legislation and the National Standards. The children benefit from the staff being motivated and interested in their professional development. They attend regular training and keep up to date with current childcare issues and trends. Space and resources within the pre-school are extremely well organised.

The required documentation for the safe day-to-day management of the pre-school and to promote children's welfare and safety is in place. The operational plan is being developed to create an effective working tool and there are clearly written policies and procedures. However, these have not yet been updated to meet the revised National Standards.

Leadership and management of the pre-school is good. The staff work extremely well as a team and are all actively involved in planning and delivering the curriculum. All staff are aware of their responsibilities and the sessions run particularly smoothly. Regular staff meetings are held, staff appraisals are undertaken and activities are consistently evaluated to ensure that the pre-school is effective in monitoring the provision for nursery education.

Overall the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection improvements have been made to the documentation to ensure the children's welfare and safety. The daily register now details the session times so that the arrival and departure times of children are recorded and an effective operational plan has been devised.

Good progress has been made within the programme for nursery education. The more able children attending the pre-school are now offered a little more breadth in order to challenge their learning within communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The short-term planning has continually been reviewed and updated to ensure that activities are adapted for the individual needs of three and four-year-old children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints 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.

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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):

- expand the details recorded about fire drills in the fire log
- review and update written policies and procedures to meet the revised National Standards.

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 the long-term planning to maximise children's learning and ensure that all aspects of each area of learning are routinely covered.

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