



Embleton Cygnets Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	401671
Inspection date	12 January 2006
Inspector	Shirley Peart
Setting Address	Vincent Edward C of E Aided 1st School, Embleton, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 3XR
Telephone number	01665 576612
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Registered person	Embleton Cygnets Nursery 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?

Embleton Cygnets Nursery School has been operating for five years. It is located in a rural area based within Vincent Edwards Church of England first School in Embleton, Northumberland. It operates from a classroom. The children also have occasional use of the reception classroom and the school hall. The outdoor yard and field areas are used for outside play. Children who attend are from the local and surrounding areas.

The group is open from Monday to Friday, during term times, from 08.45 until 11.45. There are nine children aged from 2 to under 5 years of age on roll, which includes seven children who are in receipt of funding for nursery education.

The service is managed by a parents committee. There are two permanent members of staff who work with the children. One holds a relevant early years qualification and the other is working towards one.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a very clean environment and they are aware of their own personal care needs. For example, they know when they need the bathroom and that they need to wash their hands before snack time. Children enjoy their healthy snacks of different fruits and milk which ensures that their nutritional needs are met very well. During snack time they independently choose their fruit and talk about what they like and don't like. They clearly enjoy being a helper for the day as they participate fully in giving out the fruit to their peers. They relish the social occasion during snack time.

Relevant paperwork is completed if children have an accident or need medication. Although neither of the nursery staff hold a current first aid certificate, there is a named teacher in school who deals with first aid issues. Staff have identified the need to attend first aid training.

Children have regular opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air, or to participate in planned physical activities in the large hall. This ensures that the children's need for physical play and fresh air is enhanced very well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and child friendly environment. It is well set up and organised so that they move freely and access their toys and equipment independently. There is plenty of floor space so that children can build with the large construction bricks and they can set out the tea cups, plates and food in the role play area easily. Appropriate children's music plays in the background and children's art and craft work is displayed well, which gives a warm, welcoming feel to the room.

Children play with equipment that is age appropriate, good quality, clean and well maintained. Children are safe due to a combination of good practices, routines and staff vigilance. For example, the school is secured by an intercom system, staff observe the children closely on entering and leaving the room and general visual and written risk assessments are in place. Children are learning about how to keep themselves safe, when they explain why they shouldn't run in the nursery.

Appropriate information and procedures are in place regarding child protection. This

ensures that children's welfare is protected appropriately.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children are very happy and settled in their environment. All children leave their parents and carers confidently on entering the group. Younger children happily engage in the same activities as the older children and thoroughly enjoy musical movement and physical play. They make good attempts at copying the older children and have the time and space to explore freely. They benefit from being cared for by attentive, caring staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching is good. Staff provide some very good, well thought out activities based on themes. For example, the 'post office' area gives children good opportunities to develop their language, literacy, social and mathematical skills in a fun way. They use every day, spontaneous play situations to assist children's learning. For example, during tidy up time they help the children to sort the play food into vegetables or fruit, or encourage children to compare the size of the bears during play. They use lots of open ended questions which enable children to think and respond effectively. They are sensitive and recognise the individual needs of the children. Staff give the children lots of encouragement and positive praise and they manage their behaviour very well. Staff are quick to identify and prevent any conflicts or disruption and engage children in active, meaningful play.

Children concentrate very well on their activities, for example, when they design and build their construction with the large building bricks. They have good relationships with the staff and actively seek out their friends to join in with their social play. Children are extremely settled and confident within the setting. They know the routine, can see to their own self care tasks, such as hanging up the dressing up clothes and their behaviour is very good.

Children are very good at explaining what they are doing and hold lively conversations during snack time. They talk eagerly about events that they participate in, such as ballet dancing and what they have done in nursery that morning. They use their observation skills well, as they describe what the weather is like and complete the weather chart. They concentrate well and listen attentively to a story. They use a range of writing materials successfully, for example, when they complete their book on 'People who help us'. They recognise their own written name, or the names of others successfully, during registration and snack time.

Children are gaining a good understanding of size and shape. They know that they have to fold their paper so it fits the envelope and can state that the moon is round. They enjoy simple sorting and colour recognition activities. They point out the biggest, the smallest, the same size and same colour bears, and put them together correctly. Children successfully learn about number during everyday fun activities, such as when they count the amount of children in the group, or count out the number of steps that they need to take, when they play 'What time is it Mr. Wolf'.

Children use various materials in their art work, such as leaves that they have collected, which gives them a good understanding of the natural things in the environment. They operate simple equipment well, such as the toy till, but have limited opportunities to develop their skills in information technology.

Children use their imaginations well and thoroughly enjoy their role play. For example, they post their letters, make cups of tea and pretend to fry the food. They sing enthusiastically and loudly to favourite songs. They follow instructions correctly during musical movement activities and use a range of physical skills well, as they jump successfully and make good attempts to hop and skip. They use a range of equipment successfully, for example, they manage to throw the bean bag into the hoop, pull the hoops over their heads and pass the balls to each other well.

Overall children are making good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are greeted warmly and as individuals on entering the group. Children's choices are acknowledged well, they are able to move around the nursery freely and choose their toys and activities independently. Younger children are gently encouraged to join in with the group activities. For example, they clearly enjoy playing with the large parachute, but are given the chance to play with other toys, while older children sit quietly during story time. Therefore, they benefit from supportive staff who are aware of their developmental needs. Positive images, books, dolls and staff conversations with the children, promote diversity and non stereotypical ideas and play. Completion of individual records and children's profiles, ensures that staff receive sufficient information on the children's needs and what they like and don't like. Therefore, children's needs are met very well.

Appropriate measures are in place should the nursery care for children with special needs. For example, they would obtain information from an advisor based in the local authority.

Children's behaviour is very good. They line up at the door carefully and know that they have to be quiet, when walking through the school to the bathroom or to the hall. They are very helpful, as they confidently give out the place mats and snacks and assist to tidy up and put away the toys in the correct place. They are therefore gaining a good sense of responsible behaviour.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents speak very highly of the nursery provision and the staff. Parents are encouraged to be involved. They come into the group at the end of the session to hear the children sing along to a chosen 'parents' action song. Parents feel that they are welcomed into the group at any time, to discuss any issues with the staff. Staff have friendly relationships with the parents and carers, which helps to develop secure and trusting relationships for the children. There is some very good, useful information in the information booklet, on the display board and regular letters are sent out, so that parents are well informed. However, there is insufficient information available, regarding children's activities, in relation to the

Foundation Stage and their progress through the stepping stones.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Both the leader and deputy have relevant experience in childcare. The leader holds an appropriate qualification and the deputy is working towards one. The parent committee oversees recruitment and selection and suitable procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted. However, Ofsted was not informed of the new person in charge. As the leader and deputy have only been in post since last September, further training has not yet been carried out and they have limited knowledge on the Birth to three matters framework. However, a clear commitment to enhancing their own knowledge and development is apparent. First aid and child protection training is being seen as a priority and training on the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage is also being considered.

Relevant policies and procedures underpin practice well. These are readily available for parents and they are actively encouraged to read and sign them. Staff-child ratios are good and the staff decrease the numbers of children who attend, when two year olds are present.

The leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. Relevant planning is in place and although this is based on the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and the early learning goals, the format was not clearly linked to the stepping stones. Therefore, staff are unsure of how to monitor and assess children's progress throughout the stepping stones, as the assessment system is not yet formalised. However, there is a suitable, general, assessment system in place, which currently focuses on the children's settling in progress. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group was required to; develop staff's knowledge of child protection issues; to ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity; to implement a system to record existing injuries and to keep a written record of any medication administered.

New staff are in post since the last inspection and they are aware of child protection issues. Further training is planned for the near future. There are now sufficient activities and resources relating to equal opportunities. For example, children have the chance to participate in learning about different festivals, such as Chinese New Year. Relevant paperwork is in place to record existing injuries and medication. Staff are aware to update the medication form, to include a space for parents acknowledging signature.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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):

- ensure that key staff obtain relevant first aid training and certificates
- develop knowledge on the Birth to three matters framework and consider using in practice.

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 a clear system for assessing and monitoring children's progress through the stepping stones
- ensure that parents are given sufficient information on the Foundation Stage and on how their children are making progress.

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