

Cygnets Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Melanie Eastwell

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Type of setting	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

Cygnets Preschool opened in 2003. It is run by the Hope Project, which supports children and their families in the local area. The preschool operates from The Well on the Hemmingwell Estate in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire.

The preschool is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 30 children under the age of five years at any one time. The preschool is also registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for older children, however no out of school care is currently offered. There are currently 48 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The preschool is open each weekday from 8.30am to 3.30pm, during school term times. A number of children bring a packed lunch and attend all day. The preschool supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Seven members of staff work with the children, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager and one other member of staff hold Early Years Professional Status. The setting receives support from the local authority and has links with local schools.

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 makes sure that they are successful in promoting their welfare and learning. Children are safe and secure and they enjoy the staff's positive interaction with them. The partnerships with parents and the local schools are effective and are significant in making sure the needs of all the children are met. This means that children generally progress well, given their individual age, ability and starting points. The staff team have implemented procedures for self-evaluation and they are keen to continue to develop these to identify their priorities for future improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance the procedures for observation and assessment to ensure the identified next steps for each child are re-visited and cross referenced to clearly show progression and implement a system to clearly demonstrate that a balance of evidence is in place across each of the six areas of learning
- develop further the partnerships with parents through continuing to involve them in their child's learning and development
- develop further the setting's self-evaluation procedures to clearly identify

well-targeted plans for the future as well as current effective practice.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The well-motivated management and staff team work hard to provide the children in this setting with a safe environment where they can access a broad range of activities that cover the six areas of learning. Safeguarding is given high priority. The manager has experience in safeguarding issues and she is confident that all the staff fully understands the importance of following the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures in the event of any concerns because they have a dedicated folder of information available to them that relates to child protection. All the staff have the required clearances in place and recent changes to the procedures for the arrival and departure of the children ensures their safety during these busy times. The written policies and procedures for the preschool underpin the staff's daily activity with the children. They maintain good levels of supervision at all times. For example, they ensure that there are sufficient members of staff in the outside play area during free-flow play between the playroom and the garden. The staff team are well organised, taking on the different roles required throughout the day. For example, knowing who will read the story, who will lead the circle time and who will prepare the snacks and set out for lunchtime. This effective organisation promotes a smooth flow of activities throughout the sessions. Children are encouraged to move freely between the activities. They can help themselves to various resources such as construction toys and art and craft materials. They are able to enhance their play by transporting resources to different areas within the room. For example, preparing pretend food from the play dough table and taking it to the home corner area to 'cook' it in the oven.

Children benefit from the strong partnership working between their parents and the preschool staff. Parents are welcomed in to the setting to settle their child when they first start attending and the staff make themselves available to talk to parents during arrival and departure times each day. Parents have access to notice boards and newsletters and they are invited to the regular, themed open days where they can experience a range of activities with their children. Parents report positive feedback about their child's experiences at the preschool and comment on how supportive they find the staff to be. The manager and staff team have developed strong links with the local schools in order to support children in their transition. They visit the schools and invite the foundation staff to visit the preschool and work together on a consistent theme during the children's final weeks at the preschool before continuing this theme when they move on to school. The staff team are keen to continue to develop the partnerships with parents through encouraging them to become more involved in their child's learning at the preschool. These effective partnerships contribute to a consistent approach and a smooth transition for the children.

The preschool have ongoing procedures in place to reflect on their daily activity with the children. Over recent months, their efforts have been focused on the actions and recommendations from the previous inspection and they remain keen to continue to develop their self-evaluation activity in order to identify well-

targeted plans for the future and continued development of the preschool. The setting demonstrates a good capacity for continuous improvement because the staff team are committed to further professional training and they have been pro-active in addressing the issues raised at the previous inspection. The parents and children are involved in the reflective processes through discussions and questionnaires.

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

The children enjoy attending this lively setting where they are provided with a good range of interesting activities and resources that cover the six areas of learning. They enjoy the staff's positive and encouraging involvement with them during their play. The staff sit with them, they talk to them about what they are doing and make suggestions to extend the play. For example, a group of children working on building a marble run listen to the member of staff to build the model and show interest in how the marble rolls down the different tubes. The children are enthusiastic in their play and immerse themselves in whatever they are doing, whether it is listening to a story, watering the seeds they have planted, using the climbing frame and slide, building the train tracks or using the computer. The staff are effective in their supervision and they regularly remind the children about being kind and thoughtful and about the boundaries for behaviour. The children are seen to respond positively to this discussion because the staff speak to them in a gentle, yet effective manner. Children's awareness of the wider world is promoted through a range of images celebrating diversity in the books and play provision. All children are treated as individuals and with respect.

Children demonstrate that they feel safe in the setting. They are familiar with the daily routines, they are confident to move around and to select their chosen activities and they approach the staff to initiate conversations and for comfort and reassurance as they need it. The staff know the children very well and they respond entirely appropriately to individual children's specific needs to ensure they can enjoy their preschool session. Children are developing an awareness of healthy living. For example, they are able to be independent in the bathroom and they clean their hands before eating. They can access tissues independently and they enjoy a good range of nutritious snacks provided by the setting. They bring packed lunches from home and lunchtime is a social occasion when they sit together with the staff. The children become involved in a good range of well planned activities that take account of their interests and can be adapted as the children lead the play. For example, children using the soft play blocks under the climbing frame move them into a line of stepping stones along the fence and use the fence to support themselves as they balance across them, giggling and laughing as they go. They become involved in an activity closely linked to a familiar story and take on roles in the story and they enjoy colour mixing activities. Circle time supports children to listen to each other and to gain confidence as they sing the 'hello' song and participate in a 'show and tell' session.

The management and staff team demonstrate a good understanding of how to

implement the Early Years Foundation Stage for each child attending. The staff are all involved in contributing to the planning and this takes account of the children's interests and the evaluations of the previous week's activities. The more senior staff members support their colleagues in managing their own key children's records. The key workers are responsible for maintaining each child's chronological record of achievement which includes written observations, photographs and samples of their work. The staff know where each child is in their development and they use the Early Years Practice Guidance document to help them identify appropriate next steps for them. However, they do not currently record how these next steps are re-visited to clearly demonstrate the progress each child is making and they currently do not have an effective system to ensure that a balance of evidence is in place across the six areas of learning. The records of achievement are well presented and are shared with the children and their parents. Each child's sense of belonging and well-being is promoted in this setting where the staff team know them as individuals and are very responsive to their needs.

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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	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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