

# Mini Cowpers

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY292484

**Inspection date**

15/07/2011

**Inspector**

Geof Timms

**Setting address**

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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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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

Mini Cowpers opened in 2004 and operates from a single storey building in the grounds of Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School. It is situated in a village on the outskirts of Hertford, Hertfordshire. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. There is no ramped disabled access.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9am to 12noon during school term time. There is also a lunch club between the hours of 12noon until 1pm. This is also attended by children from the nursery class in the school.

There are currently 29 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for nursery education. Children can attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four permanent members of staff, of which three including the pre-school leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. Of these, two hold qualifications at level 3 and one holds qualifications at level 6. The pre-school receives support from a qualified teacher and the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy attending the pre-school and they take a full part in a range of activities. It meets the needs of children in the early years age group well and they make good progress towards the early learning goals. Resources are good and staff provide a good range of adult-led activities to balance those that children initiate. The pre-school engages outstandingly well with the parents and carers in a number of ways. It is fully inclusive and promotes children's understanding and respect for others well. It is well placed to improve in the future.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the outdoor area so its full potential can be realised and can more effectively support the indoor learning
- review and improve the current system for making observations and assessments so that children's progress can be better tracked.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Staff work hard to ensure safeguarding procedures are robust and thorough. They are well trained and understand their roles and responsibilities thoroughly. Detailed risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis for all aspects of the pre-school's activities. Parents say how safe their children are and there are a wide range of good systems and procedures that are rigorously followed, in line with Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidance. The correct checks regarding recruitment and staff vetting are carried out robustly. First aid, medical and child protection arrangements are well documented and rigorous. Because of this the children learn and play confidently. However, the accommodation is not easily accessible for parents, carers and children with physical disabilities, although staff work hard to overcome this.

Links with parents and carers are outstanding. The committee who runs the pre-school is largely made up of parents and carers, and they are keen that parents and carers have a voice in how the pre-school is run and the sort of activities provided. This is also boosted by the careful recognition of children's views and their comments about things they like doing are displayed prominently in the setting. Information regarding children's progress is shared with parents and carers regularly. They have access to the children's learning journey books and can contribute to them with learning done at home. Stay and play sessions, which allow new children to be accompanied by their parents, are very successful. Daily communication occurs through the 'blog' on a whiteboard by the entrance, which keeps parents and carers well informed about aspects of the day's plans and outcomes. Links with other settings and the host school are good, and the children's needs are well supported by staff's access to outside training and advice.

Planning is detailed and ensures all aspects of the early learning goals are covered. Topics are often linked to the themes being taught in the school, and jointly planned, so ideas can be shared and good practice spread. . Observations are recorded both formally and informally. These are supported well with samples of children's work and photographs of activities. Short term planning contains appropriate detail about developmental stages and what children are expected to learn from the activities provided. For example, a current theme of 'holidays' provides a number of very good opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world as well as their communication skills. However, the current systems in place, although effective in tracking individuals, do not enable the staff to easily highlight any child who is not making sufficient progress or those who are high achievers. The pre-school's self evaluation is good. A detailed review of their work has highlighted accurately and honestly a number of strengths and some areas staff wish to improve. Self-evaluation is supported by the local authority.

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

Children's behaviour is good. This is due to the hard work staff put in to developing their social and moral skills. Children are encouraged to play and learn together. Cooperation and collaboration have a high priority as staff encourage children during their activities. This results in some activities taking on an extended timescale. For example, children enjoy playing in the indoor sand area which has been devised to represent a beach, for a lengthy period. They quietly play and talk together while demonstrating that they are having fun. They learn to help tidy away and are encouraged to share equipment, for example when using magnifiers to study parts of a bee. This activity showed good the development of children's speaking and listening skills as they talked about what they could see, including colours and patterns. Adult interventions clearly and effectively extends children's use of language and understanding.

Children have a good understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and drinking and make nutritious choices at snack time. A good understanding of hygiene is evident as they are encouraged to wash their hands before eating. They are taught to stay safe in a range of interesting ways. For example, one parent who is a fire fighter brought in a range of equipment and clothing to show the children, and to talk about fire safety. A local crossing warden also visited the pre-school to talk about road safety. When preparing their snack one member of staff highlighted well the dangers of sharp knives. Children use a good range of technology and confidently use computer programmes to undertake a range of tasks, such as highlighting the odd one out from three objects. When making dough for models, adult intervention develops children's mathematical skills and understanding. They encourage children to discuss comparative sizes of ingredients.

The children are helped to understand how others live in a range of ways. When it was the Chinese New Year, for example, they helped build a very impressive dragon for dancing with. They also experienced and tasted Chinese food and practised using chopsticks. Children have opportunities to grow their own foods and a good crop of tomatoes are currently thriving under the supervision of the children. However, the outdoor area is underdeveloped as a resource and learning opportunities are missed to extend indoor activities outside. Overall, children are making good progress in their learning and development.

## 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

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

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	2
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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
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