



## Somerford Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 305306   |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 03 October 2006  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Susan Patricia Birkenhead  |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Quinta School Grounds, Ullswater Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4LX |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01260 299076   |
| <b>E-mail</b>                  |  |
| <b>Registered person</b>       | Somerford Kindergarten   |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated   |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Somerford Kindergarten is run by Somerford management committee. It opened in 1982 and operates from a pre-fabricated mobile classroom within the grounds of Quinta county primary school, Congleton. Children have access to two play rooms, an outdoor play area and associated facilities. A maximum of 24 children between the ages of two and five years of age may attend at any one time. The Kindergarten is open each week day during term time from 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.30 to 15.00.

There are currently 38 children on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the immediate locality and local rural area. The Kindergarten currently supports children with special needs and there are no children who speak English as an additional language.

The Kindergarten employs 11 members of staff, of these 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications or teaching certificates and none of the staff are currently working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is promoted effectively in the main because of the positive routines and practices established by the staff. Children are developing an awareness of the need to keep themselves healthy and understand why they need to wash their hands after certain activities, such as visiting the toilet, after craft activities or before snack. Children recognise such times within the routine as staff ask children at the end of circle time 'and what do we do now' the children reply, 'wash our hands'. Children carry out these tasks independently and are developing their understanding of why they wash their hands through discussions held. However, children are not provided with plates at snack time to further enhance these positive practices. A sick child policy and procedure, which is shared with parents and carers ensures that they are aware of the group's responsibilities in relation to sick children. As a result, children are cared for within an environment that protects them from the risk of infection.

Children's physical development is well provided for. Daily access to physical play activities and equipment both in and outdoors, is helping in the development of children's physical skills and abilities. Children develop large physical skills, such as climbing and balancing as they use climbing frames and balancing equipment. They are developing small physical and manipulative skills as they access a range of activities and resources. They develop their skills for using scissors, the computer keyboard and mouse, spatulas and manipulate the play dough. Children have opportunities to be outdoors daily as they take part in outdoor activities or walks, which contributes to their well-being.

Children enjoy healthy snacks and drinks mid-morning or mid-afternoon. Children enjoy the fruit and vegetables which are provided by the school daily. This means a consistent approach is maintained between the school and the Kindergarten. Therefore, children's understanding of the importance of healthy eating is promoted from a young age. Staff sit with the children during snack times in smaller groups to promote a socially interactive time for all involved. They discuss aspects of healthy eating further promoting the children's understanding. Children have a choice of drinking water or milk at snack times. Some children pour their drinks skilfully and others require assistance. At other times during their stay they ask staff for a drink when they are thirsty to which they respond. However, drinking water is not freely accessible to children during their play to further promote their independence.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure environment. Staff make good use of the available space to offer children access to a wide range of activities and opportunities both indoors and outdoors. The two rooms available provide different surroundings for the children

to frequent during their stay. The bright, stimulating rooms are set out well prior to the children's arrival to offer a range of free play experiences and more structured activities. Therefore, all areas of the children's development is actively promoted.

Children have access to an extensive range of good quality play materials to support, extend and challenge their learning. Equipment and resources are checked regularly for cleanliness and safety and any damaged items are removed. As a result, children remain safe. Children develop their independence as they make choices about their play, self-selecting toys and equipment from those on offer or requesting alternatives.

Children are cared for in the main within a safe environment; staff have good safety policies and procedures in place to ensure children's safety at all times. Staff are diligent in their care of children and the provision of a safe environment through the use of suitable safety equipment, good staff ratios and supervision. For example, finger guards are fitted to all doors, the exit door has a security system in place and during the inspection 13 children are cared for by six staff. Risks are identified and the details are recorded using the record book in place, this enables early detection and attention is given to ensure safety within the setting. The Pre-school Learning Alliance risk assessment has in the past been completed of all areas the children have access to, however, this has not been reviewed, therefore, the portable appliance tests have not been carried out. Children are learning to keep themselves safe because the staff make them aware of unsafe practices and explain the consequences of their actions. Children learn about fire safety as they practise evacuation drills every half term at least and procedures are displayed within each room.

Children's welfare is carefully considered by staff who have a clear understanding and awareness of the procedures to be followed regarding child protection. Staff are clear about their role within this area and the responsibilities of the designated staff member. A written child protection policy and procedure is available for staff, parents and carers.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and stimulating environment. They are greeted warmly by staff at the door. Children are developing positive relationships with staff and other children due to the motivated staff team and the procedures followed. Children have opportunities to access a good range of adult and child initiated activities. Children arrive happy, they access the different rooms and the range of opportunities offered to them in a confident manner. Any unsettled children are well supported by staff, enabling them to quickly join in with the other children. Children become familiar with the routine through the images displayed on the 'what next ' board which outlines different aspects of their stay. The high staff ratios employed and the positive interaction observed contributes to the children's involvement in interesting and purposeful activities, resulting in their good learning and development. Children have access to a wide range of activities each day; these activities, toys and equipment are rotated regularly throughout the week to sustain children's interest and enjoyment. The good range of resources and equipment supports a planned programme of activities and opportunities in the main. However, the planning does not include aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

## Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The manager and all the staff are actively involved in the planning of a broad and balanced curriculum for the children. This is based on the positive understanding they have developed of the Foundation Stage curriculum through the early years training completed and additional short courses they attend to further extend their knowledge. Children have access to and benefit from the efficient balance of adult led and child initiated experiences. Plans are in the main monitored during the termly meetings involving the staff team. However, there are no formal systems in place for the evaluation of the activities, and the plans developed do not reflect the children's intended learning. Children's learning and development is well supported by a committed staff team. Children's learning, enjoyment and success is achieved in the main through planning, positive experiences and the provision of an extensive range of resources across all six areas of learning. Staff take account of the children's starting points which are assessed during the early weeks of joining the setting. Observations of the children's development are completed by the key workers assigned to them during activities and play they take part in. Such information is recorded and information is transferred to the assessment records held individually. These aspects are used to inform future planning and promote the children's learning, therefore, monitoring their progress towards the early learning goals effectively. The assessment records used highlight statements from the stepping stones in all six areas of learning to describe children's achievements. Assessments in place are supported by the children's work books. All entries are dated and annotated, which contributes to the monitoring of children's progress.

Children are familiar with the routines, and motivated to learn, trying new experiences offered to them. For example, children learn how to use the mouse when accessing the simple computer programmes. Children show great excitement through gestures and facial expressions as they achieve positive results in their attempts to throw the hoops over the stick. They show delight in their reaction and facial expression as they are chosen to receive the ball at circle time. Children are well behaved and conform well at the required times, for example, tidying up and circle times. They are responsive to staff direction and are polite. For example, children say 'excuse me' when attracting the attention of the staff. The children are forming good relationships with the others and show consideration to the staff and each other. For example, one child turns to his friend and says 'come on' as he wants him to follow him into the creative room to play. Older children accompany the younger ones to the bathroom to wash hands as part of the routine at snack time. Children take part in games during circle time to become more familiar with each other and get to know the children's names.

Children in the main are developing their confidence in communicating as they instigate or become involved in conversation with staff and their peers. They are actively encouraged to think for themselves as the staff ask open ended questions during activities, play, circle time and story telling. For example, 'what did you do at the weekend', 'what is the weather like outdoors' and 'what happens to spaghetti when it is cooked'. Therefore, children are regularly encouraged to use language to communicate and demonstrate this as they use words, such as 'wobbly' to describe cooked spaghetti. They are introduced to new words, such as 'hibernate' as staff talk about hedgehogs as part of the current theme. Children respond to simple instructions as the staff ask them to assist in tidying toys away which they do without question. During the circle game staff give the children clues, for example, colour of clothing, hair length

and shoes to enable them to identify individuals to roll the ball to. Therefore, children are learning to use language for thinking. Children learn about written words as many areas are labelled around the room. For example, the storage drawers are labelled with the written word which reflects the content. This enables the children to associate written words with objects to promote their learning. However, associated pictures are not used to further promote the three-year-old's understanding. Children select from the extensive range of books available and are attentive at group story time. Children anticipate what happens next as stories are read to them and staff positively encourage their interaction. For example, staff use visual aids, such as puppets to capture the children's involvement and maintain their interest. Some children show a keen interest in books as they access them independently and attempt to tell the story using the pictures. This is further promoted through the book loan system in place. Children access writing materials freely available around the setting indoors and outdoors where they pretend to write letters and make marks using a variety of resources. For example, pencils, felt pens, wipe clean boards and chalks. They develop their writing skills and sometimes give meaning to marks they make. For example, older children attempt to write their names on their pictures at the top of the page. They skilfully draw woodland creatures, such as moles, owls and squirrels which are annotated by the staff.

Children count confidently and natural opportunities are made available for them to count and develop an awareness of number during every day situations. For example, they count the children present at circle time to 13. They count the number of pieces they fit into the jigsaw tray and count the numbers on the mobile phone to nine. They relay messages to the staff preparing the drinks and snacks informing them of the number of pieces of fruit and beakers are required at snack time when instructed by the staff. Children correctly calculate how many sausages are left as they count their fingers when singing 'five fat sausages frying in a pan'. Other systems in place enable children to measure themselves as they establish 'how many hands high' they are on the chart in place and record their findings. Children learn about shape as they enjoy making jigsaws, they recognise and compare shape and persevere manoeuvring pieces until they fit. Children frequently recognise and identify shape as they select from the different carpet pieces chosen to sit on at circle time, for example, triangle, square, rectangle and circle. They attempt to throw the shaped bean bags into the corresponding holes of the board game, identifying the shapes. As a result, they build their confidence as they become successful and staff praise their achievements.

Children take part in effective activities to enable them to explore and investigate. Children examine the shells available in the sand pit and question if you can make them soft by rubbing them and know they are found on the beach. They investigate construction materials as they play with the 'cogs'. They create patterns and design them effectively to enable them to turn all the cogs by the movement of one wheel. Good use is made of the outdoor area to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the natural world effectively. For example, previous activities have involved children growing sunflowers from seed and planting sweet peas of which the remnants can be seen. Children learn about the natural habitats of woodland creatures through the planned activities connected to the themes they follow, for example, Autumn. They show interest in technology as they access the mobile phones, the computer where some children skilfully manoeuvre the mouse to access simple computer programmes and others are assisted. Children talk about significant things and recognise a sense of time as

they ask if they can 'paint leaves like we did last week'. Children hold their arms outstretched as they explain how far they live from the Kindergarten and comment when asked it is about two and a half miles. Children learn about the world they live in as the photographic evidence shows children making visits to the local post office, post box, the organic farm and the manager's pond, therefore, promoting their interest in the world in which they live and the local community. Visitors to the setting enable children to develop their understanding of the roles people play as they share their experiences with them. For example, the mother and her new baby, the hair dresser, the physiotherapist, the pilot and the flight attendant. Children begin to learn about the wider world effectively through the good range of resources accessible to promote diversity. For example, the range of multicultural dressing up clothes, ethnically correct dolls, play food, jigsaws and books. However, resources to promote children's understanding of disability are not fully represented. They complete creative activities and sample various foods from different cultures. They celebrate different festivals during the year which include Christmas, Easter, Diwali and Chinese New Year.

Children are making good progress in their physical development. They have regular, daily opportunities to promote and develop their skills effectively both indoors and outdoors using a wide range of resources, which they use confidently. For example, the climbing apparatus, the trampoline, the bicycles, hoops, balancing beams, the stilts and controlled indoor games for throwing. Therefore, children are learning to develop control and co-ordination over their bodies. Children learn to negotiate available space during movement to rhymes they sing, sitting at circle time using the carpet pieces to define their own space and manoeuvring the bicycles in the outdoor play area. Children show competence in the use of scissors, writing materials and tools for cutting and making patterns in the play dough. Where necessary staff guide and support their efforts to further extend their ability. They skilfully use the spatulas taking care not to apply too much glue by wiping it against the side of the container. Therefore, developing their finer manipulative skills with increasing control.

Children are provided with many worthwhile opportunities and experiences to express themselves creatively using a variety of media and techniques. For example, the wall displays reflect the varied materials used to explore texture, such as corrugated card, egg shells, wool, pipe cleaners, leaves and shiny paper. The decorate the hedgehog pictures they make with spaghetti for the spikes, 'wobbly eyes' and a 'pom pom' for the nose. Children are provided with opportunities to express themselves creatively in their art work and the results are taken home or entered into their work books. However, there is a high proportion of adult led creative work used for the displays around the rooms. Children enjoy tactile play using sand, water, ice, shaving foam and play dough, some aspects are reflected in the photographic evidence available. Children confidently express themselves through joining in with familiar action rhymes and songs as a group. They learn about rhythm as they move their bodies and learn to play instruments in time to the music. Children have opportunities to use their imagination as the role play area changes purpose to include the 'home corner', the 'take away' and various other themes. Children adopt the role of the fireman as they dress up in the hats available and use the book corner as the fire engine. They imitate the noise of the fire engine and rush to put out a fire making sounds to imitate the noise of the fire hose demonstrating good imaginary skills prompted by props in place.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children are included in all the activities provided; staff develop knowledge of their individual needs and circumstances through information obtained from parents initially. Children are encouraged to think about and consider the needs of others. For example, staff ask the older children to look out for the younger as they visit the bathroom, which they do by holding their hands, showing them the way. They are developing a good understanding of their local community through the visits they make, for example, to the local shop to purchase goods. They are developing relationships with the school to assist in their transition. They celebrate various festivals, such as Chinese New Year, Diwali, Christmas and Easter and respect individual cultures and beliefs. Children are encouraged to share and take turns when developing consideration for others. Access to a range of appropriate resources, promotes children's understanding of diversity. For example, ethnically correct dolls, books and jigsaws which reflect race and culture. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

Staff work effectively with parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure that children who have special needs are appropriately cared for. For example, the setting provides one to one support, they include the child development centre and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the area, with the consent of their parents and carers. Staff have regard to the 'code of practice' when assessing the children's individual needs. They produce Individual Educational Plans (IEP) for children and promote inclusion of all by moderating their approaches to play and activities. For example, the picture cards to denote situations, such as outdoor play and circle time, hand washing and snack time are used to further promote children's understanding. A written special educational needs policy is in place, however, this lacks some detail regarding the up to date legislation which applies.

Children's behaviour is good as a direct result of effective staff interaction and involvement with children in their activities. Staff use symbols which are shown to children, which reflect 'good listening', 'good sitting' and other aspects of their behaviour to reinforce positive practices. Children receive lots of positive praise and encouragement for their good behaviour, attempts and achievements. This successfully fosters children's self-confidence and self-esteem. Staff are good role models, showing respect and consideration for children, each other, parents and carers. Children share, take turns and develop friendships. Basic rules are displayed effectively in picture format around the rooms, for example, 'no hitting', 'no kicking', 'no pushing' and 'no running' to further promote responsible behaviour. Staff approach situations calmly and provide explanations to children when their behaviour is considered unacceptable. Where necessary they would work with parents to provide consistent management of situations. The written behaviour and discipline policy is shared with parents making them aware of the practices followed.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Introductions to the Kindergarten are managed well because parents are given detailed information about the setting regarding the policies and procedures, which they sign to say they have read. They receive information about funded places and aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. In addition, the parents provide information which outlines the individual needs of the children, therefore, children benefit

from the effective exchange of information between their parents, carers and staff. Parents complete the 'all about me record' which informs key workers of the child's family members, pets at home, what they like doing and children's favourites. Effective home links are in place to encourage parents to continue the children's learning at home. For example, children can take books home on loan to share. The list displayed makes parents aware of the themes followed and related tasks suggesting ways of continuing their learning at home. Children take the 'Panda' home and record his adventures which are shared with the Kindergarten. For example, the 'Panda' has visited places, such as Scotland, Cyprus, Chester Zoo and has been taken on bike rides. Children's development records are shared with parents to which they can contribute to by choice. These are accessible for parents to see at any time and aspects of their development may be discussed upon collection of their child. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the running of the pre-school as they are encouraged to join the committee, take part in fund raising events and receive a newsletter on a termly basis. Parents have contributed in other ways, such as decorating the toilet areas with attractive murals, provided painted shapes of animals and spaceships to decorate the building outdoors. They accompany the children on visits to places of interest, for example, the farm to provide an increase child to adult ratio. Good use is made of the notice boards where information is displayed for parents about the staff, the themes followed, planning of activities and more. This ensures parents have access to information about the planning of activities weekly and how the early learning goals are incorporated into the children's play and activities. Therefore, parents are kept informed of how their children's learning is promoted within the setting. The parents share positive and complimentary comments about the Kindergarten and their children's learning and enjoyment.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Established systems are in place for the recording of staff employed. These include details of the training they attended, qualifications, clearance and personal details. However, such systems are not in place for the clearance of the committee members and as a result members of the committee have not completed the necessary clearance through Ofsted. This, therefore, constitutes a breach in regulation and as a result adversely affects the children's welfare.

There is a very high ratio of qualified staff within the team, who are very experienced in both childcare and education. For example, 10 of the 11 staff employed hold recognised early years qualifications or teaching certificates. They are aware of how children develop and are able to plan for children's good learning. Staff are committed to attending additional training and have attended short courses to further enhance their knowledge and understanding of some areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, there are no systems in place for the completion of appraisals with the staff. Staff are very clear about their individual roles and responsibilities within the group on a daily basis and have designated roles within the staff team that are displayed on the rota in place.

The written policies and procedures in the main provide sufficient detail of the Kindergarten's practices and procedures. These are reviewed and updated regularly or as changes occur. However, minimal changes are identified, for example, the special needs policy does not refer

to current legislation. All legally required documentation that contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is generally in place. However, minimal attention is necessary to ensure that the completed risk assessments are reviewed regularly.

The confidentiality of records is respected as they are all stored in a lockable filing cabinet. Entries to accident, incident and medication records are individual to the child concerned. Parents acknowledge entry by signing against the details recorded.

The leadership and management is good. The manager is clear about her role and that of the deputies and staff employed. All the staff are actively involved in the planning of activities and assessments carried out to ensure children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Information gained is sufficiently used to guide future planning. A good level of photographic evidence is provided to reflect areas of learning the children encounter and some are positively linked to the areas of learning. Regular planning meetings, training attended, occasional attendance at cluster meetings locally and the support from outside agencies is encouraged. This ensures the educational provision is monitored and developed appropriately.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children for whom care is provided.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

During the last care inspection the provider was requested to give attention to certain aspects of the documentation which included: obtaining parental consent for the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment; making parents aware of the child protection policy and to record the contact numbers for the police and social services and ensuring the written complaints policy reflects the contact number for the regulating body Ofsted. Since the last inspection all recommendations made have since been addressed and all aspects are now included in the documentation available. Therefore, making parents familiar with practices followed and ensuring the children's welfare is maintained.

During the last Nursery Education inspection the provider was requested to further develop ways in which observations and assessments of the children, made by parents and carers may be recorded and used to complement those made by staff. Since the last inspection the Kindergarten have implemented ways to involve the parents and carers in the assessment and observations of the children. As a result, parents feel they can contribute by choice to the records held. They are given opportunities to develop their learning at home through the home links displayed. In addition, they record the children's adventures with the visiting 'Panda' they take home on loan. Therefore, involving the parents in the children's learning and assessments which further benefit the children.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. 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 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):

- further enhance the good hygiene practices at snack time by providing plates for the children and enable children to access drinking water independently during their stay
- ensure risk assessments are reviewed regularly and portable appliance testing is completed
- develop robust systems to ensure all committee members complete the necessary clearance.

#### 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):

- further enhance the planning of activities in place by reflecting the children's intended learning and evaluating activities completed
- provide pictures to illustrate labelling of resources to enable children to associate written words with objects
- ensure the displays around the rooms reflect children's individual creativity.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)