

Caterpillars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224217
Inspection date	17 September 2007
Inspector	Dianne Andrews
Setting Address	Pre-School Unit, Stocks Lane, Welshampton, Ellesmere, Shropshire, SY12 0PG
Telephone number	01948 710 123
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Registered person	Welshampton Caterpillars Pre School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Welshampton Caterpillars Pre-School was registered in 1992. It is situated in a single storey demountable in the grounds of the local primary school in Welshampton. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is registered to provide care for up to 18 children from two years to under five years old. There are presently 18 children on roll. This includes children in receipt of funded nursery education. Children can access a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those speaking English as an additional language. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:30 and 12:30 to 15:00 on a Thursday. The group offers a lunchtime club for children who attend in the mornings.

There are four members of staff who hold childcare qualifications. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and is accredited through the quality assurance scheme Growing Together.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene through effective, consistent daily activities. All the children conscientiously wash their hands appropriately, for example, before eating or after outdoor play. They show good levels of independence as they visit the toilets by themselves, or use tissues to wipe their noses. Staff show children good role models by washing their own hands and wiping down tables and furniture before and after meals. Areas used by the children are clean and hygienic, however, the nappy changing mat is split and may harbour germs, leading to cross-infection. Parents are informed about infectious illnesses through well-researched information on the notice board, this promotes children's good health.

There are rigorous systems in place to record accidents and medication; accidents are recorded on individually numbered sheets, which are countersigned by parents to ensure they are fully aware of the details. Children receive appropriate treatment as all the staff have up to date first aid training. Emergency telephone numbers are easily accessible in case parents or appropriate professionals need to be contacted, although the document that enables staff to seek emergency medical help or advice refers specifically to the transportation in an ambulance and not to the seeking of medical advice if a child is ill.

Children develop their interest in physical activities as they play active games in the outdoor play area or indoors. They play outside each day and enjoy a wide range of activities, such as using wheeled toys or bats and balls. Indoors they play active games, such as music and movement to extend their physical skills.

Children sit together at snack and lunchtime to enjoy a relaxed and social occasion, where they chat with staff and each other and share news about their day. They benefit from a varied selection of fresh fruits at snack time, which encourages them to sample new foods and promotes healthy choices. Planned activities, such as healthy eating lotto, also promote children's awareness of a healthy lifestyle. Staff record any allergies or special dietary needs so that children eat appropriate meals, although information from parents is limited in this area and does not fully promote children's well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a safe and secure setting, which is bright, cheerful and well maintained. The play space is well organised so children move around with ease. They play safely both indoors and out as most risks have been identified and minimised, although children's safety is potentially compromised at times as the bolt on the kitchen door is not fully effective, leaving the kitchen area accessible.

There is an extensive range of resources, which are displayed well so children help themselves and develop their independence. Risk assessments ensure furniture and equipment is safe and in good condition. Children maintain their own safe environment as they help to tidy up equipment and put things away. They learn about boundaries that keep them safe outside and in particular, at parents' request, they have practised road safety procedures through meaningful activities.

Staff have a sound understanding of their responsibilities to protect children. However, they have not recorded injuries, which children have on admission to the setting, in order to fully protect their well-being. Key staff have attended necessary child protection training and are supported by appropriate policies and procedures, which are shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Most children separate happily from their parents or are supported by staff to do so and given continuing reassurance in the welcoming and child-friendly environment. They make positive relationships with staff and their peers and spend the majority of their time playing together purposefully. They are encouraged by staff to develop pride in their achievements and see many examples of their work adorned on the walls and ceilings. 'Birth to three matters' is reflected in the group's good practice; staff have introduced the framework into their planning and assessment for children under the age of three years.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from a good range of practical activities because staff are aware of how children learn and have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They support and guide children with skill and sensitivity and take many opportunities to extend children's independence and learning in most areas by increasing the level of challenge in their activities. Children are eager and enthusiastic as they freely select from the extensive range of toys and resources. Staff are skilled in using open-ended questions to challenge and motivate children so that they make good progress in all areas of learning. They are sensitive in their management of children and their behaviour and provide a stimulating and welcoming environment, which reflects children's backgrounds and the wider community.

Staff make regular assessments of each child's progress, they use the information recorded and their informal knowledge of the children to inform future planning. Children respond well to the interesting range of planned activities and are enthusiastic learners because staff manage their time effectively to maximise the time they spend with the children. A recently introduced system ensures that staff know new children's starting points, in order to accurately see how children have made progress, however, this information is not available for the majority of children in the setting.

Children become confident and self-assured in their play, negotiating and interacting with others to share their ideas and experiences. They show high levels of concentration and curiosity as they immerse themselves in their play, and when building models showing farming life with the construction toys, they enthusiastically talk about events in their own lives. Children develop independence as they make choices about their activities and access resources, but opportunities during snack time are missed to develop self-care skills such as pouring their own drinks or helping to prepare their own snacks.

Children have opportunities to make marks and develop their writing skills, for instance when using the large chalk boards in the outdoor area and using the writing area, which is stocked with interesting stationery and resources. The environment is well-labelled, helping children to understand that text carries meaning, however, children do not contribute to the labelling or attempt to write their own names on any work they produce. They learn about stories and generally enjoy story time as a large group. They take part in practical activities such as making a story board of a familiar and well-loved book. Although there is a wide selection of books

available in the setting, the book areas are not well planned to encourage the enjoyment of reading during free-play activity times.

Children have a firm understanding of mathematical concepts, they enjoy practical activities, such as learning to weigh, calculate and estimate with a range of everyday materials. Songs, stories and rhymes help them learn about numbers and most count objects or themselves confidently to ten or beyond. They use mathematical language easily in their play, such as higher or lighter, and name shapes such as rectangles, circles and squares. They enjoy problem solving through planned activities for instance matching and sorting, but spontaneous opportunities to develop early calculation skills are missed within the daily routine.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well through a good range of practical activities, such as looking at cultural festivals and thematic activities about travel. Visitors to the settings and regular outings ensure children learn about their local community and develop their sense of belonging. They benefit from access to a wide range of interesting creative materials which help them develop their imaginations. They make mobiles, using tools such as scissors and glue spreaders with competence, confidently cutting out shapes and discussing suitable joining materials with staff. Music helps children explore sounds; they enthusiastically move to music from around the world, expressing their feelings and interpreting the mood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are helped to develop their individuality and self-esteem because staff get to know each of them and their families in the small community extremely well. Children are learning to recognise and respect the needs of others, for example, older children are keen to offer support to the younger children in the group. All children are included and have equal opportunity to access resources and equipment that meets their individual needs, so that they can become confident and independent. They have opportunities to play with a range of resources, which help them to value diversity and they take part in planned activities that help them to understand how others live, such as, looking at aspects of the Diwali festival of light. The Special Educational Needs co-ordinator works closely with parents and other professionals to support children's learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Most children behave well or are reminded of the rules of expected behaviour by staff who provide positive role models by being calm and polite. Children are familiar and comfortable with the routines of the session, quickly choosing a chair for 'busy board' or lining up for washing hands before snack time. Staff use a good range of positive strategies such as star charts to reinforce positive behaviour and show children visually that they are achievers. There are appropriate strategies in place to deal with any unacceptable behaviour if it occurs; one-to-one support is offered to help children settle and make the most of activities. The children are polite and staff positively encourage the use of manners.

Mainly effective information sharing ensures that children are cared for according to their parents' wishes. Basic information about children's specific needs are recorded on the registration forms and parents share information verbally with staff to ensure they are cared for in line with their expectations. However, this detailed information is not always provided in writing to fully promote their well-being. Settling in procedures are flexible to reflect the needs of the child

and parents are welcome to attend for as long as necessary so their children are secure and confident.

The partnership with the parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the development of the service through attendance at committee meetings. They can access information about the setting in a number of ways, for example, on the notice board and through detailed information that is sent home. At present the key workers share information about children's development with parents on an informal basis and once a year, prior to the Annual General Meeting of the committee. This system is not fully effective in offering them an opportunity to discuss their child's development and any issues they have, or to be actively involved in their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are kept safe because the setting has sound strategies in place that ensure staff are suitable and have the appropriate skills to support the children in their care. Care is taken to check references and complete a suitable vetting process. Sufficient staff have the required first aid training so children receive appropriate medical treatment in the event of an accident.

Staff work together very well organising the play space effectively and managing necessary domestic tasks whilst still providing good quality care and support for the children. High priority is given to staff training and currently over half the staff are working towards improving their qualifications, which will further enhance the good practice already evident in the setting.

The leadership and management of the provision of nursery education is good. Children benefit from a stable and motivated staff team who are committed to the education and welfare of the children. Staff appraisals, regular team meetings and evaluation of practices through the 'Growing Together' quality assurance scheme, help staff to identify strengths and areas for development so that they continue to improve the outcomes for children.

Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure they are complete and up to date and contribute to children's health, safety and welfare. Personal information on children is stored safely with regard to confidentiality and is available so appropriate information, such as emergency contact details can be obtained as necessary. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school was asked improve the risk assessment format and review the staff recruitment procedures. Both areas have been improved to meet the requirements of the National Standards and ensure children's safety and well-being.

At the last education inspection the pre-school was asked to provide resources to extend children's skills in writing and in addition and subtraction. Children now have access to a wide range of resources for mark making such as the writing area, chalk boards in the outside area and a writing table. Resources to improve skills in addition and subtraction are used within planned and free-play activities, although opportunities to develop early calculation skills spontaneously during the everyday routine remains a recommendation at this inspection.

The pre-school was also asked to provide a range of materials and objects that work in different ways for different purposes. Children have access to a range resources to enable them to develop

an interest in why things happen and how things work for instance construction kits and a tape recorder. Thematic work further enhances their knowledge in this area.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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.

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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):

- take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection during the nappy changing procedure
- ensure that information from parents regarding any special dietary needs, preferences or food allergies is up to date and detailed enough to enable staff to competently meet the child's needs
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board; this refers to the recording of any injuries present on admission to the setting.

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):

- develop opportunities for children to form recognisable letters, in particular when labelling their paintings or contributing to labelling and text in the environment, and to practise early calculation skills within everyday routines
- develop opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning and progress and to share what they know about their children.

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