



Cottam Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY309408
Inspection date	24 January 2006
Inspector	Lisa Patterson

Setting Address	Sandy Lane, Cottam, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 0LE
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Registered person	Sarah Louise Bolton
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

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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?

Cottam Nursery School was registered under individual ownership in summer 2005. It is situated in the old village of Cottam, near Preston. It occupies a premises that was once the village school. The accommodation comprises a school room, a barn, a main playroom and a conservatory. There is an enclosed outdoor play-area with both concreted area and a millennium garden.

Opening hours are from 08.30 until 15.30 from Monday to Friday during school

term-times only. Current registration is for 52 children aged 2 to 5 years old and the setting has 64 children on-roll, 40 of whom are in receipt of government funding. Both full and sessional places are available. The nursery supports children with Special Educational Needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

There are 14 members of staff, all of whom are qualified including one qualified teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy in the main because staff follow current health and hygiene procedures and staff have read the policies. All documentation is in order and very good records are made of accidents, which are appropriately shared with parents. Children enjoy regular physical exercise and fresh air. They play in the outside area, weather permitting, three times during the day and have access to a good selection of pedal toys, push along toys, balls and heuristic play opportunities. This promotes their physical and mental wellbeing and stimulates the development of both small and larger muscle groups. Children learn to stay healthy through topics, such as 'Healthy Eating' through which they identified those food groups which were healthy. Discussions also take place when dancing and using the outdoor area about the effects of physical exercise and how it is needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Children rest and sleep according to their needs. The risk to children of cross-infection is not effectively prevented during snack-times because children do not wash their hands and tables are not washed prior to them handling food. Hygiene procedures are effective when serving lunches, however, and children wash their hands and tables are cleaned with antibacterial spray.

Children are nourished because they eat snacks which are nutritious, including cheese, cheese-biscuits, toast and fruit. Regular drinks of water or milk are provided and this provides children with a healthy choice. Children eat together around small tables and mealtimes are a social occasion during which they are encouraged to talk and share experiences with their friends. Staff have a good understanding of children with specific needs and ratios during lunch time ensure that all children receive appropriate attention and have their needs met. While the nursery does not provide meals, parents have been advised of healthy options to include in their child's lunch box, and those foods to avoid due to risks, such as choking and allergies; for example, grapes, olives and nuts. This ensures that children have their health and dietary needs met in accordance with the wishes of their parents, receive a balanced diet and helps them to learn about staying healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and secure environment. The rooms are

bright and airy, and examples of children's work and commercial posters adorn the walls and ceilings. These are used during sessions to consolidate their learning. This celebrates their achievements and encourages them to succeed. Space is well used to allow all children to have independent access to a wide range of activities which promote learning in all areas. There is a dedicated classroom for more structured activities and an indoor area which can be used for dance and larger physical play. Children have access to a good selection of age-appropriate and suitable toys, play materials and equipment which are well maintained and regularly checked for damage. This ensures that children are safe and have sufficient choice to maintain interest.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through constant reminders from staff about the rules in the setting. For example, staff reminding children not to run or they will fall or push someone over. Children's safety is maintained both on and off the premises by appropriate ratios and through staff following and practicing safety procedures, such as the emergency escape and outings procedures.

Children are protected in the main because most staff have an appropriate level of understanding about the procedure to follow in the event of a suspicion of abuse. The manager confirmed that staff who have been absent will revisit the Child Protection policy to ensure that they are fully aware of any changes which may have occurred. This ensures the safety of children in the setting. Three staff members have carried out Child Protection training and have cascaded this information to the rest of the team which ensures their understanding is in line with current thinking.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem through excellent interactions from staff. Activities are rich and stimulating and give children the opportunity to explore their environment and investigate their surroundings. Activities are well planned and resourced to challenge their understanding while giving them the opportunity to succeed at their own level. Children are extremely interested in what they are doing. They are given space and time to develop their own ideas and interests and excellent use is made of the physical environment to create a stimulating setting for play, fun and learning. Staff are very receptive to the needs of children, stepping back where necessary and interacting occasionally to encourage or extend their learning. Imaginative use is made of the outdoor area to develop skills in all areas. A very wide selection of planned and free-play activities are on offer which stimulate a love of learning and an interest to acquire new knowledge and skills. The Birth to three matters framework and Foundation Stage guidance are effectively used to provide children with a broad and balanced curriculum.

