



Old Hall Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315229
Inspection date	15 March 2006
Inspector	Janice Shaw
Setting Address	Old Hall Community Centre, Old Hall Road, Old Hall, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 5QA
Telephone number	01925 635 903
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Registered person	Old Hall Pre-School Committee
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?

Old Hall Pre-School opened in 1985. It operates from the community room attached to the local primary school in the Old Hall area of Warrington. It is situated in close proximity to a residential area.

There are currently 56 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 40 nursery funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have special needs and for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school opens four days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays and from 12.30 until 3.00 on Monday, Thursday and Friday.

There are six full time staff who work with the children, five of whom have an early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well protected as a result of effective day-to-day practices within the pre-school. Their individual health needs are thoroughly discussed with parents and competently addressed by staff. If children become upset whilst at the pre-school, they are sensitively cared for and parents contacted if necessary. Staff keep up to date with their first aid training and are therefore able to care for children appropriately in the event of accidents or illness. Children are learning to wash their hands before they eat, after messy play, or after using the bathroom and independently access the liquid soap and towels. As a result, children are beginning to understand their own role in keeping themselves healthy. All children have good opportunities for quiet activities or to rest in the comfortable book area according to their individual needs.

Snack times are good social occasions where children sit in small groups and chat happily with each other and staff. Children have an input into the snack menu and each week in circle time they discuss and choose from an extensive list the selection they would like for the following week. Their level of maturity is acknowledged, as children take turns to help set the table and help themselves from a varied range of nutritious snacks. Children skilfully and freely pour themselves drinks of water during the session and one child could be heard discussing with another how much he liked water, whilst encouraging his friend to drink his.

Children are learning the importance of physical activity in keeping themselves healthy. They enjoy well balanced routines that provide excellent opportunities, regarding physical health. Outdoor play is an integral part of the children's day and is used like an additional room where a varied and stimulating range of equipment and activities is available for the children. For example, children are involved in a variety of painting activities, water play and the re planting of bedding plants bought at the garden centre. All children benefit from these enjoyable activities that help them to develop both large and small physical skills. Most demonstrate good spatial awareness and control their body movements very well whilst walking, running, climbing and negotiating obstacles. Some children recognise it as a good means of getting fresh air which they understand as being good for them. Children are learning to move around confidently, many select and use one-handed tools and equipment well. They enjoy model-making and construction; many use small tools and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well protected as they play in a safe, secure, child-friendly environment. Premises are warm and welcoming and children's safety is given high priority; both indoors and on outings. For example, the manager ensures that there are always sufficient staff on duty to ensure that children are well supervised at all times. Formal risk assessments are completed on a regular basis for all areas of the pre-school, including outings. However, the lack of a cover on a florescent light presents as a risk to children. Children are learning good strategies for keeping themselves safe as they walk carefully, throughout the setting and help to keep play areas tidy, thereby minimising potential trip hazards. During role play children re-enacted a recent visit to a local garden centre and demonstrated, through their play, the need to use seat-belts and restraints when travelling in a vehicle. Before going outside children wait by the door and are reminded by staff not to open the doors without an adult. Later in the day, the same theme was approached from a different angle and children pointed out notices on the door for, 'no entry' and 'go', highlighting that children understand the dangers. During the current theme of fairy stories staff sensitively linked this to the 'Stranger Danger' initiative.

Children have free access to a variety of very good quality equipment and play materials, which are regularly checked and well-maintained. Rooms and resources are organised into interesting curriculum areas, and allow children choice and the ability to move around safely and freely. Children's wellbeing is given careful consideration in matters of child protection and as a result, staff demonstrate a secure understanding of their role and responsibility in keeping children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children benefit from well planned daily routines, which allow some elements of flexibility to effectively meet children's individual needs. As a result, children are gaining a good sense of routine and know what is expected of them. Many respond quickly when it is 'tidy-up-time' and eagerly anticipate snack time, put their coats on for outside play and line up to visit the bathroom. Staff have made a sound start at implementing the Birth to three matters framework, which is used satisfactorily to assess younger children's progress. Children, under three years of age, receive a broad range of activities that help them make good progress across all areas of their development. Younger children have some interesting opportunities to self-select resources or to take part in adult-led opportunities. Some enjoy construction or play purposefully with small world equipment. Others enjoy creative activities, such as painting, drawing or collage. They are beginning to develop good concentration skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching is good. Planning effectively covers the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning and is based upon providing reasonable periods of time for children to learn through active play.

