



Pied Piper Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220204
Inspection date	12 June 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	Portacabin, Earls Barton Junior School, Broad Street, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN6 0ND
Telephone number	01604 810010
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Registered person	Pied Piper Pre 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?

Pied Piper Pre-school has been open for over 30 years and is run by a voluntary management committee. It operates from one main room in a portacabin in the grounds of Earls Barton Junior School, close to Northampton. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open during term time only on Mondays to Thursdays from 09:15 to 11:45 and 13:15 to 15:25, and on Fridays from 09:15 to 11:45. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play

area.

There are currently 75 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 64 children receive funding for early education. The majority of children come from the village of Earls Barton. The pre-school is able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs seven members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is working towards a qualification.

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. Their understanding of the relevance of these practices is developed through discussions with staff. They are also gaining a good understanding of the relevance of a healthy lifestyle through activities such as topic work looking at healthy eating and through discussions about the effects of exercise on their bodies.

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 and dried fruit, bread and vegetables. Children's knowledge of different food types and where food comes from is developed through topic work which includes growing vegetables such as potatoes, and through discussions, for example, children making beanstalks at the craft table talk about vitamins and foods which are good for you. Their daily health needs are further met as they are encouraged to wear sun hats and to use the shade provided by a gazebo. They are encouraged to drink more during the hot weather and generally have access to drinking water whilst playing outside. However, their health is affected as fresh drinking water is not easily accessible indoors.

Children participate in a wide variety of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Good use is made of the outdoor play area, where children enjoy using the climbing frame, ride-on toys, slides and smaller equipment such as balls and hoops. 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 scissors, glue spreaders, paint rollers and pencils.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work is displayed and resources are well organised. Their daily safety is given a high priority and staff carry out safety checks before each session, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. This area is further promoted as staff have attended additional safety training and a detailed 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 is affected because the water in the hand basins is sometimes too hot.

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 to take turns on equipment such as slides and the climbing frame. Their understanding is further enhanced because they have participated in activities which promote their understanding of safety. For example, they have had visits from the crossing patrol person and from the emergency services and have also made their own crossings and practised using these. 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 come in eagerly and are keen to explore the resources and participate in the activities and play opportunities. Their self-esteem and confidence are consistently promoted because staff are sensitive to each child and offer appropriate support and encouragement. Children's work is displayed, promoting their sense of belonging and value. New children settle well and become secure in their relationships with staff because staff take time to get to know them, making sure that they are aware of all routines. This is supported by the clear records and paperwork, with parents or carers providing details about their children's strengths, dislikes, favourites and routines.

The careful planning of activities ensures that children are consistently offered a wide range of opportunities which are linked to their individual needs and capabilities. Staff are growing in confidence in their understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are beginning to use this in planning and assessment for younger children, further ensuring that their play is fun, purposeful and stimulating. Staff are very caring and experienced, showing their genuine enjoyment of their work and demonstrating this through their constant interaction with the children. For example, a staff member engages a group of children at the craft table in discussions about gardening and allotments, with children eagerly joining in to discuss the vegetables

grown by their parents and grandparents.

Children are able to make choices about their play and learning because all areas are well planned and staff are vigilant, quickly noticing when children need additional support. Children's learning is enhanced because staff are skilled in using daily routines as learning opportunities, for example, children playing with play dough comment that the dough has become sticky. The staff member asks them what the weather is like and they talk about the heat and the fact that the atmosphere is hot and damp, causing the dough to become hot and sticky.

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. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use comprehensive methods for assessing them and for evaluating individual activities, using information gained from this to determine future activities. Children's learning is reinforced through the good linking of play with current themes, for example, during the weekly theme of 'Fairy Tales' where children are looking at the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk', children playing with a large construction set are encouraged to 'build the tallest beanstalk', counting as they pile up the blocks, discussing what grows on a beanstalk and what plants need in order to grow, comparing this to the potatoes they are currently growing, and then following the suggestion made by the staff member to climb up the slide and pretend that it is the beanstalk leading to the giant's castle.

Children's development is enhanced and they are offered a balanced range of activities and play opportunities because staff pay attention to the planning of all areas. The use of weekly themes and topics ensures that children are consistently offered variety and interest. However, some areas of planning do not contain sufficient detail regarding the extension or adaptation of the activity, meaning that some learning opportunities for individual children are missed.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in a wide range of activities. These include regular opportunities such as role play, gardening 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 'Home and Family', where they discuss their address, send a letter to their family, draw pictures of family members, produce maps of their routes from home to pre-school and discuss different types of houses. Children show a sense of belonging as they confidently talk with staff, choose their activities and talk about their work, for example, a child proudly shows a staff member the beanstalk she has made, carefully counting the leaves and discussing how she constructed this.

Children use writing as a means of recording and communication, for example, a group of children playing outside use the drawing boards fixed to the fence to 'write a shopping list', with the older children signing their names on these. Children concentrate and listen to stories, often joining in and anticipating the outcomes. They are developing an awareness of different forms of physical movement and have a good sense of space, moving with control and co-ordination, confidently negotiating

furniture and obstacles as they play and choose their activities. For example, at snack time a child carefully balances a drink on the side of the plate and walks slowly round the table to find a seat, concentrating on balance all the way.

Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape, through activities such as painting, junk modelling, sand play and modelling with dough. They are encouraged to use all senses when investigating objects or activities. For example, whilst covering a theme of 'Senses', they make their own instruments, play at being a marching band, explore textures in a collage and have snacks with strong smells such as lemon and coffee. Children are beginning to use numbers in a meaningful context. An example of this is a child counting bricks, confidently stating the total and recognising that by adding another brick the total will equal the age of their eldest brother. Children are confident in the use of information and communication technology equipment, understanding its uses and handling it with care. For example, they regularly use the computer and use headphones to listen to story tapes. They talk confidently about their experiences and are able to differentiate between past and present. An example of this is children discussing what they had done at the weekend and then switching to discuss the forthcoming village carnival and their entry for this.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are able to feel welcome and valued because staff respect their individuality. Children's self-esteem is promoted and they are developing a positive self-image as a result of the appropriate praise given by staff, and the encouragement to discuss their views and ideas and to listen to others. For example, when the children sit together for registration they discuss recent events in their lives, and are encouraged to listen to each other and appreciate different views and feelings. Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is implemented, working appropriately with individual children to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines.

Children are developing an understanding of the values and needs of others as they participate in a wide variety of opportunities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Christmas, Diwali, Eid and Chinese New Year. Children's understanding of their community is greatly enhanced through their involvement in local activities such as the annual carnival, and through visitors to the setting, including the crossing patrol person, mayor and emergency services. Children are well-behaved throughout the sessions and are kind and considerate to each other and to staff, confidently choosing their activities and organising turn-taking and sharing. They are beginning to take responsibility for their own behaviour because staff give them clear explanations, enabling them to understand the implications of behaviour and make decisions about this. They respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. There is an active commitment to involving parents in the setting and in their children's learning. They are given clear information in the form of a pack when their child starts at the pre-school. They are also given information about current topics and themes and some information about the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. However, this is not sufficiently detailed to enable them to understand fully the relevance of this and to continue their child's learning at home. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through regular discussions with staff and access to their child's records. Children's care and opportunities are enhanced because staff seek feedback from parents, using this to review and improve their practice. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and appropriate care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the care provided by experienced, qualified staff and from their attention to detail and good organisation of all areas. Their care and safety are further promoted because 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. Good forward-planning eases children's progression into school and helps them to become aware of the expectations, for example, staff help with school visits, complete a written report for the child's new teacher and talk with the children about what sort of behaviour will be expected on a daily basis.

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 supervisor and staff have of their roles and responsibilities, ensuring that they are fully aware of all regulations. The supervisor acts as a good role model, attending additional training and demonstrating her genuine enthusiasm and enjoyment of her work. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting, helping all staff to feel valued and motivated and creating a positive atmosphere in which children can learn and develop. 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. 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 conduct a risk assessment of the premises. This has now been completed and covers all major areas, improving the safety of children and staff. They were asked to develop their operational plan and to make a number of changes to policies. The operational plan is now readily available to parents and all policies have been reviewed and contain sufficient detail, for example, there is an outings policy and the child protection statement has been extended to include comprehensive procedures covering all areas, thus enhancing the welfare of children attending. The group was also asked to obtain written parental permission for emergency medical advice or treatment. This is now in place and is readily accessible, promoting the health and safety of children.

At their last inspection of funded nursery education, the group was asked to provide more opportunities for children to develop their independence and extend their thinking. Staff consciously promote this in all areas, for example, children choose their activities throughout the session, pour their own drinks and help prepare their snacks. Staff also consistently make good use of open questions and suggestions to encourage children to think further and extend their learning. The group was asked to increase children's choice of resources with regard to creative activities. Children are now able to access a wide range of craft materials, using these imaginatively to express their ideas. Finally, the group was asked to increase opportunities for children to learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and to solve simple mathematical problems. Children are now involved in activities where they discuss the effects of exercise on their bodies and also talk about healthy eating, creating displays to illustrate this. Staff encourage children to solve simple mathematical problems such as how many more bricks are needed to reach a given total, thus promoting their understanding of this area.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004. 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

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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):

- ensure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- improve children's safety by ensuring that the water in the hand basins is of an appropriate temperature.

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):

- further develop planning methods so that these show how activities will be adapted and extended to promote and extend children's learning
- further develop the information given to parents so that they are aware of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and can continue their children's learning at home.

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