Relationships between staff and children are extremely good. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect in which everyone is able to succeed. Children use manners, are courteous and help out their friends when they are struggling, for example when fastening coats to go outside. They are learning the difference between right and wrong through clear boundaries and excellent role modelling from

staff. All are respected for their individuality and staff are extremely knowledgeable about the needs of individual children, including their likes and dislikes, ability levels and their preferred methods of learning. This ensures that they can progress at their own rate.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage guidance and how this can be used to provide a balanced curriculum and help children to make progress. All staff have received training which ensures that their knowledge is appropriate should they be responsible for the 3 and 4 year olds. An extremely stimulating learning environment has been creating using natural and man made items for displays and resources, and each of the playrooms are attractively displayed and organised to stimulate learning and independence. Children are absorbed in activities for extended periods and staff maintain their interest through effective questioning and relating activities to their own experiences. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and what they can achieve. Methods employed motivate the children, maintain their interest and help them to succeed to their own level. They make very good use of questioning as they challenge children to make comparisons during activities. Time and resources are very well managed to enable the children to make as much progress as they can. There are times for active play, quiet times, whole group and individual times, and directed activities are well paced to maintain motivation and interest.

Staff build on what the children already know. The nursery have developed a baseline assessment which gives an overview of the child's achievements so far and what needs to be done to help them to make progress. Information from parents is also well used in planning for the next stages of development, from the child starting in the preschool, until he or she leaves. This ensures that the nursery have an holistic knowledge of the child and enables them to plan activities which are appropriate to their stage of development and their preferred method of learning. Regular assessments and observations are made of the children which are used to inform future planning. All staff are very knowledgeable about the developmental needs of individual children and plans link to identified needs.

Children clearly enjoy their time at the setting. They part from their parent or carer with confidence and immediately choose an activity. They are interested in what they do and resources and activities are appropriately displayed to allow ease of access and to develop independence. They are stimulated through exciting, well planned activities which are well introduced and put into context. They behave extremely well and respond appropriately to the requests of staff and their peers. They are courteous at all times and use manners. They are beginning to value the feelings of others and will help when needed, and are able to share and take turns, for example, when accessing toys outside and playing with younger children. Children are beginning to respect their own culture and those of others through topics, for example, around the world during which they experienced what people in different countries wear, eat and the flag they have. There is a wide range of resources showing positive imagery, which also develops this awareness.

Children are making very good progress in relation to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, and experience a broad and balanced curriculum covering all areas of learning. Their self-care skills are very good and children are able to pour their own drinks and help each other to put on their coats. Language skills are well developed and staff use all activities to introduce new and interesting words to them, for example, 'tentacles' when drawing an octopus. Children are able to speak in large and small groups and understand the need to listen when others are speaking. They are able to read their own name and those of others and staff are proactive in showing children how words are made up, for example when a child said the wrong name because he knew that it started with a letter 'A', staff effectively used this as a learning opportunity. Children are able to count forwards and backwards to and from 10 and many well beyond. They are developing an understanding of calculation and staff are aware that this is an area to be incorporated on a more regular basis. Exploration and investigation is at the heart of the activities, children design and make objects and learn how things work through the technology area, they are very competent in the use of Information and Communication Technology and this is well used to support their learning. A sense of time is developed through a washing-line time-line showing activities during the day. Children are proficient in the use of small implements, such as pencils and paintbrushes and use pedal toys with ease. They have developed a good sense of space and move with confidence both in confined spaces and the outdoor area. They explore textures and thoroughly enjoy moving to music and playing instruments. They have a strong sense of imagination which displays itself during directed activities and in free-play, such as using the role play area, and when talking about why the octopus has so many legs. Children are challenged by activities across all areas of learning which are fun and maintain their interest. Staff refer children to books, the computer and other sources of information to answer questions as well as answering questions themselves, this develops independent learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children develop self-esteem and respect for others through the calm atmosphere of mutual respect. Children are valued for their individuality and staff are courteous at all times, for example, when a child needed to be interrupted during his story because another child was being disruptive, the member of staff said 'would you excuse me a minute, I must just see to this, just wait there'. All children receive high levels of support and the staff have a sound understanding of their abilities and their learning styles and use this knowledge to plan activities appropriate to their stage of development. Additional support workers are effectively deployed within the setting to allow children with Special Educational Needs to develop confidence and independence, while having support where necessary. Children become aware of wider society through a wide range of topics during which they discover similarities and differences between different cultures. Innovative methods are employed to enhance the children's understanding, such as role play and creative activities. They enjoy walks into the local community and find out about the world in which they live. Children have a good sense of belonging because of the extremely effective flexible settling-in techniques employed. Staff work alongside the child and their parents to

find out appropriate methods of making their child feel at home and welcomed, for example, the types of activity to have on display, the times of the day when they may need additional comfort or support. Staff have learned some sign language to aid the communication with those with speech and language difficulties.

Children understand responsible behaviour through clear boundaries. Rules are displayed on the nursery door and children are encouraged to abide by these at all times. They use manners, which are actively encouraged by staff at every opportunity and act courteously towards their peers, adults and visitors. Children have a wide selection of activities to choose from and are actively encouraged to make choices and have an impact on the life of the nursery as a whole, for example during free-play sessions and when carrying out topic work, children's ideas are used to inform planning and the selection of toys and activities available. Children help each other and staff encourage them to be aware of the needs of others through reinforcing such actions.

Children are cared for according to the wishes of their parents because the staff teamwork extremely hard to ensure that they have all information prior to the child starting. Partnership with parents is excellent from the initial interest and throughout their child's time in the setting. They receive a wealth of information about the setting, about mealtimes and about the classes used, and they are fully consulted during the settling-in process and feel a part of the setting. Parents receive regular assessment details of their child to keep them informed of the progress that they are making. The nursery provides two information evenings to explain to parents about, and let them experience, the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage Guidance. These have been well received

Nursery Education

Partnership with parents is outstanding.

Parents receive excellent quality information about the setting prior to leaving their child, such as policy documents, a brochure and are given a tour of the setting. They are invited to attend an informal evening during which the foundation stage curriculum is explained and brought to life through workshops. They are kept fully up to date with changes and other information through regular newsletters and assessment details of their child. Assessment files are sent home on a regular basis and parents are invited to make comments based on their knowledge from home. This information is used to give the nursery a better understanding of the whole child and aids in the support of the child and in the planning process. Parents views are always sought and the nursery actively requests feedback which is used to identify strengths and weaknesses and is used to help the nursery progress further. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the life of the setting and planning documents are sent home with activities which can be completed at home to enhance the nursery provision. Children are motivated and return to nursery with activities they have completed at home, for example a child drew a picture of a bird on a bird box because the day before they had been talking about feeding the birds and putting out a bird feeder and box.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All staff are qualified and extremely experienced and further develop their understanding of child care issues through attendance at a variety of different training events, predominantly delivered by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. There is continuity of care and staff have worked alongside each other for many years. This enhances the quality of the care and education provided by the staff team who have a high regard for the wellbeing of the children. There is a lack of clarity in the roles of the management team which leads to procedures not being fully understood. Roles should be clearly outlined to ensure that all parties are able to undertake their responsibilities for the benefit of the setting as a whole.

Children's learning is effectively supported because the adult-child ratio is high and equipment, time and resources are well organised. This ensures that all children receive appropriate care and have access to individual attention where required. Children are well supervised at all times and are kept active. Such effective staff deployment contributes to the health, safety and enjoyment of the children and ensures that all can take an active part in the setting. All required regulatory documentation is in place and policies are effective in promoting the health and safety of the children. Attendances of both staff and children do not contain the hours that they were present and therefore do not promote the safety of the children and staff. This presents a risk to children, particularly if an emergency evacuation were necessary.

Nursery Education

The leadership and management of the setting is good.

Managers have a clear vision for the nursery. They regularly have meetings to discuss their progress and what they are hoping to achieve. The manager and her two deputies work closely together on the day to day running of the setting. The manager is proactive in disseminating information from senior management meetings, for example, through team meetings, notices on the boards and cascading information from training. This ensures that staff are made aware of developments and opportunities. The setting is working towards the Kite-mark status and, as such, carries out regular self-assessments of both staff and the provision in general. Parent surveys have been completed and action taken where necessary. The manager works in a hands on manner around the nursery and acts as a good role model to the staff team. She motivates her staff through regular meetings, giving praise for good work and having an open door for those with concerns.

The provision is continuously monitored to ensure that the children are getting high quality care and education. Activities are evaluated, as are the premises and resources, for example the premises were recently assessed in terms of its suitability for children and adults with disabilities. Discrimination is tackled throughout the nursery and there is a caring atmosphere in which everyone is valued for their individuality. Sign language is being learnt by staff to ensure that children and adults with difficulties in this area can be supported. Effective induction procedures are in

place for new staff and these promote the professional development of all. Staff regularly attend further training and all are trained in the Foundation Stage guidance. There is continuous monitoring of the setting to identify the areas for improvement. The Kite-mark process has focussed the nursery in on the areas most in need of addressing in both the curriculum and the physical premises and resources.

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 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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- review hygiene procedures with reference to the serving of snacks
- ensure recording of attendance is in accordance with the 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):

- ensure roles and responsibilities of managerial staff are fully understood to ensure they can carry out their roles effectively.

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