Children have a positive attitude and are strongly motivated to learn in the inviting play environment. They make consistent progress in all areas of their development as staff have very secure knowledge of Foundation Stage curriculum. Children benefit from stability and consistency as effective systems are in place throughout the setting for staff to observe children's play and record individual progress. Assessment records effectively identify next steps for each child and are shared with their parents. An "All about me" booklet is completed by parents and used as a useful resource to help staff know children's attainment on entry to the setting. Assessments are supported by files of children's work, which parents find useful in tracking children's progress. During play activities staff are aware of when to stand back and when to intervene sensitively to provide explanations and introduce new ideas to make children think.

Children are interested, excited and motivated to learn. They feel valued because staff show affection and pleasure in their company, which helps foster their self-esteem and their confidence to learn new skills, such as using construction kits and dressing themselves. All children are developing confidence, independence and pride in their achievements. There is a relaxed, happy atmosphere within the setting. Staff praise effort and achievement and children respond well to the staff's realistic expectations of behaviour. This helps them to start learning to play co-operatively and to share and take turns. They are very well behaved and relate well to staff, adults and peers.

All children are developing good language and communication skills. Some talk freely about their home and community or about things that interest them. Most enjoy stories and listen attentively; more able children enjoy recalling narratives or predicting what might happen next, whilst younger children listen and enjoy looking at the illustrations. One child spontaneously started to read the

"three little pigs story" to the children who had sat down for circle time. Props support children's understanding that print carries meaning by the provision of small pads and writing materials in the imaginary play area. Children are learning to link sounds to letters and some can write the first letter of their name. Most children can recognise their name card at self registration time.

Children competently show an interest in numbers as basic calculations are regularly introduced in practical activities, such as counting how many bowls are needed, and how many children are present. When eight adults are counted, one child observes there are nine, as a visitor had not been included, demonstrating his alertness and understanding of number operations. Children are given time to explore, practise new skills and apply their learning in different situations. For example, concepts of colour, number and shape are discussed informally when comparing patterns on domino cards, in the play dough and in a practical shape and number sorting activity in the sand trays. Children are alert and interested as they draw their friend's attention to the triangle shape hidden in the sand and the diamond shape on someone's clothes. This leads to a lively conversation and sharing information about shape and clothes.

A strong interest in the world in which children live is fostered well. For example, they thoroughly enjoy exploring the garden-centre role play area, filling plant-pots with soil, plants, or walking around with bunches of flowers. They know that plants need water

and sunlight to grow. Children happily take their turn on the computer where they confidently complete game programmes on their own or work in a small group with discreet adult support. They skilfully use a laptop at the cash desk in the garden centre and were reminded of their visit with photographs of the garden centre displayed on it. A few children worked very hard to master how to change the photographs, whilst less able children asked staff for help whilst others used it as an electronic till. All children benefit from positive images, and well-planned activities that teach them about different cultures or beliefs.

Children have many opportunities to use a range of media and techniques to express themselves. They are developing good imagination and make good use of body language, gestures and facial expression to indicate their feelings. When using the role play areas children imaginatively play at being the cashier with a laptop in the garden centre and 'sell' tools to their friends. They experience the texture of wet and dry planting materials as they carefully replant bedding plants they had bought on their outing. One child described their role in the activity as "we are planters". Good opportunities are available that help to promote their interest in music, as they sing songs and action rhymes on a daily basis and have regular opportunities to play musical instruments. Children move exceptionally well to music tapes and respond following staff actions enthusiastically.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well-supported, fully included and effectively valued as individuals. Children have good opportunities to contribute to the group and staff take time to listen to what they say. They use a good range of multicultural equipment and see positive images in books and on posters. As a result, children learn to make good connections between their own life and that of others, in the wider world. Proficient practices within the group ensure that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children with special needs are supported well, with effective use made of individual educational plans to foster overall development. Staff know how to signpost parents to appropriate sources of professional support if necessary, and liaise effectively with external specialists, such as speech therapists.

All children benefit from regular routines and consistent boundaries, so that they know what is expected of them. As a result, children's behaviour is very good, they are polite, respectful and well mannered. Children are given purposeful praise and encouragement, thereby boosting their confidence and self-esteem. They are learning to share, take turns and be kind and helpful to one another. This is a result of the good support strategies used by staff who, take time to listen to children and talk about what they are doing together, thereby enhancing children's enjoyment and learning. At snack time when children were helping themselves to snacks one child said to another, "remember to save some for the others", demonstrating his understanding of sharing.

The partnership with parents is good. Children's personal details, and other relevant information, is thoroughly discussed and agreed. Comprehensive records and

informative displays keep parents well informed about children's routines, play and learning. Children bring in artefacts for the current topic and parents are welcomed into the setting. They are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning at home through weekly activity sheets. To support the current garden centre theme, children had done paintings of flowers at home and brought them in for display. Children's progress files are well used to share information about their achievements. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about any changes at the pre-school, current topics and how parents can support them at home. Comments received from parents indicate that they are very happy with the quality of childcare and education provided, and that children enjoy attending the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality and leadership is good. Good team work means that the sessions are well prepared and have reasonable amounts of time for children to complete the variety of interesting activities offered each day, although, there is an over emphasis within the daily routine, for adult led activities. As a result, children do not always have sufficient time to play freely, to explore and experiment independently.

Children's care is enhanced because the space and resources are very well organised throughout the setting. All children are well grouped and have good key-worker support. As a result, staff get to know the children well and children feel secure and confident whilst in the pre-school. They enjoy regular routines and staff make good use of their time to support the children well. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place and they effectively underpin the work of the setting. A clear operational plan is in place that enables staff to successfully provide for children's continuity of care. Documentation systems are well-maintained and all records are up-to-date. Relevant records are regularly shared with parents to keep them fully informed about their child's achievements and progress.

Regular staff meetings and good staff training effectively contributes towards the professional development of the staff. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development and attend external courses regularly, which benefits all areas of the children's care and learning. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and education and have identified that the Birth to three matters framework is an area for future development. Since the previous inspection the setting has been awarded the Pre-School Learning Alliance "Aiming for Quality" award. This is reflected in the very good practise and benefits all areas of children's care and learning. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection there were three recommendations for both parts of the inspection. The setting was required to maximise the amount of natural light that entered the playroom. To review the procures for the personal care of children. Ensure that children with special needs participated in all activities. The curtains now

remain open throughout the session, allowing children a view of the outside and the natural light with in the play room has increased. Children with special needs can now participate in all activities. Children's personal care has now been reviewed and their dignity, and privacy are sensitively catered for.

Within the area of nursery education the setting was required to give children time and opportunities to have conversations with each other and adults and to model language for a range of purposes, for example when requesting, explaining, sharing and instructing. To provide children with opportunities to record numbers and to develop their understanding of shape, position and size. To include time within activities for children to develop their curiosity and to explore and experiment as they draw upon their imagination, creativity and originality. Allow them to make decisions, take risks and play with ideas. Children's conversational skills at are levels is now very good. They now have many very good opportunities within the planning to develop all areas of mathematics appropriately. Children now have more creative opportunities within both adult directed and child initiated activities to explore, experiment and design freely using their imagination.

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 children's safety in relation to the florescent lighting
- continue to develop the Birth to three matters programme and effectively link it into the foundation stage.

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):

- provide children with more opportunities for additional time to consolidate their learning, be curious, explore and experiment whilst in free play.

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