



Jigsaw Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251535
Inspection date	11 September 2006
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Warren
Setting Address	Sproughton School Grounds, Church Lane, Sproughton, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 3BB
Telephone number	01473 745716
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Registered person	Jigsaw 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?

Jigsaw Pre-School opened over ten years ago and operates from a demountable classroom in the grounds of a primary school in Sroughton, Suffolk. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:10 - 11:40 and on several afternoons from 12:40 - 15:10 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 35 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 14

children receive funding for early education. Children come mainly from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a further qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about aspects of a healthy lifestyle whilst attending the setting. They are encouraged and assisted to wash their hands after messy play, before eating and after using the toilet, and can explain why this is important. They learn basic personal care routines such as wearing protective aprons when needed and changing their shoes for non slip plimsolls before using the climbing apparatus. Visits from people in the community such as the dental hygienist teach children the importance of correct dental health and they enjoy reinforcing their understanding through role play.

They are protected from the risk of infection by the group's policies and procedures regarding exclusion of children who are ill or infectious. Those who become poorly whilst at pre-school are kept comfortable until they are collected by a parent or carer. Children requiring first aid are treated by trained staff, and the details are recorded for a parent or carer to sign.

Children enjoy a nutritious snack and a drink midway through the session to boost energy levels and provide a social occasion where they sit at tables with their friends and staff. Good table manners and independence are encouraged as children are allowed to pour their own drinks and serve themselves with fruit, crackers and spread as soon as they are able to do so. Children with allergies or special dietary requirements are well catered for and staff are vigilant to ensure that no unsuitable foods are given. Children may help themselves to a drink of water at any time, this is available and easily accessible.

Opportunities for physical development are excellent. Children enjoy a range of challenging activities throughout the week such as free play on the large fixed equipment in the school grounds and riding and manoeuvring wheeled toys in the pre-school garden. Small equipment includes balls, hoops and low stilts, developing children's balancing and coordination skills. Sessions of music and movement use stories and rhymes with actions in an imaginative way, helping children use their bodies and become aware of the possibilities for creative movement. A fun sports day is held each summer on the school grounds; children enjoy taking part, cheered on by watching parents and grandparents. Small muscle skills are developed as children use construction kits, mark-making equipment and craft materials for cutting and sticking. Play dough, and occasionally clay, is ever popular and encourages children to use their hands and fingers to mould, press and squeeze as they experiment with the materials.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. They have sufficient furniture and equipment to support their needs and staff continually check for and deal with any maintenance issues and repairs to the building or equipment. Children's security is well considered and staff carefully check children in and out; they cannot leave the playroom unseen and all visitors are screened and identified before entry, when they are asked to sign in and out. Fire drills are practised regularly, recorded in the daily register, so children will know what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Children are able to access resources set out by staff, and can ask for other things if they wish to use them. The playroom is set out to receive children with a range of floor and table top activities, a book corner and role play area, which is sometimes themed to link to the topic. Some posters and displays add to the visual appeal but these are tired and in need of replacement in some cases. Little use is made of clear labelling and lettering, either inside the playroom or in the outside play area, with the result that opportunities to demonstrate the uses of print in various contexts are missed.

Children are cared for in a playroom which is well lit and ventilated, and warm in cold weather, enabling them to play and work comfortably. Blinds effectively prevent glare from bright sunlight. There are both hard and carpeted floor areas for a range of activities, and cushions in the book corner provide a comfortable reading space.

Children have named coat pegs for storage of their belongings, and are able to easily access the toilets and hand basins, enabling them to be independent in personal care from an early age. Children needing nappies changed are discreetly helped; staff follow good procedures with health and safety in mind, the changing mat is at floor level and screened from general view.

Children are protected from potential harm or neglect as staff are aware of their responsibilities in regard to child protection. They attend regular training to update knowledge and are confident to refer any concerns appropriately. Parents are made aware of the group's responsibilities and have access to literature enabling them to be well informed about child protection issues, including a statement setting out the group's approach.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in age related groups, with those under three enjoying separate sessions. The younger children are cared for in a small group with a favourable staff ratio, enabling plenty of individual attention and developing their confidence and sense of belonging. Staff are beginning to be familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and incorporate some of the ideas and information from this within the planning. Children have choice from the equipment and activities

planned by staff, always including a craft or messy activity, as well as small world play, role play and floor toys. They use the outside area for climbing and exploring the moving toys. Singing and clapping songs and rhymes is an enjoyable way to explore rhythm and sound, with instruments sometimes, or recorded music.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory

Children aged three and above follow a programme of activities based on the Foundation Stage, incorporating the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff have a generally good knowledge of the different areas of learning and plan a range of activities covering most aspects throughout the year. The topics are chosen to reflect children's interests and include seasonal and cultural festivals and celebrations, both traditional and world wide. Activities are planned to include challenge and extension for the more able child, as well as support for those who need it, thereby enabling children to progress at their own pace. Key workers make observations which go towards the child's developmental record. This builds up over time to show achievements and is shared with parents at formal parents' evenings. Alongside this a folder of work shows what the children have done, though they are able to take their artwork and models home if they wish. When children leave, the developmental folders are given to parents, or may be passed directly to the child's primary school with parents' permission to help with initial assessment in their reception class.

Staff show enthusiasm for the time they spend with the children, and this in turn helps children feel at ease and confident to approach staff for help when needed. However, at times, staff roles are not altogether clear resulting in some non-productive time for children, for example, waiting while the group is organised for circle time or at snack time. The generally relaxed and calm atmosphere encourages the children to move freely between activities; they are learning to share and beginning to understand that sometimes they need to wait for a turn with equipment or for attention. Behaviour is generally good; the children respond to positive praise and encouragement. The occasional lack of focus or inattentiveness occurs when expectations are unrealistic, such as the timing of circle time when children are engrossed in activities and are asked to stop what they are doing.

Children are beginning to listen and respond to their names at registration. They use speech both to express their needs and feelings, and imaginatively as they play and work. Very good opportunities for free mark-making include paint and writing materials, available at all times. Children's efforts are valued and they take pride in their achievements, offering a picture to a staff member for her to take home. Name cards are available at certain times only, limiting their usefulness in helping children recognise their names and the letter shapes. A phonics scheme is introduced as children become ready to learn letter sounds; staff are enthusiastic about the effectiveness of this in helping children learn the basic sounds and begin some simple word building by the time they are ready for school. Children are introduced to books early on and have the chance to take a book of their choice home to share with parents and family. Additionally, a topic devoted to books further raises awareness of the uses and pleasure that books can bring. Children are involved in

making a book about themselves as part of the topic 'all about me'.

Mathematical development is promoted by free and guided play with mathematical equipment, and in incidental ways as part of daily routines. Children begin simple calculation as they give out the cups at snack time. They count the children present and are encouraged to add the numbers of boys and girls together as they become more confident. Puzzles and construction kits help children learn about shape and space; the large blocks are very popular for outside play and take many different forms as children build with and arrange them. Sand and water play develop concepts of weight, volume and capacity. Children are helped to recognise numerals and order them by arranging number lines.

The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world introduces children to the local and wider environment. They visit many places of interest as part of the topics, learning about the people who help us, such as firefighters and the police, as well as seeing animals and birds at the pet shop and when learning about guide dogs for the blind. Nature walks in the area at different times of year help children understand the seasons and the passage of time. They collect specimens such as leaves, shells and stones to examine more closely and use these to create artworks. Growing plants and recording the changes they observe help children learn about life cycles and the needs of living things. Exciting programmable toys introduce children to the uses of technology, alongside the computers and printers which they use independently. A digital camera is used frequently to record the children's activities, and they are allowed to have a go at photography and print off the results.

Children enjoy creative opportunities with a good balance of free and guided activities provided. They can paint, collage and model using found and recycled materials alongside the various textures and colours of prepared scraps. Collaborative projects such as the large scale spaceship or posting box contrast with children's individual efforts. They enjoy making hand and foot prints on large pieces of paper, experimenting with pattern and colour. Malleable materials are popular and children are fascinated by cornflour gloop as they mix it and watch the changes, adding dyes and colours for added interest. Clay models and playdough shapes encourage expressive language and allow children to experiment without any pre-determined outcomes. Musical instruments are available for spontaneous sound exploration as well as during planned music sessions. Small world play with vehicles and figures encourage imaginative thinking, and costumes and props add fun to the role play area, allowing children to try different roles and act out scenarios to help them think about their feelings and experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children attending for the first time are allowed to settle at their own pace. Parents may stay as long as is needed until their child feels ready to be left; staff are sensitive to the needs of new children and carefully explain routines and activities to them so that they can join in with confidence. Children's sense of belonging is developed by wearing the uniform sweatshirts or polo shirts. They are allocated a coat peg as well

as a drawer to store their belongings, including any comforters they are particularly attached to. Children's needs are well known to staff as parents are invited to complete an informative profile with likes and dislikes, favourite play activities and other personal information. This sits alongside the registration form, with contact details and consent forms for medical attention, outings and photographs to provide a comprehensive picture of each child's care needs.

Children develop independence as they make choices about what they do. They can persevere at an activity for prolonged periods and repeat an action to perfect it. They take some responsibility by helping to tidy up and show consideration for others. For example, helping one another remove and hang up their aprons. Some firm friendships develop amongst the children and they learn to have regard for the needs and feelings of others as they learn to share and take turns. Children learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and children around the world by the celebration of festivals and cultural events, such as Christmas and Diwali. The local church is the setting for the annual nativity play, a favourite event in the year's calendar for children, staff and parents alike. Children have opportunities to become familiar with the school setting: they regularly join the reception class for a story or singing session, followed by a shared outdoor play time, as well as using the hall for physical activity when the outside area is unusable. These valuable links help children feel confident and ease the transition between pre-school and school when the time comes.

Children who require additional help are extremely well supported, and make very good progress, by systems put in place for them. Staff work closely with parents and outside professionals to ensure that the children's needs are met and they are challenged and encouraged to make progress, with individualised learning plans which are reviewed regularly. Staff can use sign language to help some children, and strategies such as visual timetables help them make good choices.

Children behave well and respond to staff, for example when asked to change their footwear or line up to go outside. Verbal praise and encouragement promotes desired behaviour and children learn a sense of right and wrong. The behaviour policy clearly sets out the group's approach. An incident record is in place and any issues are discussed with parents at an early stage, before they become problematic.

Children benefit from a strong and effective partnership with parents which is developed at an early stage. Parents receive a prospectus with information about the group and about the curriculum and activities their children will be taking part in. There is a notice board with useful information, but this is not always presented appealingly. Photographs of staff are useful for new parents, helping them to settle the children by putting names to new faces. Children are assigned a key worker who makes observations and completes the developmental profile, but at present does not extend the role to reporting children's progress to parents. Many parents support the group by serving on the committee or by attending social and fundraising events, in order to provide equipment and resources for the children. A regular newsletter keeps them informed of activities, outings and any changes in staffing or organisation. There is a complaints procedure in place, however, this is out of date and does not reflect the latest National Standard requirements.

Nursery education

The partnership with parents is satisfactory

New parents have a specially designed session to introduce them to some aspects of pre-school life, including curriculum aspects such as the areas of learning. Once children are attending parents have good opportunities to attend formal parents' evenings where they can view their child's development folder and discuss their progress with staff. Children take books home to share, which provides a good link between home and pre-school, and involves parents in their child's learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn to be aware of the needs and feelings of others, and to respect and celebrate differences. They are encouraged to think about the world around them by observing nature and the seasons, and occasionally reflecting quietly about what they see.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who have been checked and vetted to establish their suitability to be in contact with children. The staff team have a good level of qualifications and update their knowledge and skills by attending further training. There are procedures in place for recruitment and induction of new staff, tasks which are shared by members of the committee and the manager.

Children enjoy a favourable ratio of staff, usually over and above minimum requirements. They benefit from the additional one to one attention and are able to feel at home quickly, forming friendships and warm relationships with staff. Though a key worker system is in place, this has not been fully developed. The use of time and resources is generally good, for example during free play times staff are on hand to help children and develop the play unobtrusively. However, on occasion, time is lost as children wait to be organised between activities.

Most paperwork and documentation to support children is in place. A set of policies is available to parents on request, and they are offered a set to look at before their child starts attending. The complaints policy needs reviewing to bring it up to date. Staff regularly check children's contact details and update telephone numbers as needed, ensuring children are only collected by known persons. Accident and medication records are maintained and signed by parents or carers, protecting children's safety and welfare. The daily register shows children and staff present, and arrival and departure times. There is also a signing in sheet for parents in the entrance lobby.

Leadership and management is satisfactory

Staff meet regularly to discuss children's progress and to plan activities and forthcoming topic work. All staff are encouraged to be actively involved at all stages. An appraisal system is in place to look at staff development needs and where possible, training is arranged to improve and update knowledge and skills, mainly by attending short courses organised by the local authority.

Planning is organised round the areas of learning, and staff take advantage of spontaneous learning opportunities when these arise, to provide variety and stimulation for the children. Activities are evaluated and used as assessment opportunities for showing the next steps in children's learning. Monitoring of the quality of education provided is ongoing, but not always effective in highlighting weaknesses. As the key worker role is not fully developed, the manager appears to take a disproportionate amount of the planning for individual children and reporting to parents.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that all children had written consent for emergency medical advice or treatment to be sought: this is now in place for every child.

The provider was asked to ensure that the child protection statement contains clear procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff: the policy has been amended to contain this information and includes the latest guidance for dealing with concerns.

As a result of actions taken, children's welfare and safety are enhanced.

Nursery education

The provider was asked to improve parents' knowledge of the Foundation Stage. There are now good procedures in place to ensure that parents have detailed information about the foundation stage curriculum and the topics and activities which their children are involved in. They receive a prospectus and newsletters and all new parents are invited to attend an induction evening, where staff discuss the curriculum.

The provider was asked to improve the children's records to show the next stages in children's learning. This is now discussed at a regular meeting, where staff discuss the children's progress and forward plan to include the next steps for individual children, however, the key worker role is not fully developed so parents wishing to discuss their child's progress are directed to the manager.

The provider was asked to ensure that planning is clearly linked to the stepping stones of the early learning goals. Various approaches have been trialled and the group now have a system of planning which meets this requirement, clearly showing how activities build a programme to help children achieve the stepping stones.

As a result of these actions, the quality of education provided has improved. Further work is needed to fully develop the role of key worker.

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 the 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):

- review and update the complaints procedure to reflect the latest guidance and comply with National Standards requirements
- develop the role of Key Worker to reflect National Standards guidance.

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):

- review the use of time and resources, and staff deployment, to maximise children's learning opportunities throughout sessions, including the use of displays and print for labelling and extending the use of name cards.

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