

Cottontails Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Cottontails Pre-School is run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It opened in 1974 and operates from the Cotton Hall in Girton, Cambridge. A maximum of 28 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 40 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 36 children are in receipt of early education funding. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The pre-school is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am until 3.30pm and Tuesday and Friday from 9am until 12noon, term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs five members of staff; all of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The staff team have a well developed knowledge of each child's needs and this ensures that they can successfully promote children's welfare and learning. Children are confident, safe and secure, and enjoy learning about the local area where they live and the wider world around them. Partnerships with parents, carers and others are exceptional and significant in making sure that the needs of all children are met, along with any additional support needs. This attention to detail means that children progress well, given their age, ability and starting points.

All recommendations since the last inspection have been met. The recently appointed manager has introduced a procedure of reflective practice and self-evaluation. This ensures that areas of strength are identified and areas for development are prioritised. This results in a setting that responds well to all user needs.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that children's hours of attendance are consistently recorded. This refers in particular to children's hours of attendance for afternoon sessions

06/12/2010

(Documentation).

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- re-appraise risk assessments to ensure that they include everything with which a child may come into contact. This refers in particular to accessible glass in the outside play area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Clear and effective safeguarding procedures are in place and these include robust procedures for staff recruitment. All staff understand the importance of safeguarding children and know how to make a referral should they have a child-protection concern. The committee and manager conduct clear vetting procedures when employing new members of staff, including obtaining an enhanced criminal record bureau check. There are also clear induction and appraisal systems to ensure that staff work well in this setting. No new member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the setting is left unsupervised with the children. A record of visitors to the setting is maintained, along with daily registers of the staff and children's hours of attendance. However, during this inspection it was identified that on occasion the daily register for afternoon sessions showed when children had arrived but had not been consistently completed when children and members of staff left the setting. This potentially impacts on their ability to safely account for all children and adults at all times.

Daily checks of all child-accessible areas are carried out by members of staff before the children arrive each day. Risk assessments are in place detailing how potential hazards are minimised both inside, outside and when on outings. However, these do not currently include all potential hazards, for example how children are protected from the glass windows, which are not safety glass, in the pre-school's shed situated in the outside play area. The manager and committee have devised a wide range of relevant policies and procedures, which are shared with parents and carers. These are implemented in practice in order to promote the smooth running of the setting and provide positive outcomes for the children. All records required by legislation are in place and maintained well. The organisation of the setting encourages children's free-flow play and investigation. Child-height furniture and storage enables children to play in safety and comfort as they select resources which interest them, and explore at their own pace.

All staff in the setting value diversity and celebrate differences. Clear and effective systems are in place to promote inclusive practice, for example there is clear information about how staff support all children including those who have special educational needs. Reasonable adjustments are made and inappropriate attitudes and practices are challenged. Staff encourage children to value and respect others. Effective routines are in place and this includes exemplary multi-agency working to ensure that every child receives high levels of support at an early stage. There are well-established and purposeful channels of communication between all partners

involved with individual children. This is significant in successfully promoting the children's learning, development and welfare. The pre-school has highly positive relationships with all groups of parents and carers, and their views and suggestions are actively taken on board by staff and the committee and developed to enhance the provision and improve outcomes for children. Parents and carers are extremely well informed about all aspects of their own child's achievements, well-being and development. Parents report that they are very confident in the setting finding that staff are approachable, caring and sensitive to their child and family. They report that they would recommend the pre-school to other families without hesitation.

Reflective practice enables the management team and staff to accurately identify the strengths and areas for development of their early years provision. Consequently, actions taken are well-chosen and carefully planned resulting in sustained improvements and management systems that run smoothly.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

All staff have a good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements and Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. This ensures that they promote children's learning, social, physical and economic well-being. The pre-school is well-equipped and interesting, and its welcoming environment successfully reflects the background of most of the children and also of the wider community. All staff are well deployed both inside and outside to support children's learning, including providing one-to-one support where necessary. Staff are skilled at promoting positive attitudes to learning, for example using open questions and giving children time to consider and respond with their own ideas. Good quality observation, assessment and subsequent planning ensure that every child is suitably challenged by the learning experiences provided. Children develop their understanding of technology as they use the computer and a range of battery operated toys, such as the tills in their hairdresser's salon. They use their imagination as they join in role play activities or messy play, for instance mixing various paints and exploring the changing colours as they create purple from red and blue. Children enjoy spontaneous activities, such as building a snowman and finding a carrot for his nose. This activity sparks a wealth of conversations between children as they help each other and have lots of fun. Children learn that marks have meaning and staff actively encourage them to make their own marks and as they learn about sounds and letters they use their phonic knowledge to write their own names or compile lists in their role play activities. All children are able to be active or rest according to their individual needs. Children, including those with additional needs, make good progress towards the early learning goals. They also make good overall progress in developing the personal qualities that enable them to take responsibility for small tasks and develop skills for future learning.

Children show an exceptional understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines. They show an excellent understanding of healthy eating and make healthy choices at their snack bar. Children are actively engaged in all

aspects, from helping to prepare fruit or vegetables, where they learn to safely use knives, to washing up all they have used. This opportunity enables children to develop their self-help and independent skills. Children demonstrate their understanding about different types of food, where it comes from, which foods are good for you and which ones are not so good. Free-flow play is organised extremely well and children can easily access the secure outside play area at any time. This provides further opportunities for them to engage in physical activities on a larger scale than is possible indoors. Children gain a firm understanding about the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They have ownership of their health and well-being, and demonstrate they are well informed about healthy living. Children are secure and develop a sense of belonging to the setting. They know what is expected of them and can demonstrate a clear understanding of how to stay safe, for example when using knives to cut the fruit for snacks they talk about using them with care. Relationships are good and children's behaviour is managed well.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met