

Cottontails Pre-School

Cambridge Road, Girton, CAMBRIDGE, Cambridgeshire, CB3 0PN

Inspection date	09/01/2014
Previous inspection date	04/11/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Planning is flexible and tailored to children's individual needs. As a result, children make good progress.
- A strong settling-in procedure means that children form secure attachments quickly to their key person and strong relationships are built between staff and parents.
- Clear boundaries and familiar routines mean that children are self-sufficient and well behaved throughout the day.

It is not yet good because

- The provider has not informed Ofsted of all changes to committee members.
- Some staff do not consistently give sufficient time for children to respond to questions, or make the optimum use of open-ended questioning during children's play.
- Children do not have broad opportunities to engage in a variety of mark making opportunities, therefore, children's literacy skills are not maximised to their full potential.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the hall and the outdoor area.
The inspector sampled a selection of documentation including staff qualifications
- and suitability checks, policies, procedures and information provided by the pre-school.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents, staff and children on the day and took their views into consideration during the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a selection of children's observation, assessment and development files with the key persons.

Inspector

Elke Rockey

Full report

Information about the setting

Cottontails Pre-School was registered in 1992 and is on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from the Cotton Hall in Girton, Cambridgeshire. The pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee and serves the local and wider community. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Three of which hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above including one who holds Early Years Professional Status.

The pre-school is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am until 3.30pm and Tuesday and Friday from 9am until 12 noon, term times only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 47 children attending of whom all are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- improve knowledge of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. This refers to knowledge of changes to the provider that must be notified to Ofsted.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance opportunities for children to think critically during activities and discussion by asking open-ended questions that may have more than one answer giving them time to respond without rushing toward answers too quickly
- provide further opportunities for children to develop mark making for a purpose in a range of play activities.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are provided with a good range of resources and opportunities that promote their interests and development. Children make good progress. This is because staff find out a lot of information on entry into the pre-school using the 'All About Me' form and from parents and children directly. This helps staff develop a clear understanding of the needs and interests of the children. Planning is flexible and tailored to children's interests, which mean staff have a good understanding of children's achievements. Each key person has clearly identified next steps for their key children based on regular observation. Communication books are used in partnership with parents to exchange ideas for children's learning at home. This means children are well supported and make good progress in all areas of their learning and in preparation for school. Staff improve their understanding and practice of children's learning through training. For example, since attending training about how children learn, this is now being observed and assessed on a regular basis, thereby extending staff knowledge of children's development and how to further support their learning.

Children are motivated to learn and independently access the resources throughout the session because the adults carefully plan the way the hall is set up every day. Staff encourage children to take turns and listen to each other during activities. Children carry this on self-sufficiently after adults leave activities. For example, after a member of staff finishes reading a story, a small group of children continue to look at and discuss the pictures co-operatively. They listen to each other and considerately make room so that all the children gathered can see the pictures. This means that children are developing strong social skills and are learning to understand that others have needs therefore promoting social and emotional development. Children explore messy materials and are able to take charge of how they use the resources. For example, one child paints her hands at the craft table, while another investigates the workings of a glue stick as she spends time twisting and untwisting it. This gives children good opportunity to learn how to handle tools and use their senses to explore their world. Staff make good use of activities to promote communication skills and creative development. For example, small world characters fall in the water. Children add to the storyline as the characters then have to 'walk the plank' explaining themselves clearly and expressing their developing imaginations. However, some staff do not always use questioning techniques fully to allow children to explore their language and thinking. This is because occasionally they ask questions with limited responses, or do not always allow sufficient time for children to think about what they want to say. This means that on some occasions children's creative and critical thinking is not optimised.

Mathematical language is integrated into many aspects of teaching, which means children's awareness of mathematical concepts is good. Staff encourage small world figures to be counted accurately, shapes in the environment are named and steps are counted while playing 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' outside. This exciting game encourages children to run and stop, therefore, developing their large physical skills and spatial awareness. Children are keen to make use of the available tools at the mark making table as they cut, stick, draw and write. Staff discuss children's names and the letters in them as they attempt to form letters and create pictures that have meaning to them. This is good for children's literacy skills. However, there is scope to extend this eagerness for writing to other areas of play maximising children's potential learning in literacy. A designated co-ordinator oversees the support for children with English as additional

language. Vocabulary forms are filled out with parents and used so that home language is used in the pre-school. Visual cue cards are carried by each adult, which are used by children who have language difficulties. All these strategies mean children develop well in the language and communications skills.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children are secure and show clear attachments to their key person who offer strong settled relationships. However, children have a false sense of security because Ofsted have not been informed of changes to committee members, which compromise children's safety. Each child spends time with their key person who takes responsibility for their day-to-day care needs and plans for their learning and development. Initially, vital information is gained about the children from parents and the children themselves, consequently, children settle quickly and positive relationships are formed with parents. A regular communication book is used in partnership with parents for each child about their ongoing personal needs as well as learning needs.

Routines are familiar and embedded well as children are accustomed to many daily practices. Children are self-sufficient for much of the free flow session. For example, children dress and undress depending on whether they are moving inside or out, follow hygienic toileting procedures and put aprons on for messy activities by themselves. This confidence sets children up with strong self-esteem for future transitions. Children behave well and know what is expected of them. Unwanted behaviour is managed sensitively by the pre-school staff, taking into account children's age and level of understanding. Positive behaviour is valued and praised. Children readily seek out adults to share play experiences and are supported to develop good friendships with other children, which promotes their personal, social and emotional development. For example, a child stated he would like a friend to ride on the back of his bike. The staff give him the words and confidence to ask a friend.

Staff involve children in daily safety checks and they competently use knives to cut up apple at snack time. Therefore, children are learning to keep themselves safe. Children negotiate the garden on their bikes safely and use appropriate resources to exercise their large muscles. Staff support children to acquire new physical skills by modelling and offering encouragement. For example, children attempt to jump in and out of hoops before staff model and encourage hopping, which older children successfully achieve. This promotes their physical development well. Children have access to a wide variety of resources indoors and outside. Play in all weathers is promoted as the outdoor canopy has resources attractively arranged. This means that children have the opportunity to benefit from fresh air all year round. There are healthy choices available for snacks and fresh drinking water is available and accessible at all times. Staff discuss and model good hygiene practices, which mean children are learning about the importance of staying healthy.

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

Employment procedures are adequate with management having a clear understanding of processes. Committee members responsible for recruitment have attended safer recruitment training, which has resulted in a strong team of practitioners being employed. However, the provider has breached legal requirements by failing to notify Ofsted of changes to the management committee. This is also a breach of requirements of the Childcare Register. However, the breaches have a minimal impact on children's safety as these adults do not have contact with children in any unsupervised situation. All staff, new and established, understand the safeguarding policy and procedures. They know who to report to and of the requirement to record any concerns. Adults know to ensure new staff are not left unsupervised. Accidents are managed and recorded accurately. This means children's welfare is sufficiently promoted.

Children make good progress in their learning because staff demonstrate a good understanding of the learning and development requirements and how to implement this effectively. Staff have a sufficient overview of children's learning through use of the local authority tracker tool. New training has been cascaded improving staffs' awareness of children's learning styles. Since the last inspection, the manager has gained a higher qualification and continually supports the staff to improve their practice. Peer observations have been newly implemented and supervision sessions occur regularly. This highlights how the manager is supporting staff to further develop practice. She is also a good teaching role model and uses her skills to improve the teaching practices of other members of staff. The local authority quality framework also assists improvement as the team reflect on actions set through this form of self-evaluation. This means that the pre-school have a generally good drive for improvement.

Parents are exceptionally happy with the care provided at the pre-school. The staff work closely with parents when a child begins at the pre-school. Parents' views are taken into account as a parent states 'the staff are open to suggestion' and then suggestions are made visible. Partnerships with other professionals sufficiently support children moving between providers, such as using the school hall for physical activity sessions and attending local network meetings. This ensures continuity of care and learning for all children.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Not Met (with actions)
The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- inform Ofsted of the name, date of birth, address and telephone number of any member of the committee (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	221770
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	871288
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	47
Name of provider	Cottontails Pre School Committee
Date of previous inspection	04/11/2010
Telephone number	07935 224 607

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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