



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 221770

DfES Number: 514552

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 22/11/2004
Inspector Name Veronica Sharpe

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Cottontails Pre-School
Setting Address COTTON HALL
CAMBRIDGE RD,GIRTON
CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
CB3 0PN

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Cottontails Pre School 292130

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Cottontails Pre School
Address Cotton Hall
Cambridge Road, Girton
Cambridge
Cambridgeshire
CB3 0PN

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Cottontails Pre-school is a well-established setting that operates from the Cotton Hall in Girton, near Cambridge. The pre-school is registered to accept up to 28 children at any one time. Opening times are 09:00 to 12:00 Monday to Friday term times only. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from 3 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children mainly come from the local area although the pre-school also attracts parents from Cambridge city, which is a short drive away. The setting currently supports several children who have special educational needs and a small number who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 7 staff, most of these hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff members are currently on training courses.

Cottontails is a registered charity managed by a committee of parents and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

Cottontails Pre-school provides good quality care for children. Children are settled and happy, they have warm and friendly relationships with staff and enjoy a good balance of child initiated and adult directed activities. Staff support children well, offering one-to-one help when necessary. Children are encouraged to select their own resources and play together and as a result they are confident and independent and develop their own ideas and interests. Staff display pictures, posters and examples of children's artwork throughout the setting to make sure children and carers are welcomed into a warm and stimulating environment.

There are sound procedures in place to ensure the premises are secure and children are safe and well cared for although knowledge of the fire procedures needs improvement. Staff encourage children to develop good hygiene habits and there are satisfactory systems to ensure medication and accidents are recorded

accurately and shared with parents. Snacks and drinks are healthy and take into account any allergies or special dietary needs. Staff know children well and enjoy their diversity. They seek advice and support from parents and other professionals so that children are settled and happy and their individual needs are met. Staff provide good support for children with special needs and ensure they take part in all the activities. Generally children's behaviour is good, they organise their own play and negotiate the rules. Occasionally, organisation of some of the activities does not take into account the needs of younger or more active children.

The setting has developed good relationships with parents, who are well informed about their child's well being. Information is clear and well written and shared with parents as appropriate. Documentation is complete.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group was asked to devise an action plan detailing how staff qualifications would meet the National Standards; to implement a system to record visitors and to introduce a system of recording any incidents of physical restraint.

Staff now meet the minimum requirements for qualification. The majority of staff have the required level of training, and several staff members have continued their training beyond the Level 2 required. There is a pro-active training programme in place which ensures staff have the skills to support children effectively. A record of visitors is in place to enhance children's safety and a system of recording physical restraint has been implemented. This is a confidential record kept with the children's files to ensure parents are aware.

What is being done well?

- Children enjoy a wide variety of materials and resources, they are encouraged to self-select and staff are pro-active making suggestions and providing additional resources if needed. This enables children to make their own decisions about their play and extend their own interests and ideas.
- Children eat their snacks seated together so they enjoy a relaxed, social time. They are encouraged to eat healthily and develop good eating habits. Plans are in place to encourage parents to contribute fruit or vegetables for children's snacks, so they can enjoy a greater variety and explore new tastes
- Staff have developed good relationships with parents who are well informed, both formally and informally about their child's well being. Parents are invited to join the parents' rota or the committee and are warmly welcomed into the setting.
- Documentation is well written and complete. An excellent range of written policies and procedures have been devised, along with an easy to read and user friendly parents handbook.

What needs to be improved?

- knowledge of the emergency evacuation procedure so that both adults and children are confident.
- organisation of some activities to ensure the needs of all the children are met.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
6	Improve staff and children's knowledge of the emergency evacuation procedure.
11	Improve organisation of the sessions to ensure activities meet the needs of all the children.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Cottontails Pre-school is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. Teaching is very good, staff have a secure understanding of the early learning goals and plan and provide a rich and diverse programme of activities that children enjoy. The wide range of interesting and stimulating resources are organised so that children can self-select and as a result they are becoming independent learners. Occasionally, opportunities to encourage children to speculate and question could be further improved.

The systems for planning is excellent. Plans are clear and well written and, in conjunction with the assessments enable staff to have a sound understanding of children's progress and successfully identify their next steps. Systems to support children with English as an additional language are thorough. Capable and experienced support is offered to children with special educational needs.

The partnership with parents is very good and contributes to children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are well informed about their child's education and are warmly welcomed into the setting. They share what they know about their child and are encouraged to participate in their child's learning activities.

The leadership and management are very good. Staff work very well together and support each other effectively during the session. Staff deployment is good, enabling children to receive appropriate support and guidance and therefore contributing to their confidence. The management and committee meet regularly to discuss professional development of the staff and the continuous improvement of the quality of the setting, including the educational provision.

What is being done well?

- Children are kind, helpful and caring. They eagerly help each other or adults tidy away and show care and consideration if one of their peers is hurt or unhappy. They play happily together and show high levels of maturity in their ability to negotiate and settle their own disputes.
- Children's opportunities to mark make are excellent. A wide range of tools is available so that children can practise their pre-writing skills, such as pens, pencils and diaries on the writing desk. Children confidently make use of the resources to draw self-portraits and write their names, or the names of their friends.
- Parents are invited to share books and stories that are relevant to their children's topics or themes and have good opportunities to share in their child's learning, both in the setting and at home. Parents speak warmly and positively about the setting and have a good understanding of the educational

provision.

- Children are able to engage in complex group activities independently, they play 'hospitals' in the role play area, requesting additional resources from a well deployed adult and they have enormous fun identifying and agreeing roles, such as 'doctor', 'daddy' or the 'patient'.
- The staff and committee are committed to the future development of the setting and the educational provision. Future plans are discussed and staff are pro-active in their initiation of new ideas, for example, staff have recently introduced a revised system of planning that enables them to further improve the range of activities that children enjoy.

What needs to be improved?

- strategies that enable children to question and speculate.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school's progress since the last inspection has been very good. Children's independence is further encouraged by the provision of additional resources. For example, aprons for painting are organised so children can put them on independently, and an 'indoor shoes' policy means children learn to change their shoes for plimsolls or suitable slippers with confidence and dexterity.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident, social and friendly, they interact with their peers, join together for small and large group activities and happily share the resources. They help each other tidy away and are eager to ask for additional resources if they are unable to find what they want. They show high levels of independence such as helping themselves to fruit and drinks at snack time and are able to express their needs and negotiate with confidence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children happily sit in the book area and enthusiastically select books to read out loud. With an adult they excitedly decide which book is to be read next. They have good opportunities to see that print has meaning in well devised wall displays and labelling and are beginning to recognise initial sounds and letters. Lots of opportunities for children to practise mark making in meaningful ways are provided and children use them confidently and with enjoyment.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children use and identify numbers confidently. They know there are three 'Billy Goats Gruff' and which one is the largest or smallest. Some use a programmable toy, confidently working out which way is forward, or left and right and they can remember and duplicate the movements, learning to pattern and sequence. Children use their own experiences, such as travelling to pre-school to devise and formulate a graph which shows how many walk or bike every day.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children go on local visits, such as to the memorial for a 'poppy day' parade, they talk about the significance and explore their own feelings. They look at changes in the weather and grow living things, such as carrot tops. They explore ice and water and consider changes in cooking, such as cake mixture to the final product. They explore festivals from other lands using their own personal experiences and inviting adults into the setting to share their knowledge.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have good opportunities for outdoor play, using a range of outdoor equipment to pedal, climb, bounce or balance. They dance and move to music and sing action songs with enthusiasm and confidence. They build and design using small and large construction and develop their hand-to-eye co-ordination by threading, sewing or using scissors, pens, brushes and cutters. They are developing their own self-care, using the toilet, putting on aprons and washing their hands independently.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have good opportunities to create their own imaginative artwork and have some of that artwork displayed. They explore colour and texture and experiment with other media, such as clay, play dough, sand or water. They enjoy singing and listening to music and explore sounds such as car horns, bells and musical instruments. They are very good at role play, creating complicated scenarios and using both real and 'pretend' resources to extend their ideas and interests.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no key issues to report, however consideration should be given to the following:
- further improve children's opportunities to question and speculate and therefore enhance their own learning.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.