

Carmel Caterpillars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127083
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Inspector	Freeda Wildon
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Registered person	The Trustees of Carmel 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?

Carmel Caterpillars Pre-School opened in 1974 and operates from a church hall in Sittingbourne, Kent. The pre-school operates term time only, Tuesday to Friday, from 09:15 to 14:45. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time.

There are currently 61 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these 34 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school has experience supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 10 staff. Of these nine, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

The setting receives support from a teacher from the local authority. In November 2006 Carmel Caterpillars Pre-School was given the title of Leading Early Years Team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a nurturing environment. Their health is well maintained because staff have a good understanding of health and hygiene procedures. Effective practices are in place to prevent the spread of infection; for example, nappy changing procedures and the cleaning of tables before snack time with anti-bacterial spray. Children learn why good practice is important through activities and the daily routine. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. All staff hold a current first aid qualification, consequently, they are able to deal appropriately with injuries. Parents are informed about accidents on the day through written confidential records. This allows parents to continue the care at home. A sick child policy ensures that children are protected from infectious diseases. Staff give careful consideration to children's health in warm weather; children are protected from the sun through canopy, hats and sun block.

Children have a good understanding of healthy living because staff provide healthy foods for snack time. They have a variety of fruit, vegetables and breadsticks. During the growing season children grow their own fruit and vegetables which they share at snack time. Parents provide a packed lunch for their child and staff encourage parents to provide healthy foods. However, some foods in their lunch boxes are of less healthy option and high in salt content. Children also learn about healthy eating through the activities. Role play helps children learn about good health. For example, children pretend to go to the dentist and talk about the importance of cleaning their teeth. Children help themselves to water throughout the session from a water dispenser to keep their bodies hydrated.

Children move confidently and in a variety of ways both inside and outside. The outdoor play is very popular with the children; it is used on most days. They confidently use bikes and trikes and show good co-ordination when steering and pedalling. If the weather is extreme children are able to use the climbing frame in doors. Children enthusiastically join in action songs and especially singing along to 'Bob the builder' they jump and pretend to dig.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their play in a warm and welcoming environment. The hall is set up attractively into different work areas, which are labelled, and inviting. Children have independent access to a good selection of equipment and play provision, which are clean and well maintained. The resources are carefully selected to enable the children to initiate their own play. Staff conduct daily formal risk assessments on all areas used by children to ensure risks and hazards are minimised. Recently they have identified that some of the thermostats on the radiators are not working efficiently, as a result, some are too hot. New thermostats have been purchased to replace faulty ones. Staff organise the activities so children do not get close to the radiators. Staff are effectively deployed through the sessions to ensure children's safety, especially during the change from morning to afternoon sessions, when the front door is opened for parents.

Children benefit from a range of procedures to protect against fire because there are fire exits, checked extinguishers and clear signs. Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. Children learn how to keep themselves safe because staff give them gentle safety reminders and through regular

activities such as road safety. Written procedures are in place for outings to ensure children's safety when they are away from the pre-school.

Effective procedures are in place for the collection of children; as a result, children only go home with authorised adults. For example, the password system is implemented when known persons are unable to collect a child. This ensures children's safety. Children are safeguarded because staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. There is current information to refer to and a designated person for child protection. Staff are aware of the need to communicate concerns to that person. This safeguards children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and are eager to play and learn because staff provide interesting activities throughout the session. New starters to the pre-school who are finding separation difficult are comforted by caring staff. Younger children benefit greatly from playing alongside their older peers. Children's independence is well promoted. They visit the toilet when they have the need and help to prepare their snacks. Children independently self-select from a wide range of activities available to them. This enables them to be creative and imaginative. Very supportive staff are always nearby to extend children's play. The outdoor play area is popular amongst children and all areas of learning are covered.

Children are confident and are developing good relationships with staff and other children. They play happily and co-operatively. Staff successfully encourage children to share information in small or large groups. Their achievements are valued and shared with others at group time. Each session children take turns to be 'star of the day', and are given special responsibilities. As a result, children feel valued and important. Staff know the children well and build on their existing knowledge and learn new skills. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to provide activities for younger children. This is not set out formally in the weekly plans but relies on staff's memory. As a result, some activities are not always developmentally appropriate for younger children such as large group work recognising numbers from one to ten out of sequence.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and know how children learn. Through sheer hard work they prepare the environment well so that children have independent access to a full range of equipment covering the six areas of learning. The activities are interesting and stimulating. As a result, children are focused, show good concentration, and are well behaved. All staff assess children's development and each child has an individual play plan. Children are therefore making good progress in their learning.

Children are making very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They are encouraged to take care of their needs, for example, putting on their coats before going into the playground for outdoor activities. They know the routine well and know what is going to happen next; they recognise when it is time to tidy up and get ready for group work. Children are happy and settled at the setting and they shout out loudly and scream excitedly when appropriate. For example, when they play 'What's the time Mr Wolf' in the playground.

Children are confident speakers as they play with their friends and in a large group. They receive regular opportunities to recognise their names because staff have introduced self-registration

and name recognition at snack time. More able children write their names on their art work. They have lots of opportunities to mark make throughout the sessions because staff provide writing materials in the writing area and in the role play area. They make appointments as they pretend play at the dentist. Children are able to use their imagination in many other ways. For example, the dentist becomes a hospital and children pretend to call an ambulance because someone is hurt. In the role play kitchen they cook for their friends mixing fresh vegetables with spices to make a stir fry.

Children sing rhymes and songs and are heard singing along as they play musical instruments in the garden. There is a good selection of books and the book area is attractive and set out with small chairs and a table. Children visit the area to read a book and look at photographs of themselves at work and play. Story time is popular and children sit quietly and concentrate well because they are interested. Staff are skilful at telling the stories using different voice tones and props to hold children's interest. Staff encourage children to use books in different ways such as during investigations. Children look at granite, stones and natural sponges and use books to refer to. Staff extend children's learning by asking open questions to make children think. The pre-school have introduced a book lending library so that children can borrow books to take home to share with parents. Children make their own books on covered topics such as electricity.

Children have many opportunities to use all of their senses; they cook, mix paint and play with rice and soil. A wide range of science equipment is available to the children such as tools, mirrors, magnets and magnifying glasses. As a result, children have plenty of opportunities to explore and investigate. A range of reference materials such as charts, pictures and photographs extends children's learning. Staff support children using the computer and teach them basic computer skills and how to use the mouse.

Children learn simple calculation through number rhymes. Counting is a regular feature of the session when they talk about the number of children present and count the staff. Some children are able to recognise numbers from one to 10 out of sequence. Many activities and materials are available which help children recognise different shapes and sizes such as circle, oval, rectangle and triangle. Children are encouraged to compare and match; they weigh feathers and talk about heavy and light objects. As a result, they are beginning to solve problems, such as weight and volume. At lunch staff lead conversation with the children; they talk about who is sitting next to them and who is sitting opposite them. Children have good opportunities to develop their small muscle skills with a range of tools, such as, hammers, scissors, cutters and knives at snack time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's behaviour is very good because staff value and include everybody. They help to tidy up, they share and take turns. The carefully planned environment means children are occupied and stimulated. Their names are displayed for self-registration and there is a place for their personal belongings. This helps them feel comfortable and part of the group. The excellent settling in programme benefits children enormously. Staff make home visits before children join the pre-school. These visits provide much information to help children's transition from home to pre-school and forge links between home and the staff. Parents are welcome to spend as much time as it takes in the setting to settle their children. Lots of praise and encouragement by staff builds children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff are positive role models, as a result,

children are polite and have formed many positive relationships with adults and with one another.

Children experience good opportunities to develop their awareness of differences and similarities, which enables them to develop a positive attitude to others and gain a balanced view of society. Children celebrate varied festivals such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and Jewish celebrations. Many resources reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability which allow them to feel valued as individuals. Visitors to the setting and planned outings help children learn about the local community. Children are able to express their feelings; recently staff introduced profile books, this allows children to record their interpretation of the chosen activity.

All are welcome to the setting and staff have experience caring for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. There is a named member of staff who is the special educational needs coordinator. She has been trained and has a sensitive and passionate approach to meeting children's individual needs. Staff carefully monitor children's development and work closely with relevant professionals to promote the welfare and development of the child in partnership with parents and carers. Spiritual, moral and social development is fostered.

Parents and children are greeted warmly. They are extremely happy with the care provided at the setting. This is evident in the many 'thank you' cards and information from parents. They receive detailed information through a prospectus and regular news letters. Parents are encouraged to be a parent helper and be involved in their child's activities. A suggestion book and feedback through questionnaires in the term when children leave for school helps the pre-school improve the service to parents. In this term children's achievements are celebrated at a graduation ceremony when parents and their families join in the celebration.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good information on the Foundation Stage and on the activities. Parents discuss children's progress informally during the year and meet with their key worker for open evenings. There is a system in place to assess children's starting points when they enter the pre-school. This enables staff to plot children's progress and make observations to identify their next steps in learning. Parents contribute to their children's learning by bringing in objects for the themes and lending books. They are aware of their child's development records and staff encourage them to look at them and to contribute to these records. As yet parents do not contribute to these records, as a result, they are not fully involved in children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Carmel Caterpillars Pre-school operates two sessions, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. The morning activities are changed so that children who stay for both sessions do not get bored. The organisation of these sessions provides a balance of individual choices, small group and whole group activities. The routine provides quiet times, active play and physical opportunities that children clearly enjoy. Procedures are in place to ensure that all adults working at the setting have undergone checks to establish their suitability. A new committee is in place and checks are in process for suitability.

All mandatory documentation and parental consents are in place and completed correctly with the exception of the staff attendance register. It does not show the times of arrival and departure, this was pointed out and rectified. The certificate of registration is displayed. As a result, parents are easily able to confirm details of the pre-school's registration. All staff are

qualified or working towards to an early years qualification. Each member of staff receives an annual appraisal and has a profile folder which identifies any training needs, and every member of staff evaluates the setting. In addition all staff take responsibility for specific areas such as child protection, health and safety, and behaviour management. A member of staff is employed for administration, consequently, others are able to work closely with the children, resulting in good outcomes for children.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The manager is at the helm and takes full responsibility for the care and education of children; she is supported by hard working qualified staff. The manager is committed to provide the very best for children. She and the staff are able to identify the setting's strengths and weaknesses through reflective practice. Staff are secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They all contribute to the long and medium term plans at staff meetings. As key workers they assess children's development and plan their next steps through individual play plans but they are not involved in the weekly planning. The manager and the deputy take responsibility for the weekly plans and these are not based on individual play plans. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection one recommendation was made to ensure that the child protection procedure complies with local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures. Since the last inspection staff have developed their knowledge and understanding and the child protection policy has been updated to reflect Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

At the previous nursery education inspection there were two key issues identified to improve practice. They were to develop evaluation of activity sheets to ensure all areas are fully evaluated and steps recorded to take any issues further, and to continue to develop arrangements for initial contact with families to facilitate children's progress into the group. The provider has made good progress, resulting in good outcomes for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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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):

- continue to develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and formally plan and provide a range of activities for younger children

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):

- continue to develop partnership with parents and carers by providing them with more opportunities to contribute to their children's development records
- continue to develop the planning so it is based on individual play planning and ensure that all key workers are fully involved in the short term planning [this also applies to care]

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