



Vandyke Road Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY320426
Inspection date	04 July 2006
Inspector	Christine Pettitt

Setting Address	St. Georges Lower School, East Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 1EW
Telephone number	01525 372096
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Registered person	Vandyke 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Vandyke Road Pre-School has been operating at new premises in St George's Lower School, Leighton Buzzard since 2006. The group is registered to provide care and education for 18 children from 2 to under 5 years. It takes place in a classroom within the main school building. They have use of adjacent toilet facilities. The group have access to an outside play area. The setting is open from 09.15 to 11.45 on week-days during term time only.

There are 19 children on the roll and 16 of these receive funded nursery education. Children attend from the local and wider community. The provision supports children who have special needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

The staff team consists of three members who work with the children on a full time basis. The manager and one assistant are qualified to level 3. The remaining staff member holds a level 2 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy play in an environment which is hygienic. They are learning personal care as they use the toilets with staff supervision, they wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack-time. The staff team engage in appropriate hygiene practice, they wash their hands after using tissues to wipe a child's nose and give explanations why hands are washed. They ensure cups which are available for children to access a drink during the session are put immediately into the washing-up bowl so they are not reused by other children. This means children observe and learn from their practice. There is a sickness and medication policy, these are contained in the prospectus for parents. This means parents know when they should keep their child at home if they are unwell and minimises the risk of cross-infection. All staff have current first aid certificates.

Children are learning about healthy eating. They have engaged in creating a collage which identifies good and bad foods and have talked about this. Children are offered fruit at some snack-times and at others have a savoury or sweet biscuit. This does not give a consistent message with regard to healthy eating. They have a choice of milk or water to drink and water is available in the fridge for children to access during the session. They enjoy the social occasion of sitting together and have opportunity for children to recognise their name cards so they know where to sit. Parents have completed a questionnaire regarding their child's preferences and allergies with regard to different types of fruit.

Children concentrate well as they engage in activities which encourage their coordination skills. They show prolonged interest as they use screwdrivers and spanners to build and take the wheels off large construction cars. They enjoy a 'magic' painting activity outside and paint with brushes using water and watch the pictures disappear. They balance on the 'wobbly bridge' climbing experience outside and engage in physical activities such as musical movement, running round or use balls in the school hall. Some children use a rocker energetically indoors and discuss with a staff member that their heart is beating faster when they make the rocker go fast. This means they are becoming aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies. There are currently no written plans for outside or physical play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a safe environment where safety precautions are in place and the room is arranged to promote safety. They are supervised by the conscientious staff team who remind children of safety issues during the session. They are reminded to walk indoors and not to run, they queue in an orderly manner to go to the toilets. Children know they should wear trainers for activities in the hall and to do their shoes up in case they trip. They are reminded to be careful and to hold on to the rocker so they don't fall off. There are risk assessments completed for the indoor area but not for outside play. Regular fire drills take place and are recorded. There is a safety policy containing many safety aspects. This means staff have a secure knowledge of appropriate safety practice.

Staff are aware of child protection issues, but none of the current staff team have attended recent child protection training. This means they may not have knowledge of current child protection procedures. There is a child protection policy but this does not include procedures to follow in the event of an allegation against a staff member.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their pre-school experience. This is because the staff team are welcoming, friendly and show a caring approach. Children enter confidently and happily participate in a variety of free play activities and a planned activity each morning. For example, they delight to explore a tray of oats, using scoops to fill buckets. They talk about their buckets being full, half-full or empty. They discuss the smell, texture and feel of the oats, this encourages them to use their senses. Children generally behave well, play harmoniously together and respond positively to staff requests. Once a week the older children spend time with a staff member concentrating on skills which prepare children for school. Younger children engage in all the activities on offer but these are not always adapted for their level of ability. However, staff have attended 'Birth to three matters' training, which is ongoing and aspects of this are being incorporated into the curriculum planning and assessment. This means younger children's developmental needs will be more effectively addressed.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. The setting is developing the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are making progress in curriculum planning. They use a weekly theme and plan the main activity of the morning using plans which define the learning goals, the stepping stones covered, the resources required and the adult role which identifies how to manage the activity. There are no plans for other aspects of the session. This means they cannot ensure that they use other activities to reinforce learning. A staff member is in the process of devising charts to identify the aspects of learning contained in each area of the pre-school, for example, the home corner. These are to be displayed in the appropriate areas of the room for staff and parents to view. This will enable them to be more aware of the opportunities to extend children's progress in

child initiated play activities. Observations and recording of children's progress take place. These do not appear to be routinely recorded. This means children's progress cannot be sufficiently monitored to identify gaps in their learning or the assessments used to plan further activities to extend this. This minimises the ability to promote challenge on an individual basis. Opportunities to record observations are sometimes missed, for example, in the main activity. Children respond well to staff asking them open-ended questions to gauge their understanding. They respond positively to staff requests and their behaviour is managed well. They enjoy a routine with a focus on child initiated play and the offer of an adult-led activity, with staff involvement as they follow the children's preferred play. There is a varied range of age-appropriate resources for free play which are provided on a five weekly rota to promote different experiences for the children each week. Staff use visual aids when they are talking to children about the main activity, for example, shells, rocks and sand for the summer theme. This promotes the children's understanding well.

Most children confidently interact in a large group. They delight to show one another the toys they have brought to pre-school and answer staff questions relating to the colour, size and function of the toy. Children know their full names and have opportunity to recognise their name cards initially and at snack-time. They are beginning to identify the sound of the first letter of their name. Children show interest in books and delight to look at books, they ask staff members to read these to them. Although the older children are learning to write their names, there are missed opportunities for the majority of children to engage in mark making, for example trying to write their names on their pictures or postcards. Children are becoming aware of numbers and some know their door number, the sequence of numbers from one to ten and recognise numerals on the calendar. They hear and use mathematical language regarding weight, height and size. They compare sizes between two dolls and have been engaged in creating height charts discussing words like smallest and tallest.

Children are finding out about the environment through the weekly themes, such as 'Summer'. They talk about the beach, and look at a map to show them the length of journey to get to the sea. They discuss the texture of sand, feel the weight of a rock and listen to the sea as they hold a shell to their ear. They look at postcards and discuss where these are sent from, and how they get to the children's house. They are asked their address and are informed of this if they do not know. Children design their own picture on a post card and hear that it will be posted and the postman would bring it to them in a couple of days. Children have opportunities to use computer games and other technological objects. They engage in activities which promote creativity and imagination. They enjoy drawing pictures on their postcards and telling the staff member what they have drawn so she can label the card. This means children learn that writing is for a purpose. They use play dough to make snakes, and use different mediums such as paint, chalk and crayons to paint, colour and draw. They use different textured materials to create collages and make a beach picture out of tissue, paper shapes and sand. Children delight to play in the home corner pretending they are going on a bus to the seaside. They use the dressing up clothes and enjoy trying on the different clothes. Children practice singing songs for their Teddy Bear's picnic, they are learning the words well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are generally behaving very well. They are learning the boundaries through a consistent approach within the staff team. They know to sit quietly before showing time when they wait for all children to arrive. Children are learning to be polite and say 'please' and 'thank you', for example at snack time for their drinks and snack. They willingly help staff to tidy away play resources after free play-time, putting these into storage boxes. Younger children are learning to share and take turns through reminders when they try to take an object from another child. Staff are positive role models and through their warm, caring and consistent approach towards the children promote positive behaviour.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Children's well-being is promoted through informal channels of communication with the parents. Parents receive a prospectus which includes an overview of the arrangements, some policies and information about the curriculum. This does not currently include information about 'Birth to three matters', or complaints. Parents receive newsletters informing them of past and future events. They can view the current weeks curriculum planning and other related information which is displayed at the entrance. This encourages them to take an interest in their child's learning. Children's progress is observed and recorded. Parents receive a report which includes the child's progress regarding each learning area when their child leaves. The key-workers approach parents about their child's progress on an informal basis. Formal opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress are not offered. This means parents and staff may not always share in the continuing progress of children's learning.

Children and staff work harmoniously together and experience a happy, warm atmosphere. Children enter the provision confidently and happily. They receive constant praise and encouragement from the staff in activities. This makes them feel valued and promotes their self-esteem. Written information is provided by parents before the child commences at pre-school. This includes the child's interests, play preferences, health, family and cultural background. The key-worker system is in place, this provides a consistent contact person for the parent to be able to discuss their child's needs, progress and any concerns. This means staff are made aware initially and have ongoing information of children's individuality. Children with special needs are welcomed and staff are very willing to work with outside agencies, using Individual Education Plans. They currently provide daily individual attention in a specific activity to promote the child's progress. All staff seek to encourage the child's progress throughout the session. This means the child's individual needs are met well. Children are made aware of the diversity of cultures through play resources, books and activities when festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Chinese New Year are celebrated. Overall children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a generally organised provision. The play area is arranged to promote safety and for children to be able to access activities independently. There are defined areas, such as a home and book corner which are identified by a notice in the area. The room is bright, and provides a child-orientated environment through wall displays of children's art work, cultural posters of children, numbers and letters. Activities are displayed attractively to encourage children to participate. The required documentation is in place and is recorded and stored confidentially. There is a set of policies as part of the operational plan. Parents receive a prospectus which provides an overview of the pre-school arrangements, some policies, staffing and curriculum information. Parents provide written information regarding their child before they commence at pre-school. This means staff can encourage a child to settle successfully because they have prior knowledge of the child.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

Practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of child care and the Foundation Stage. The committee and staff are committed to improving practice. An outside agency has been organised to provide training regarding 'Birth to three matters' framework and to help introduce this into the planning and assessment. Staff work very well as a team. There are lists available so staff know which play equipment to set up and plans are displayed to enable staff to know their activity roles. Some procedures such as snack-time are displayed. Recruitment procedures are not robust, there are job descriptions but currently no application forms. There is no staff induction programme, this means there is not a secure procedure to ensure new staff know all the required information. Annual staff appraisals are carried out by the committee, with input from the manager. The current complaints policy and recording of complaints does not conform to the new guidelines. Overall the needs of the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been no complaints since registration.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets

the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- devise robust procedures relating to staffing, this includes recruitment, recording of vetting procedures, and induction of new staff
- enhance the information for parents to include complaints and 'Birth to three matters'
- update knowledge and understanding of child protection and add to the policy procedures to follow if allegations were made against a staff member
- ensure the complaints policy and recording of complaints conforms to the new requirements.

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 opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress at regular intervals and seek to encourage them to be involved in their child's learning
- further develop curriculum planning to include all aspects of the routine and ensure that regular assessment is used to build on children's progress to provide challenge according to their individual stage of development.

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