



Curdworth Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	200565
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Janet Ashcroft
Setting Address	St Nicholas Church Hall, Glebe Fields, Curdworth, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B76 9ES
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Registered person	The Committee of Curdworth Pre-school
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Curdworth Pre-School was registered in 1993. It operates from the church hall of Saint Nicholas Church, Curdworth and serves the local and surrounding areas. The children have access to an adjacent outdoor play area. The setting is open term time only, from 09:30 until 12:00.

The setting is registered to care for 24 children at any one time. There are currently 13 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. Of these, eight children receive funding for nursery education.

There are four staff who work with the children; of these, two hold relevant level 3 qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and holds a Pre-School Learning Alliance accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are actively learning about hygiene through the staff's good example and practice. They inspire the children's interest through discussion and topic activities, for example, the children have made their own hand washing posters, which are displayed in the bathroom. The children know the importance of hand washing, although not all remember to wash their hands consistently; they talk confidently and knowledgeably about the effects of germs on their bodies.

Children's health is strenuously safeguarded through the setting's policies and records; these are commendably organised to enable the required information to be located immediately and are exemplary in their level of detail, maintenance and review.

Children are given frequent opportunities to play outdoors in the adjacent garden, where they are able to practise a variety of physical skills. They particularly enjoy the walks in the village and the sensory experiences which they offer, for example, smelling freshly mown grass.

Children's nutritional needs are accommodated well. The setting is not able to offer meals, however, children's home packed lunches are stored suitably and staff observe good hygiene procedures as they serve the food. A fruit snack is offered daily and snack time is effectively used to extend the children's learning. For example, during inspection, the children were able to try a variety of hot and cold foods, including porridge and jelly, which linked to their theme of the week.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The setting is exciting and stimulating; child-centred posters and examples of the children's creative work are attractively displayed, making a welcoming environment for all. However, the temperature in the hall is not always conducive to the children's full participation in all of the activities offered, particularly during the winter months. The children enjoy independent access to a good range of toys and equipment, which is kept in a very clean and safe condition and which effectively fosters all areas of their development.

The staff are very aware of possible risks to children's safety and have taken steps to remove hazards in the setting, however, the locks on the inside of the toilet doors are presently compromising their safety. The children are actively learning how to keep themselves safe and regularly participate in fire evacuations. The staff are creative in providing opportunities to reinforce aspects of personal safety, for example, peripatetic visitors, such as the traffic safety officer, inspire the children's interest in road safety and the children have made zebra crossings to practise and refine their road crossing skills.

Children's protection from abuse and neglect is promoted through the staff's thorough knowledge of signs and symptoms and of reporting procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are able to engage in a stimulating and well-balanced range of activities and experiences, which helps them make progress in all areas of development. The staff are well trained in the 'Birth to three matters' framework and actively support all the children in their decisions and choices, helping them to become autonomous and competent learners.

Children benefit from exciting learning and play opportunities outside the setting. For example, the recent trip to the Severn Valley Railway gave the children opportunities to engage in a variety of experiences to extend their understanding of transport and mechanical engineering.

Children's language and thinking skills are enthusiastically promoted through general conversation and through the frequent questions asked of them by the staff. The children's confidence and self-esteem is enhanced as the staff listen carefully to their responses; social skills are developed as the children are encouraged to take turns in speaking and listening.

The quality of the teaching and learning of funded children is good. Staff are very knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage and make excellent use of assessments to plan activities that match the children's maturity and provide challenge for their varying abilities.

Children investigate objects and materials through a variety of experiences. For example, during inspection, they were engrossed in a water activity, which extended their understanding of the scientific principles of freezing and melting; the models of arctic animals and ice cubes in the water trough inspired their interest in the natural world and living creatures. Children are able to observe and find out about their own environment through activities such as planting seeds and through regular outings, for example, to the local park and village walks. Children are given frequent opportunities to explore shape, colour, form and space during creative activities and particularly enjoy role-play activities where they are able to recreate their past experiences.

Children enjoy listening to stories and are able to confidently discuss aspects of their favourite books. They know that print carries meaning and can be used as a method of recording and communicating, particularly at arrival time when they self-register their presence. Children are using mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems and are learning to negotiate and work together. They are able to work independently and are developing skills of self-reliance as they independently access resources and activities. Their sense of responsibility is fostered through small tasks and daily routines, for example, tidying away toys and handing out cutlery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The staff have a real commitment to equality of opportunity, they recognise children as individuals and as a result the children benefit from having their differing needs met. Through discussion, the staff described a proactive and sensitive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties. Children are able to access a good range of resources and activities to raise their awareness of diversity and to promote their understanding of others. For example, the recent Diwali festival was acknowledged by costume dancing and food tasting.

The children behave very well. Staff have high expectations of the children and strategies to promote positive behaviour are consistent, age-appropriate and positive. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Younger children respond well to gentle reminders to care for their environment, nursery resources and each other; older children are actively encouraged to resolve their differences through discussion, developing their skills of negotiation and compromise.

Children thrive as a result of strong continuity of care; this has developed through the first-class relationship that staff have built and strive to maintain with parents. Parents are very warmly welcomed into the setting and are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning; daily diaries, open mornings and newsletters keep them fully informed of all aspects of the provision.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Staff provide parents with regular information about their children's progress, however, this is not clearly linked to the progress the children are making towards the early learning goals. A good range of leaflets and posters keeps parents informed about current aspects of child care and education, including information on the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are able to explore and investigate as a result of the well-organised use of space, which has been planned to enable them to participate in a variety of stimulating activities. The effective and consistent adult support and the familiar daily routine fosters the children's sense of security.

The children benefit from the good practice of the skilled staff team and the setting's commitment to continuous improvement ensures that staff are kept fully informed of current trends in child care practice.

Children's welfare is effectively promoted through the staff's excellent organisational skills and all records, policies and procedures are exemplary in their level of organisation and review.

Leadership and management is good. The staff regularly review the provision and the children benefit as a result of the improvements they strive to implement. There is a real commitment to the promotion of quality care and education for young children, evidenced by the strong programme of continuing professional development.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the provider was asked to improve the accessibility of the first aid box; to provide fresh drinking water at all times; to improve contingency arrangements for unexpected staff absences; to ensure that children are kept interested in activities; to expand

sickness policies. All of these recommendations have been addressed and now safeguard the children's health, safety and welfare.

At the last inspection of funded children, the provider was asked to improve opportunities for children to independently access toys and equipment and to improve planning with regard to children's individual needs. Children's self-help skills are now effectively promoted as they independently access all toys and equipment. Activity planning now takes account of and accommodates all children's needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the locks on the inside of the toilet doors are made safe or inaccessible to children
- ensure that the hall is maintained at a satisfactory temperature at all times

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that parents are provided with information that links their children's progress to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk