



Playstation Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY292798
Inspection date	15 November 2006
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Warren
Setting Address	Hadleigh CP School, Station Road, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP7 5HQ
Telephone number	01473 824271
E-mail	
Registered person	Playstation Pre-School Group
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 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?

Playstation Pre-School opened over 15 years ago and operates from a classroom within a primary school in Hadleigh, Suffolk. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.15 to 15.30 during school term times. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. Children may attend for half day or whole day sessions, with an optional lunch club.

There are currently 54 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area and surrounding villages. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

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

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about some aspects of a healthy lifestyle such as eating healthily at snack time, when they have a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables with milk or water to drink. They wash their hands after messy play or after using the toilet, although the hand washing area is untidy at times and lacks any visual prompts to help children, and the paper towels are too high for some children to reach. Although a cleaning routine for the premises is in place it is ineffective in keeping some areas of the playroom and shared cloakroom to a high standard of cleanliness, thereby placing children, potentially, at risk of infection from poor hygiene.

Children wear warm clothing when playing outside or visiting the exciting adventure play area and wooded area within the school grounds, keeping themselves warm and learning about self-care.

Children who need to be treated for minor injuries are cared for by trained staff and have the details recorded for a parent or carer to sign. Similarly, any medication given is recorded and the doses signed off. Consents are in place to seek emergency advice or medication for any child needing it, protecting children's health and welfare.

As well as snack time, some children attend for a lunch club where they eat a packed lunch sent from home. Parents are asked to include healthy foods for children and staff try to help the children eat sensibly and try their sandwiches or savoury choices before any biscuits or chocolate, reinforcing ideas about healthy eating.

Children have very good opportunities for physical development. They can play safely in the playground in a separate area using a range of outdoor equipment, or go for an adventurous walk to the challenging climbing and balancing equipment further away in the school grounds. Indoors, children have space to move around and can line up or find a space on the floor when asked to. They have a good range of tools and equipment to encourage the development of small motor skills and hand to eye coordination, such as scissors, hole punches, dough tools and mark making equipment. Hammers and tacks are popular and children can pour and fill containers with sand or water, sometimes combining these for a spectacularly messy effect!

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Outside the main entrance is a useful notice board telling parents about some activities and the snack menu each day. The main entrance door leads into a store area which is potentially hazardous due to clutter. A notice board inside the playroom gives some information about the setting for parents and an office is available for confidential meetings.

Children are secure once in the playroom. They cannot leave the premises unseen and the door is monitored at the beginning and end of sessions to make sure children leave safely with an appropriate adult. Visitors are screened before admittance and signed on and off the premises. Most aspects of safety are well considered as staff carry out risk assessments regularly. However, in the adjacent outside area there are some hazardous plants which have been identified as a risk to children yet remain in place.

Children are cared for in a good-sized, well-proportioned playroom with sufficient furniture and equipment to meet their play and learning needs. However, the presentation of resources and standard of maintenance is in some places only just satisfactory. Children's work is displayed on the walls but displays are sometimes haphazard and careless, with evidence of old displays not removed and no consistent labelling to make attractive, interactive displays. Some are very high and not easily in children's range of vision, thereby making them less useful as a stimulating resource for learning. Some toys are in labelled trays or boxes but most are not, limiting children's independence in being able to access what they want to play with as well as making tidy-up time more difficult for the children.

Children are protected from potential harm or neglect as staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding child protection. A policy is in place setting out the group's approach to child protection issues and a member of staff has attended a recent training course to update and refresh knowledge of local procedures. Concerns are monitored for a short while before being referred to the appropriate authority, since children's welfare is paramount.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children at the pre-school are cared for in one group. Currently staff do not use the 'Birth to three matters' framework or any other source of information to offer care specifically tailored to the under threes attending. These children have a developmental record in line with those set up for the older children, which is based on the Foundation Stage curriculum. Their individual needs are considered but the group is organised in such a way that it is difficult to have regard for very young children's specific needs for rest or sleep, and at whole group teaching times, and in the pre-lunch period it is not always appropriate for young children to be sitting for extended periods. Staff speak to the children appropriately, making eye contact and allowing children time to respond, building warm and friendly relationships.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children in receipt of funding for nursery education follow a programme based on the Foundation Stage curriculum which is designed to help them make progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Most staff have a generally good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan a range of activities across the areas of learning, however, not all staff are confident in the knowledge of how children learn or what the learning intentions of each activity are, so some opportunities for helping children maximise their potential are lost. Staff have recently introduced focused activity sheets with more detail which shows what the activity is expected to achieve and has space for evaluation to inform future planning; these are still in the early stages of use.

Staff record children's achievements and progress to build into a profile which is shared with parents and may be passed on to the child's next setting. These are based on observations and assessments and staff discuss these in relation to their planning, but no written record of the next steps in children's learning is kept.

Children needing additional help are supported and monitored to make sure they can be included in all activities. This includes children who may have English as an additional language, when staff will try to have some key vocabulary to help children feel settled and able to ask for their needs to be met. Close working with outside professionals as well as parents is recognised as key to ensuring that all children make progress and achieve well.

The use of time and resources is poor at times throughout the sessions; the general pattern of the sessions involves a proportion of non-productive time for children and this has a negative impact on the play and learning potential, as well as knock-on effects with behaviour and children's general enjoyment and fulfilment in the time they spend at pre-school, which for some is a full day.

The sessions include a free play time when children can choose what they want to do from the range of activities provided as well as take part in an adult-focused activity. The options are explained to children at the beginning of the session to help them make choices about what to do. The free play time is followed by a tidy-up time before children go outside. After this the organisation of the day is less successful in terms of choice for children as most activities are cleared away and snack is served. Children's behaviour is less settled and they become less able to gain any meaningful experiences. This is an organisational issue as the day's routine currently includes a proportion of non-productive time for children, both those who are attending for a half day session and those who are staying for lunch or for a whole day.

Children are able to listen attentively and respond appropriately as they are told a story or when talking to staff about what they are doing. They express their ideas and explore language as they enjoy topic-based activities such as going on a bear hunt or talking about the hibernation habits of different creatures. Children are able to talk about both real and imaginary events as they play and work. The book area has a range of fiction and information books and soft seating to enable children to browse in comfort. They often choose to take a book to a member of staff and enjoy sharing one to one. Children have very good opportunities to freely experiment with a range of writing implements and a choice of large or small paper. They enjoy drawing and often write their names and other letters they know on their work. They have access to their name cards at all times and are encouraged to use them for reference.

Children explore shape and space as they play with construction kits, play dough and puzzles and use specialist mathematical equipment such as compare bears to make patterns and sequences. Calculation begins with the singing of action rhymes which count up and down, such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and 'Five Currant Buns'. Children have sand and water to learn about weight and volume. Non-standard measures in the form of foot and hand prints introduce children to the idea of comparative size. Positional language is demonstrated to good effect in a practical way as children act out the story of the bear hunt and go under, over and through various obstacles. Children count and use number as they play and work, but there are few visual displays to help them recognise and order numbers and reinforce learning.

Children learn about the seasons and changes in nature as they go for walks and collect specimens such as leaves. They can talk knowledgeably about bats and other animals who hibernate and understand that this means 'a long winter sleep'. Children have use of a computer and begin to learn the basics of a simple programme. Children's design and making skills are given free rein as they use recycled materials to make models. Children occasionally look at other cultures, for example, sampling foods characteristic of various countries, but mainly celebrate traditional rather than world cultural events and festivals. Recently children thought about the significance of Remembrance Day and made some beautiful poppies.

Children have very good opportunities to explore colour and texture in two and three dimensions. They can paint freely using large brushes, draw with pens and collage using a variety of media, decorating their creations with glitter and glue. They use dough and other malleable materials to cut and shape. Children use small world toys and role play items including dressing up clothes and props to explore imaginative play scenarios and express their ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's needs are well known to staff as details are recorded on the registration forms and updated as required. All children are assigned a key worker who is responsible for liaising with parents and completing the child's developmental record, however not all parents find the key worker approachable or available to discuss issues. The recent introduction of the home link books enables information to be shared on a daily basis. The current organisation of the children in one group does not allow for the needs of the very youngest to be given special consideration, for example at whole group times. If children need a nap or rest, a comfy space is made for them in the quiet corner. Those children who arrive speaking a language other than English are helped to feel at home by the inclusion of some key vocabulary; staff work with parents to ensure the children can join in and ask to have their needs met.

Children show enthusiasm and concentration when working at self-chosen tasks such as playdough, sand, water play and free mark making. They enjoy the adult focused activities and delight in showing the results of their efforts to others, such as the glittery bats with flapping wings. They generally get on very well with one another, sharing resources and taking turns, and are taught to show consideration and concern for one another's feelings. Children are encouraged to be independent in choosing activities and some aspects of self care, but some opportunities, such as during the snack time routine and craft activities are lost. For example, staff set the tables for snack and pre-prepare craft items such as cut out shapes instead of encouraging children to do these for themselves. Children have some opportunities to learn about other cultures but few planned activities help them become aware of the similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Children with additional needs are supported and cared for by trained staff. Extra adult help is put in place when needed and staff work closely with parents and outside professionals at all times to ensure that children make progress and are able to join in with activities at their own level.

Children's good behaviour is promoted by use of a special display tree with leaves awarded for effort or achievement. Children enjoy this process and applaud the children who have earned a leaf as it is put on the display tree. Children are mostly happy and settled and behave positively, however problems tend to occur at changeover times and when all the tables are cleared, or whilst children are simply 'waiting' for staff to organise the next part of the session. This reduces children's choice and they become unsettled and less able to concentrate well.

