



Hardwick Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221797
Inspection date	30 November 2006
Inspector	Heidi Falconer
Setting Address	Limes Road, Hardwick, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB23 7QR
Telephone number	01954 212823
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Registered person	Hardwick 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?

Hardwick Pre-school is operated by a voluntary committee. It opened in 1982 and operates from a classroom within Hardwick Primary School. It is situated in the village of Hardwick, Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday, during school term time, from 09.00 to 12.00 and from 12:45 to 15:15 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 35 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three members of staff are working towards further qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. Staff have put good procedures in place to sustain good levels of hygiene and prevent the spread of infection. For example, staff act as good role models washing their own hands before preparing snack and they use anti-bacterial spray to clean the tables. In addition, staff use different coloured cleaning cloths for different tasks such as, cleaning tables or cleaning painting materials. This helps to maintain children's health by reducing the risk of cross contamination. A high number of staff have attended first aid and food hygiene training.

Children in the pre-school are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy through discussions, themed activities and daily routines. For example, they enjoy visits from the oral hygienist, who shows them how to care for their teeth. In addition, children are learning why they need to wear their coats when they play outside in the cold weather. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene. They use tissues to wipe their noses and wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, without being reminded. Children are also developing a good understanding of healthy eating. Staff promote children's understanding through activities, such as fruit printing when they talk to the children about what foods are good for them. In addition at snack time, staff talk to the children about why milk is good for them, children know that it helps them to develop strong bones and teeth.

Children are very well cared for if they become unwell or have an accident at the pre-school. For example, clear records are gathered from parents regarding children's medical needs and excellent records are in place to ensure that appropriate care is given. Staff have continued to refresh their training in providing specific treatment to children, for example, the use of epipens. In addition, the staff have carefully considered the storage of emergency medication to ensure that it is easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

Children are becoming increasingly independent at the very well organised snack time. An attractive snack bar is set up, which allows the children to have their snack at a time which suits them, without disrupting their play. Children select nutritious snacks from a varied range of fresh fruit, vegetables and dried fruit. Fresh water is available for the children at all times and children use it to get themselves drinks particularly after playing outside. This demonstrates their developing awareness of their bodies needs.

All children benefit and enjoy a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, which promote their physical development. For example, children handle a variety of small tools such as, scissors, rolling pins, needles and scoops as they pour sand into a sand wheel, with competence. Outdoors children enjoy practising their throwing skills as they propel mini javelins in the air. Children also demonstrate their co-ordination as they use dust pans and brushes to sweep up leaves, and then pour them into a rubbish bag. However, there are fewer opportunities for the children

to use ride on and wheeled toys. Therefore outdoors they are not always challenged. The group have identified this as a weakness in their physical play and they are applying for funding to develop the outdoor area further.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children display high levels of independence as they access resources freely for themselves. These resources are well-maintained and stored invitingly in low-level drawer units, and children understand that they can access any drawer which has a bright yellow star on it. Staff make excellent use of the well maintained premises to ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities. For example, children move freely between indoors and outdoors, which allows them to follow their own interests.

Children are safeguarded because staff have a secure knowledge of the local procedures they must follow should a concern arise about a child or if an allegation is made against a member of staff. The designated child protection co-ordinator has attended child protection training and she ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities.

Children are kept safe from harm through good adult supervision and clear explanations of safety practice and procedures. As children enter and leave the premises staff are deployed effectively to ensure that they remain well supervised. For example, one member of staff always stands in the doorway, to ensure that children do not leave unaccompanied or with an unauthorised adult. Through regular discussions with staff, children are developing a good understanding of how they can keep themselves safe. For example, children know not to throw foam javelins until everybody is ready, and they understand that they must be careful when using scissors 'because they are sharp'. Staff conduct and record daily risk assessments of the building and equipment, to ensure that hazards are quickly identified and minimised. These assessments are generally effective.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time and are highly motivated and independent. Children are actively encouraged by staff to pursue their own interests and direct their own play and learning. As a result children thrive in the highly stimulating and very well resourced environment which puts them first. Staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn through play. Staff understand how children's learning can be promoted through all activities and use children's interests as a way to develop their learning. For example, for children who like to draw, staff use their pictures to help them engage in different types activities such as making models of their drawings with construction sets.

All children confidently organise themselves, setting up activities and collecting additional resources such as, farm buildings, animals and tractors to extend their play. Other children play happily in the quiet area, selecting puzzles or reading books alone or to their friends. The books are rotated on a regular basis and are extremely well organised to ensure that they reflect the

current theme for planning. For example, the children are currently extremely eager to read stories about Christmas. This then prompts conversations between children and staff and is a time where children share their experiences from home, talking excitedly about when they are going to put up their Christmas tree.

Children have developed strong friendships with their peers and the staff. Children understand the impact that their behaviour has on others and they ask their friends politely if they can share resources or join in their play. For example, whilst playing with the farm, children asked each other 'please can I have a turn with the tractor now?'

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have attended training on the Foundation Stage and receive helpful support from the school reception teacher and their local early years childcare advisor. This has enabled them to put into practice a well-planned programme of interesting and stimulating activities, which cover all areas of learning, both in and out of doors. Staff interact effectively with the children, they ask them pertinent questions such as, 'How do you think we can make the ice melt quicker to get the polar bears out?', 'Where do you think we put the water to turn it into ice?'. These types of questions encourage the children to think and extend their learning. The staff provide good support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities as they work closely with the area special educational needs co-ordinator. As a result children's learning is tailored to their individual needs. There is a systematic record system in place to ensure that planning covers the areas of learning and that all aspects receive sufficient attention. Staff effectively assess children's attainment and keep detailed records of their progress. These records are then used to plan children's individual next steps in their learning, to ensure that children of differing abilities are provided with activities that provide them with appropriate challenges.

Children are confident and secure at the pre-school, they arrive eagerly and say goodbye to their carers with happy confidence as they join in the familiar routine. Children display high levels of independence as they help themselves to water, choose activities and help to set the table for snack time. If children need assistance, for example, when putting on their coats, they are confident to ask for help. Children experience and show joy and wonder as they watch their trapped polar bears break free from the ice block after thawing it with hot water.

Children enjoy the opportunities that they have to listen and talk to each other in small and large groups. For example, as they pass around flipper the dolphin children enthusiastically discuss their feelings. Children speak of feeling 'happy' because their parents help at the group. Most children can recognise their names as they find their place at the snack table, and some are able to write their name from memory. Children practise their early writing skills in role-play situations such as, a café as they write down the customers orders. Children enjoy looking at books, and joining in rhyming stories such as, I don't care said the bear. These types of books introduce children to patterns in rhymes, words and letters.

Most children count confidently to ten and over, as they take part in games which require them to match the number of bricks to pictures. Children are showing an understanding of mathematical concepts of more and less as they compare sets of bricks or the number of boys

and girls in the setting each day. These activities also help the children to understand that numbers represent sets of objects.

Children are involved in many activities which help them to gain a greater understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. For example, they go on autumn walks, have visits from people in the community such as, police officers and each year they go on a bus trip around the village. Through activities such as the polar bears in ice, children have opportunities to predict, hypothesis, question and observe change as they suggest how the ice can be melted. Children offer many ideas such as 'use a hammer,' 'use hot water'. With the support of staff the children were able to test out some of these suggestions.

Children enjoy the opportunity to express their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play. For example, children play imaginatively in the role play area dressing up as dragons, cooking mushy peas in the kettle and pretending to bake cakes by putting them in the microwave for 'twenty minutes'. Children are able to be creative as they use different materials on the easels such as, charcoals, crayons, pastels and paint. Children explore different types of media such as gloop, sand with glitter, clay and playdough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are committed to promoting equality for all of the children at the setting, including those who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff respect and treat all children as individuals, taking time to find out about their individual needs prior to each child starting. For example, staff gather detailed information from parents about their child's medical needs, special objects, special words and their previous experience of spending time away from home. In addition, staff carry out home visits to children who have been identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities before they start at the setting. This ensures that staff have a full understanding of the child's needs so that they can put additional measures in place, if needed, for when the child starts. Children develop a good sense of belonging as they play an active role in the setting. For example, they choose how they spend the majority of their time and they enjoy singing the 'Hardwick Pre-school' song together at the start of each session. Children develop positive attitudes to others through activities which celebrate the customs and cultures of those who attend and the wider community. For example, they have celebrated Jewish, Christian and Chinese festivals. Overall children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the consistent and positive approach that staff use to manage their behaviour. For example, the children help to formulate the rules of the setting. These are displayed in words alongside photographs which, show children at the group demonstrating good behaviour. As a result children are aware of what is expected of them and behaviour at the group is very good.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the good relationships between their parents and staff. Parents receive a detailed prospectus about the day-to-day organisation of the pre-school and the Foundation Stage and how it is implemented. Planning is displayed and is easily available for parents to view, and the parent's notice board informs

parents of the current topic. Planned activities such as, the children writing and sending letters home enables parents to be involved in their children's learning. All parents know they can share information with all staff about their children's needs through daily discussions, parent consultations and the sharing of progress reports. When their children start at the setting parents have good opportunities to share with staff what they know about their child's development. The manager understands the changes in regulation, with regard to keeping a record of complaints and ensuring that any records are available to parents. However, the complaints procedure has not been updated to reflect the change in their practice, to ensure that parents are fully informed.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children in the pre-school are cared for in a very well-organised environment. The deployment of staff is effective as it enables the staff to spend the majority of their time with the children, getting to know them and joining in with their play and conversations. This adds to the children's feelings of security and builds their confidence in the pre-school.

Effective recruitment and induction procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff who are appropriately vetted. Induction training and appropriate policies and procedures work in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. All records are stored well to ensure that children's confidentiality is maintained. For example, all records which relate to child protection issues are always stored in a lockable container, which is only accessible to key members of staff. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. Regular staff and committee meetings ensure that everyone works well as a team to ensure that children receive consistent care which is of a good standard. There is a strong commitment to the professional development of staff and training needs have been identified. There are effective systems in place to monitor the quality of the nursery education and evaluate its impact. As a result the setting have identified weaknesses in the provision for nursery education and they have put action plans in place to show how they will develop in these areas. This ensures that children will continue to enjoy their time at the group and make good progress in their learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection, the pre-school were asked to improve the organisation of snack time, to ensure children have opportunities for social interaction with staff and each other; and that the settings complaints procedure was available to parents and that it contained the contact details of Ofsted. The staff have reviewed snack times and effective systems are in place to ensure that children and staff sit together to enjoy a sociable snack time. The settings complaint procedure is now available to parents, and it has been updated to contain the contact details for Ofsted.

Nursery education:

At the last inspection, the pre-school were asked to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of effective questioning techniques, so that children were offered challenges. All staff working with children have received training and support in this area, and now use very good questioning techniques to challenge children and extend their learning. As a result, children are progressing well in their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- extend the complaints procedure to ensure that it reflects changes in regulations on 3 October 2005.

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):

- extend the opportunities for children to use wheeled toys and resources in the outdoor area.

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