



Silsoe Preschool/Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219295
Inspection date	02 March 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	Silsoe Lower School, High Street, SILSOE, Bedfordshire, MK45 4ES
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Registered person	Silsoe Preschool/Playscheme
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Silsoe Pre-school and Play Scheme is managed by a voluntary committee. It opened approximately 30 years ago and operates from one main room within Silsoe Lower School, in the village of Silsoe, Bedfordshire. A maximum of 20 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during term-time and sessions are from 09:00 to 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:15. A lunch club is offered to link the two sessions. The play scheme opens during the Summer and Easter

holidays from 09:00 to 16:00. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

With regard to the pre-school, there are currently 36 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for nursery education. The play scheme currently has 50 children aged from 2 to under 8 years on roll. Children come from the local and surrounding community. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and is able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs eight staff. Five of the staff, including the managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The group is accredited through the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) accreditation scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. They are learning good health and personal hygiene practices through following practical daily routines, such as washing their hands before snack time and after playing outside. Their understanding of the relevance of these practices is developed through discussions about germs and the use of resources such as books which present these issues in a child-friendly manner.

Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are clearly documented and staff ensure that these are respected. Their growth and development are promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of healthy eating and offer children a variety of nutritious foods at snack time, including fresh fruit, breadsticks, pitta bread and dips. Parents are given guidance about appropriate foods to be included in children's lunch boxes, ensuring that healthy eating is consistently promoted. Children's knowledge of different food types and where food comes from is developed through topic work such as food tasting sessions, and through growing and cooking a variety of vegetables such as sweetcorn, carrots and pumpkins. However, their understanding of social expectations is not consistently promoted as they do not use plates at snack time.

Children participate in a variety of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Very good use is made of the outdoor play area, where children enjoy using the climbing frame, ride-on toys, smaller equipment such as balls and hoops, and gardening with a variety of tools such as spades and rakes. They also practise and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in activities such as music and movement sessions, action rhymes and parachute games. They demonstrate good control and skill in smaller physical movements, for example, they competently use the woodwork bench, selecting and using the correct tools for

hammering, clamping materials and sawing wood. Children demonstrate a good level of independence in their personal care, for example, helping themselves to drinks and visiting the bathroom independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where there are colourful posters, their work is displayed and resources are well organised. Their daily safety is given a high priority and staff carry out frequent safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. This area is further promoted as a number of staff have attended additional safety training and a major risk assessment has also been completed. This helps to ensure that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. The daily implementation of practical policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety in all areas, for example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised regularly. However, children's safety could be compromised because staff have hot drinks when they sit with the children at lunch time.

Children's understanding of safety is consistently promoted. They are given clear explanations by staff to help them appreciate the relevance of safety rules, for example, they understand why it is important not to run inside and are involved in activities which promote their understanding of road safety. Children use toys and resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. Staff regularly check these to ensure that they are clean and safe. Children's welfare is very well promoted because staff have attended additional training and have a good knowledge of child protection procedures, ensuring that all relevant details and paperwork are in place to enable them to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They enjoy their time at the pre-school, coming in happily at the start of the session and enthusiastically participating in the activities and play opportunities provided. They are very confident in their relationships with each other and with staff. Their personal development and self-confidence are consistently promoted because staff treat all children as individuals, interacting and offering appropriate support. New children settle well, quickly becoming secure within the setting because staff are calm and confident, and make sure that children receive individual attention and support whenever needed.

Children are in a stimulating environment where resources are clearly labelled and easily accessible. There are colourful posters and displays of their work, providing information and helping children to feel valued and promoting a sense of ownership. They confidently make choices about their play and activities throughout the session. Staff pay attention to getting to know the children and make good use of open

questions and discussions to encourage them to think further and extend their knowledge. Learning is promoted in all areas, for example, very good use is made of the outdoor play area where children are offered an extensive variety of opportunities. They choose tools from the tool board and work competently at the woodwork bench, they enjoy digging and raking the earth and have grown a range of flowers and vegetables. They have also made bird feeders and make use of these and the bird table for watching wild birds. Staff consistently interact with the children whilst outside, making the most of all learning opportunities.

Children attending the holiday play scheme are offered a wide range of activities and opportunities which are well-balanced with the provision of time and space for relaxation and recreation. Staff have paid attention to understanding children's interests and to providing a variety of activities and resources which maintain children's interest and offer variety across the holidays. Children are therefore able to access structured activities such as music sessions, dance, woodwork and drama.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a thorough knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and use appropriate teaching methods. Children spend their time purposefully because staff are skilled in monitoring them throughout the session, allowing them to develop their own ideas but quickly noticing when they need encouragement and direction. Children's progress in all areas is well-balanced as staff use detailed assessment methods, using information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered in future activities. However, structured activities are not always evaluated and some activity plans do not state how the activity will be extended or adapted to suit individual children, which could lead to missed opportunities to promote individual learning and development.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities. These include opportunities to engage in imaginative role play scenarios, exploration of music, use of information technology equipment, reading and a wide variety of crafts and construction. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a variety of themed topics, enabling them to look more closely at subjects such as the weather, communication, mini beasts, hibernation and migration. Children interact well with others, confidently initiating conversations and using language to explain their thoughts and negotiate plans and activities. An example of this is a group of children involved in role play, organising turns at acting as the doctors and patients, discussing possible treatments and organising 'home visits'. Children enjoy listening to stories and are beginning to communicate through writing, for example, older children are able to recognise and form letters of the alphabet and write their names and simple words.

Children persevere at tasks and are motivated and enthusiastic about their play and activities, for example, building a 'model airplane' using wood, nails and plastic, then confidently naming and explaining the various working parts such as the 'control knob' and propeller. They are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. Examples of such experiments include growing seeds, making spirals

and hanging these at different heights to see that hot air rises, and making a 'tornado in a jar'.

Children show developing skills in mathematics and are beginning to see connections and relationships in numbers. An example of this is children discussing different ages with a staff member. They talked about how old each child was, how old they think staff members are, then thought whether staff members were old enough to have children or grandchildren, recognising the relationship between bigger numbers and older ages and what this might mean.

Children are gaining an awareness of their own culture and that of others through activities, discussions and regular access to resources such as dressing-up clothes, books and puzzles, which provide both information and positive images. They are gaining an understanding of their community through visiting local facilities and through the attendance at the group of visitors such as the police, a nurse, the vicar, the Woodland Trust, a vet, a dentist and a recycling group. Children enjoy opportunities to explore music and rhythm, for example, making their own musical instruments and participating in experiments to change sounds.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are welcomed and are offered a wide variety of opportunities and learning experiences, underpinned by highly appropriate support from staff, ensuring that all are able to participate and develop to their full potential. Children are respected at all times and play an active part in the pre-school because staff value their individuality and the family context for each child. This is further strengthened by staff's excellent knowledge and the setting's comprehensive policies, which give practical guidance on a variety of issues such as the implications of child protection procedures and working with children who are cared for by the local authority.

Children are offered a creative range of play opportunities and activities which promote their understanding of society and their local community and increase their appreciation of differences, other cultures and ways of life. An example of this is an activity where children looked at differences, studying pictures and reference books, discussing different skin tones and hair types, and finally studying themselves in a mirror and producing self-portraits. Children have also been involved in a wide range of fund-raising activities which increases their understanding of other people's needs, for example, making Christmas boxes to send overseas, organising the village Easter egg hunt and involvement in national and local appeals.

Children's behaviour is excellent throughout the sessions as they confidently choose activities and competently organise turn-taking and sharing. Staff are highly skilled in managing children's behaviour, setting consistent boundaries and always offering clear explanations so that children are able to take responsibility for their own actions. Staff act as excellent role models, always remaining calm and polite. Children mirror this behaviour, creating a busy atmosphere within the setting, with all children fully occupied, confident to choose resources and say what they want, but respectful of each other and mindful of individual needs. Children respond very well

to staff, and this exceptionally positive approach ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified and consistently met as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is consistently implemented. They have attended additional training and have much experience of working with children who have varying needs. Children have individual plans which set realistic targets and are reviewed on a regular basis. These relate directly to their needs and are referenced to the Foundation Stage Curriculum, enhancing their balanced development in all areas. Staff demonstrate great skill and sensitivity, reviewing all procedures to ensure that children are offered equality of opportunity, and working with individual children and parents to make sure that all are included in activities and daily routines.

In connection with the provision of funded nursery education, the quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff and committee members show a great commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. There is a comprehensive range of information readily available to parents providing details about the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and how children can be offered learning experiences through play and resources. Parents are kept exceptionally well informed of their children's progress through daily discussions with staff, monthly newsletters, regular written progress reports and meetings with staff. There are informative notices containing a wealth of information about topics such as the current themes and activities, curriculum guidance, snack menus, health and safety. Staff also make regular use of questionnaires to gather feedback and ideas, responding positively to these and setting new goals. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and high quality care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the needs of all children attending are met. Children benefit from the care provided by experienced, qualified staff and from their attention to detail and good organisation of all areas. Their care is further enhanced because of the excellent support given by the voluntary committee, who ensure that all areas of the pre-school are running efficiently and that staff are well-supported. There are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. A clear staff induction process, regular supervision and ongoing monitoring ensure that the pre-school's policies and procedures are understood by all and are consistently applied.

Children's play opportunities are further enhanced by the good organisation of space. They are able to move safely and freely between activities, enabling them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Good organisation of all play areas ensures that children are offered a wide range of activities and opportunities both within the building and outside, for example, children are able to make full use of the outdoor play area because staff continuously assess the situation, deploying staff

wherever they are needed throughout the session.

In connection with the provision of funded nursery education, the quality of leadership and management is good. Children's learning and development is enhanced and their overall welfare promoted by the clear understanding that the managers have of their roles and responsibilities, ensuring that they are fully aware of all regulations. Both managers and committee members act as good role models, attending additional training and demonstrating their genuine enthusiasm and enjoyment of their work. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting, helping all staff to feel valued and motivated. All sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of activities throughout the week. Children are always given sufficient time and resources to complete their activities and tasks. Their progress is tracked through ongoing assessments and monitoring. Staff pay attention when planning future work, ensuring that the needs of individuals are met and the development of all children is promoted.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the group was asked to ensure that staffing levels are maintained at all times and ensure that children are not able to access the main school area unsupervised. Staff now pay particular attention to this, ensuring that correct ratios are maintained indoors and outside and that children are always appropriately supervised. A door alarm has been fitted to the internal door, alerting staff whenever this is opened. These measures further improve the safety of the children. The group was also asked to update the complaints procedure. This has been reviewed and updated, contains all relevant information and is readily available to parents, ensuring that all are aware of the correct procedure.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the group was asked to develop planned activities for the outdoor area. They now provide a wide range of activities and resources in this area, further promoting children's development and physical skills.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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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):

- review the procedure for staff having hot drinks at lunch time, assessing the risks to children and demonstrating that these will be removed or minimised
- further develop the procedure at snack time to increase children's understanding.

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 the activity planning procedure so that this clearly demonstrates how the activity will be adapted, how it was evaluated and how this information will feed future 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 *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk