



The Saplings Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY333449
Inspection date	08 June 2006
Inspector	Melissa Cox
Setting Address	Burnham Copse Infant School, Newchurch Road, Tadley, Hampshire, RG26 4HN
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Registered person	Carol Mary Alison Deller-Merricks
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Saplings pre-school opened in 2005. It operates from two rooms in Burnham Copse Infant School in Tadley, Hampshire. There is an outdoor area and grounds, kitchen, toilets and hall. It serves families from the local community, surrounding areas and villages. They are currently registered for 26 children, aged from two to five years and there are currently 32 children from two years to five years on roll. This includes funded three year olds and four year olds. The setting supports a number of

children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:00 until 15:00 during term time and children can attend a variety of sessions. Thirteen members of staff work with the children. Four members of staff have a recognised early years qualification. All staff hold a current first aid certificate. The setting receives support from an advisor from the Early Years Development and Childcare partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is promoted effectively by staff who demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the robust procedures for promoting health and hygiene. Excellent procedures such as, staff consistently wearing disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing sustain high levels of hygiene and help prevent the spread of infection. Children have a clear awareness of their own needs and are developing independence in their personal care. For example, they know to wash their hands before eating their snack and after using the toilet as it stops germs spreading.

Children's healthy growth and development are fostered well as staff show an excellent understanding of their individual dietary requirements. Snack times are very well organised as children sit in small groups at the table. They eat in a relaxed and social atmosphere, as they chat to their peers and staff. Children are developing good manners as they spontaneously say please and thank you to each other when giving out the snacks. The children's independence is very good as they help to serve the drinks and snacks. They learn about the importance of healthy food as they regularly enjoy fruit snacks such as bananas, raisins and tangerines.

Children are adept in their physical skills. They move confidently between areas both in and out of doors. They have good co-ordination and an awareness of others, particularly when riding bikes and wheeled toys outside. Children take part in a range of activities in all areas of learning, which helps to develop both their fine and gross motor skills. They are able to control pencils, scissors and paintbrushes with a good range of activities to develop their manipulative skills. Children move with confidence, they jump off small steps and crawl through tunnels when acting as spacemen on the moon.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from the welcoming surroundings as staff greet them and their parents warmly, which ensures they feel secure and content. The room is bright and stimulating, helping to create a positive learning environment for the children. They have access to a very good range of challenging toys and resources that meet the

learning and developmental needs of the children attending. As a result, the children are very well stimulated and are very motivated in their learning. They are able to make choices for themselves as the play equipment and resources are stored at a low-level to encourage their independence.

Children move freely and safely around the environment, because staff pay good attention to ensuring potential hazards are reduced and children's safety is promoted. Staff's awareness of children's developing abilities helps to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place to avoid dangerous situations and minimise risks. Robust policies and procedures are individual to the setting. They promote the children's safety and well being, supporting all to develop their full potential. In addition, children are learning about keeping themselves safe. For example, staff teach children the importance of using the small chairs and cooking equipment correctly so they do not hurt themselves.

Children are very well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures and give high priority to the children's welfare. This supports children's welfare and ensures the appropriate action is taken to keep children safe from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school. They arrive happy, confident and quickly settle into the routine as they make their own choices about their play. Children take initiative and organise their own learning, they play independently, in small groups as well as enjoying opportunities to work more directly with staff; for example, during a craft activity or when participating in a group music and movement session.

Children receive lots of attention and have a strong bond with staff which increases their sense of wellbeing. Young children are becoming competent learners, as they self-select activities such as puzzles and threading helping to increase their manipulative skills. They have great fun playing with materials, such as play dough. They squeeze and roll the play dough in between their hands and make different shapes using the equipment provided. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Birth to Three Matters framework which has been implemented

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are happy and thoroughly enjoy their time in the pre-school. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to working with children, which they do so very successfully. Children are progressing very well, because of the staff's knowledge of how children learn, they offer the children very good experiences. Staff plan, evaluate and assess children's progress and the effectiveness of activities, in moving children on in their learning. Staff and children interact well together and as a result children enjoy warm and close relationships with all staff members, who listen and question appropriately to extend children's learning.

Children are confident, happy and enthusiastic in participating in activities. They choose and use resources independently, and confidently express their needs, likes and dislikes. They interact well with adults and each other, playing co-operatively in pairs and small groups. They have a good understanding of the boundaries and behavioural expectations of the group and share and take turns very well. They have good levels of concentration and persist at activities for extended periods of time. They have good opportunities to develop their early writing skills and they have access to a good range of reading materials. Children use books independently; they handle books competently and are aware that print and pictures carry meaning. There are excellent opportunities for children to develop further their thinking and communication skills successfully

Children are confident in the use of numbers and are able to count to ten and beyond. They recognise numerals, shapes, are able to match, pattern, weight and measure. Children have very good opportunities to build and construct with a wide range of objects. They are able to use small tools competently. They are able to explore and experiment through a range of activities. Through planned activities children are becoming aware of cultural, religious events and customs of countries around the world.

They are developing good control over their bodies as they have access to a variety of physical activities. For example, they have good opportunities for developing balancing and jumping. Good hand-eye coordination is well promoted as children learn to use pencils, glue sticks and paint brushes with good control. Children express their ideas freely through a good range of activities such as role-play, painting, collage and movement. They use their senses well whilst using a variety of equipment and enjoy exploring sound and rhythm. Children can sing simple songs from memory and they participate actively at singing time. They enjoy the storytelling sessions and become actively involved in the story.

Teaching is inspiring and challenging for all age groups of children. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They provide a purposeful learning environment for the children to learn and develop as individuals. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to providing a rich learning environment for the children. The staff have excellent relationships with parents and cooperate well to meet each child's individual needs. Children play an active part in the setting. They show immense enthusiasm as they make independent choices and select their own activities from good well-presented play equipment and self-selection areas.

Staff work directly with the children. They show an excellent understanding of the individual development needs of the children, helping them to focus on activities such as counting and building and develop good concentration skills. Children throughout the setting are motivated and become engrossed in a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities, indoor and outdoor, which provide good levels of challenge. Staff use good consolidation techniques through repetition, questions and revisiting topics and activities to support the children's learning. Assessments of the children are rigorous. Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge of tracking the children's progress and use the information effectively to guide planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children feel valued in the setting. Relationships are excellent. The play and education provision is organised and monitored well to ensure children have access to the full range of activities. Children arrive at the setting happy and confident. Younger children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents.

Parents and carers are well informed by staff. They share relevant background information, play activities and discuss children's specific needs. A clear and informative notice board with relevant up to date information is accessible to all parents. Children benefit from the open door policy and two way sharing of information, with opportunities for parents to speak to staff to enhance their development and learning. Parents receive very good opportunities to contribute to the assessments made on their child and to be involved in their learning. As a result, parents and carers have a very good understanding of their child's progress.

Staff are proactive in ensuring the needs of all children are being met. They demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the individual needs of the children in their care. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) demonstrates sound knowledge of the fundamental principles of the code of practice. As a result, staff work together with parents, carers and other professional bodies to organise the environment and plan appropriate activities to ensure the children take part at a level appropriate to their needs. Children develop a positive attitude to others through varied positive images displayed around the setting. They visit the local community and develop a secure knowledge of the wider world. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children benefit exceptionally well from staff who adopt a consistent and positive approach to the management of their behaviour. As a result children's behaviour is exemplary. They become aware of the routines and procedures and know what to expect in response to the routine changes in the session. Children know right from wrong, they are sensitive to the needs of others, readily share toys and resources and co-operate with each other.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by the setting's effective and efficient organisation. Staff working with the children are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and consistently promote the children's well being in line with the comprehensive and robust policies and procedures. They demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of the National Standards for Full Day Care and the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance to help children achieve well.

Staff observe children's development and learning and keep detailed systematic records that help them to meet their needs. Children's records are openly shared with

parents and their contributions valued to help them develop their full potential.

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities with relevant induction procedures and good opportunities to receive further training. This is used to help develop their skills in organising a provision that meets the children's needs, keep them healthy and safeguarding their welfare.

The provision for the quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The supervisor is enthusiastic, and well informed about the early years. She evaluates the provision through regular meetings, training and promoting the personal development of herself and all the staff. This results in a happy and focussed team who work effectively to meet the personal development and to promote the achievements of all the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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