The partnership with parents is promoted by the use of the home link book, in which parents can comment and share any relevant information about their child. A prospectus and regular newsletters inform parents about the day to day routines and procedures as well as any extra activities and events. Staff are available at the end of sessions although, with the current organisation, the manager is absent at the end of the morning session as she is on escort duty bringing children from another setting. Children's details, including personal information and consent forms are stored confidentially in the office. Parents are positive and speak warmly of the setting, saying their children are generally happy and enjoy attending, always eager to talk about the things they have enjoyed and the friends they have made.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory for children in receipt of funded nursery education. Parents have two, more formal, opportunities a year to meet staff and discuss their child's developmental progress. This includes looking at the development profile and discussing children's achievements and the next stages in learning, although these are not available in a written format.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are beginning to understand the consequences of their actions and how these might make others feel. Children gain a sense of the wider world by activities such as the Remembrance Day celebrations and discussions, particularly pertinent for those children whose families are in the armed forces.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who have been checked and vetted to make sure they are suitable to be in contact with children. Any volunteers or parent helpers are made aware of the limitations of their contact, such as personal care, thus protecting children and keeping them safe and well cared for. There is a recruitment and induction procedure in place for new staff, with some job descriptions in place outlining duties and responsibilities.

The organisation of the day is a cause for concern. Although the staff ratio is favourable, at some times staff are not actively engaged with children but busy with routine matters, whilst children wait. The successful parts of the day include times when children have free choice from a range of activities set out for them including core activities such as sand, water, dough and mark making, floor toys and books, outdoor play and role play. However, the current routine involves clearing away all activities several times a day so that at times children are present with no choice of activity; they are contained within the book area whilst the midday changeover occurs as the lunchtime session is arranged and this can be drawn out, causing some frustration for children. The deployment of staff and the quite complex arrangements for children coming

and going, particularly around the busy lunchtime period do not meet the care and learning needs of the children well. As a result, children's behaviour and concentration deteriorate.

Documentation and paperwork is in place to support the care and welfare of children. Attendance records show when children and staff are present and all policies and procedures are kept in the office for parents and staff to refer to. Most policies are well thought out and contain all the relevant information, however, some are not up-to-date and do not contain the latest information and contact details, for example the complaints policy.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager and committee work together to run the setting on a day to day basis. Staff are mostly aware of their responsibilities and duties throughout sessions. Staff have a commitment to the care and welfare of the children and a policy of inclusion ensures those needing additional help are supported.

Staff development and training is looked at through the appraisal system and staff are encouraged to attend day courses or full programmes of study in order to improve and update knowledge or gain further qualifications. Information gained at training days is shared at staff meetings so that the children can benefit from new ideas.

There is an awareness of areas of strength and areas for improvement, although progress on these is not always as prompt as it could be, for example, the general cleanliness and hygiene of the setting, which was identified as an issue some time ago, and the issues identified in the previous inspection report which in some cases have shown limited progress. The group does seek and welcome support and advice from outside agencies such as the local authority.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group was asked to ensure that all records relating to day care activities are readily accessible on the premises and available for inspection at all times. These are now in place and kept in the nursery office.

At the last inspection the group was asked to develop the focused activity sheets to show clear differentiation, evaluate activities and show how this information is then used in future planning. These have only very recently been introduced and staff are still getting to grips with using them as a new method of short term planning, therefore it is not yet possible to evaluate their effectiveness.

The group was asked to include other cultures and beliefs when planning for children's learning; there is still little evidence of activities reflecting world cultures and staff recognise this as an area in which they are less confident and therefore needing further work.

The group was asked to provide more problem solving activities within the daily routine around calculating, adding and subtraction. Limited progress has been made on this. Children sing counting songs but opportunities for day to day practical calculation such as counting out cups and plates at snack time are still not being utilised.

The group was asked to continue to develop staff knowledge and understanding on observations and assessments and recording children's progress. Children's profiles are now completed using observations to show what children have done, but do not yet show the next steps in learning, which are discussed amongst staff but not recorded.

This limited progress on identified issues means that there are still a few significant gaps in the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for children receiving funding for nursery education. The recommendations following this inspection are intended to build on and extend this progress.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted relating to National Standard 7: Health. This concerned the cleanliness and standard of hygiene of the shared toilet and nappy changing areas.

Ofsted asked the provider to conduct an internal investigation and as a result of the information given, regarding changes made and monitoring systems put in place, Ofsted was satisfied that no further action is required. At the close of the investigation the provider remained qualified for 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):

- implement effective procedures for cleaning and organising all areas of the setting including surfaces, resources and toilet areas to make sure the environment is clean, hygienic and safe for children
- take steps to improve the outside area and minimise hazards to children to make a safe and suitable play space for children (this refers to potentially poisonous plants)
- review the organisation and staffing arrangements around busy periods to improve outcomes for all children and begin to look at sources of information such as the 'Birth

to three matters' framework to inform the particular care and play needs of children under three.

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 use of time and resources and daily routines to maximise productive time for children and take advantage of opportunities to allow children to develop independence
- develop the educational programme in the area of multicultural education to broaden children's understanding and to enable them to begin to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others, and to celebrate a wider range of world customs and beliefs.
- review and improve the use of displays as a learning resource for children and the presentation and storage of equipment and resources to make them more easily accessible to children

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk