

# Country Mice Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	113450
<b>Inspection date</b>	26/01/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Elaine Joyce

<b>Setting address</b>	Station Road, Cowfold, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 8DA
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<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
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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

Country Mice Pre-school was opened on its current site in 1992. It operates from a purpose built room with an enclosed outdoor play area adjacent to St Peter's Primary School in Cowfold, near Horsham, Surrey. The pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee. The manager has Early Years Professional Status and works with five other members of staff, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 22 children may attend at any one time, in the early years age group. Pre-school sessions operate during term-time only for children from two years to the end of the early years age group. The sessions are from 9am to 12 noon five days a week, and between 12 noon to 3pm on three days a week. A lunch club also operates daily between 12noon to 1pm each weekday. There are currently 34 children on roll in the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free education for children aged three and four years. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The well qualified and experienced staff organise a welcoming, caring and stimulating environment overall for children. All children have fun as they learn through thoughtfully supported play. Overall, the pre-school's practice is effective in helping all make good progress with their development, underpinned by excellent relationships with parents and outside professionals. Children are safeguarded exceptionally successfully by staff implementation of robust policies and procedures. Evaluation systems are effective, and recommendations from the previous inspection addressed well, so the pre-school demonstrates a strong capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

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

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

- reappraise the outdoor learning environment to make it as stimulating and challenging as the indoor provision, so that all children can make similar progress in development and learning outdoors as they do indoors.
- improve further the use of reflective practice, self-evaluation and professional discussions to better guide target setting that will further improve the quality of provision for all children.

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

The pre-school's clear safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively by staff which means that children are safeguarded well and their welfare is a priority. Effective recruitment and induction systems are in place; all staff are vetted and good systems are in place to check their ongoing suitability to work with children. Staff are confident with the procedures to follow with any safeguarding concerns and the pre-school has a clear policy to underpin their practice in this area. Visitors to the pre-school are recorded and all staff receive safeguarding training to keep their knowledge updated. Staff carry out a daily safety check of both the indoor and outdoor environments so that children can play safely. The pre-school's policies and procedures help protect children from illness and infection too. Staff work together most effectively as a friendly, cohesive team to ensure sessions run smoothly and happily for all children.

Children have daily access to a good range of generally well set out resources, which promote learning in all skill areas. Resources are arranged so that they are accessible to all children at their level, so available equipment and materials are used effectively. Staff do not make the most of the outside area, however, which disadvantages those children who learn better when outdoors. Staff treat all children with respect and children's special member of staff, their 'key person' knows them well and with a good understanding of children's individual needs. Children with additional needs are sensitively supported, owing to effective planning and use of outside specialist advice.

Staff act as positive role models promoting good social skills and positive relationships. Excellent partnerships with parents, other professionals and the local primary school contribute significantly to children's well-being while at the pre-school and help them make the move into full time education smoothly. Useful information is shared with parents including all pre-school policies and procedures. Termly newsletters are sent out to parents, information is displayed on the pre-school notice board and the website is kept up to date with news, which aids excellent communications with all parents, including those who do not go to the pre-school.

Parents are kept informed about their children's development with planning displayed to show current activities and they have regular opportunity to read and contribute to the children's 'Learning Journals'. Parents are extremely positive in their praise of the pre-school, stating that staff are 'very good at helping them settle here and then to move to reception'. The pre-school committee and pre-school leadership work together effectively. They are responsive to parental views and have good systems for reflecting on and evaluating the provision although they do not always use the information to clearly identify the priorities that will help the pre-school to improve provision most effectively. The members of staff managed the inspection very professionally in the absence of the manager.

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

Children's behaviour is good, contributing extremely well to safe play. They settle quickly and happily in the pre-school. In the playroom, activities are attractively presented so that children are keen to use them and quickly engage in purposeful play. Children have excellent relationships with staff and turn to them readily for support showing they feel very safe and secure in their care. Children learn about safety rapidly, owing to extremely clear teaching by staff. For example, children listen carefully to staff, who gently explain why running inside is not safe.

They have good opportunities to develop healthy bodies through regular exercise and play in the fresh air. They are helped to learn how to put on coats and wellington boots for themselves, and eagerly run around in the garden. They have fun as they jump in puddles and play 'superhero' games in the wooden train. Children wash their hands before eating, showing a firm understanding of good hygiene practice. They help themselves to tissues to wipe their noses.

Staff regularly meet together to plan and provide daily resources and activities which support children in developing their future skills well. Activity plans are clear and provide for particular children's needs and interests and link with all six different areas of learning. Staff maintain 'Learning Journals' for children with accurate observations of their stages of development, and clearly track children's progress in all areas. Children are given time to learn through independent exploration and show perseverance to succeed, as they spend time using a toy crane to hoist various toy cars to the table top, for example. Not all outdoor provision supports children's development and learning as well as the indoor provision, as staff do not plan this environment as well as possible to provide challenges to children. Children correctly identify numerals on the clock face jigsaw and count accurately the number of pieces to be fitted into the puzzle. Boys and girls demonstrate good creative skills as they enjoy pretend play whilst dressed up as superheroes, tigers and fairies. They show an interest in language when they cluster round a practitioner reading a book and listen with obvious enjoyment to the story. Staff interact playfully with children at activities, often sitting on the floor alongside them. Thoughtful questioning challenges children to think beyond their immediate response and helps to develop their thinking skills. Children enjoy printing and using collage materials to make a cave for their wall display of a favourite story. Older children develop an understanding of letter and sound links, and are beginning to attempt to write their names on their drawings and paintings. At the end of the morning session all children participate enthusiastically in a singing time. All are well supported to enjoy this activity and to learn the words and actions because adults join in with them, speaking clearly.

## 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	1
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

<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	1
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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