



Merry-Go-Round Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY292062
Inspection date	04 December 2006
Inspector	Leoarna Mathias
Setting Address	Stokenham Area Primary School, Stokenham, Nr. Kingsbridge, Devon, TQ7 2SJ
Telephone number	01548 581440
E-mail	
Registered person	Merry-Go-Round Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Merry Go Round Pre-school has recently re-opened, and is now operating from a separate portakabin in the grounds of Stokenham Area Primary School. The group serves the local community.

The group is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 09:15 hours until 12:30 hours, with a lunch club offered from 12:30 hours until 13:30 hours. On Tuesdays and Thursdays they are open from 09:15 hours until 15:00 hours. They provide after school care five days a week from 15:30 hours until 18:00 hours. There are 54 children currently on roll, including 23 children in receipt of nursery education funding. The group can accommodate children with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

Eight members of staff are employed by the voluntary committee to work with the children, seven of whom hold a suitable early years qualification, with the remaining staff member working towards a qualification. The group also employs an administrator. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, whose quality assurance scheme the group completed in 2003.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are developing a very good understanding of how to care for their own health needs. For example, they can recognise when they need to put on their coats and wellies, and are increasingly able to perform these tasks by themselves. Similarly, they are encouraged to decide when they would like their own snack, to make choices about which healthy items to eat, and to pour their own drinks. They understand which foods are good for them, talking spontaneously about how milk makes them strong. They receive very consistent encouragement for hand washing, and as such are also learning to manage their own hygiene needs. The continuous provision of both indoor and outdoor play areas ensures that children move with freedom and confidence around the setting, and have opportunities to develop a wide range of skills, such as den making and gardening. Regular opportunities to improve their balance and co-ordination skills are built into the group's planning, and children receive excellent support for the development of their manipulative skills, and as such, even the youngest children can correctly and safely use pens, scissors and glue sticks. Staff do all they can to ensure children's health is maintained at all times. For example, the majority of them are first aid trained, and they ensure that accident and medicine records, and children's information sheets, are detailed and kept up to date. Furthermore, staff endeavour to support parents in maintaining their child's health through the sharing of information and training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff make every effort to ensure that children are kept safe at all times. Risk assessments are thorough, and written procedures for carrying out a wide variety of tasks, from cooking, to bringing in animals to the setting, mean that hazards are minimised at all times. Fire drills are regular, and are fully recorded and evaluated. Access to the provision is closely monitored and visitors are promptly recorded. Staff deploy themselves in such a way as to ensure that children are closely supervised at all times, and children are also encouraged to risk assess for themselves, for example, by deciding whether it is safe to move around without shoes on. Children's welfare is also very effectively promoted while they attend the group. Staff are clear as to their own child protection responsibilities, and take appropriate action where there is cause for concern. They also ensure that parents are clear as to the procedures to be followed should concerns for a child arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are warmly welcomed upon their arrival, and settle very quickly to activities. They are familiar with the routines of the group, and gravitate easily to staff for praise, guidance and achievement. The Birth to three matters framework has been carefully and successfully integrated into the planning for children under three, and key working systems ensure that every child's progress is closely monitored by a skilled member of staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children give their very best to their learning throughout the session. The session is organised in such a way as to allow children to make purposeful choices about the direction their own learning will take each day. Children relish the opportunity to concentrate upon, and persist with, adult led or self chosen tasks for significant periods of time. Staff take every opportunity to challenge children, and as a result, children are making substantial developmental progress throughout each session. Children are proud of their achievements, and staff value their work with meaningful praise. They play co-operatively, demonstrating a very good understanding of the agreed codes of behaviour for the group, and participate fully in group tasks, such as tidy up time.

Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. They are strong conversationalists with wide vocabularies, and they enjoy participating in large group discussions at circle time. They use language freely in their play, and are learning to sing their greeting song in other languages beside their own. As a result of consistent and effective teaching in this area, children are readily able to recognise sounds and letters, and spontaneously and accurately talk about the letters in their own name. Children learn in a print rich environment and are also increasingly able to recognise their own name and other simple words in print. Children access books in many parts of the provision, and thoroughly enjoy story times. Staff take every opportunity to support the development of their handwriting, and as a result, some children are already able to write a range of words from memory. Similarly, many children are readily able to count accurately beyond 10, as well as being able to recognise written numerals. They have regular opportunities to learn about shape, size and measure, and to solve simple mathematical problems. Free movement between the outside and inside spaces allows children to explore and investigate their environment, and regular trips to local places of interest effectively promotes children's genuine curiosity about the world around them. They also freely access toys and resources that promote their understanding of how things work, as well as showing an appreciation of how time passes, as they talk about how long they have been playing outside. Staff help children to appreciate their own and other cultures through meaningful projects about themselves and their families, and the families of others. Children freely access a wide range of materials with which to design and make, commenting on their textures and colours. Musical instruments are used effectively in order that children learn about volume, rhythm and so forth. Children make very good use of role play and dressing up resources, using their imaginations to their full as they direct their own play. Finally, small group times give children ample opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas.

Staff are skilled in treating children as active partners in their own learning, and take every opportunity to facilitate children's choices. Each session is carefully organised to offer a mixture of adult led and free choice activities, both indoors and out, and a good balance is struck between ensuring children access as many different kinds of experiences as possible, and offering them the flexibility to pursue their own interests. Staff deploy themselves well in order to give every child ample small group and one to one support for their learning, and are able to maximise the teaching potential of every interaction with children, by posing questions and setting challenges that encourage children to progress. Detailed initial assessments allow staff to quickly establish each child's abilities, and individual learning plans are then monitored closely by key workers; regular planning meetings allow the team to continuously modify planning to meet the needs of all children. Comprehensive observations and assessments of each child's progress are regularly shared with parents in order that they too can contribute to the planning of next steps for their child.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are a clear priority for every member of staff working with the children. The effective key working system ensures that each child is very well known to at least one member of staff, and individual learning plans for each child means that their progress is frequently monitored, reviewed and plans revised. Children receive every encouragement to be aware of their own needs and the needs of others, accessing many activities and resources that promote their understanding and appreciation of difference and diversity in our society. Detailed inclusion policies work well in practice to ensure, for example, that children with English as an additional language are appropriately supported. A skilled and experienced Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) works closely with families and outside agencies to give children with special educational needs the support they need to be fully included in the group's activities. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive an abundance of information about the group's work through the detailed prospectus, welcome pack, newsletters and notice boards. An open door policy allows parents to actively help their child to settle in, and the parent rota enables them to become actively involved in their children's learning by attending sessions regularly. Parents also receive regular questionnaires, as the group is committed to continuously meeting their needs. Finally, parents build good relationships with their child's key worker, enabling them to remain in close contact with their child's progress and to contribute to further planning for their child.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that only suitable adults have contact with the children, and, as a result of excellent operational plan documentation and thorough induction procedures, all staff and committee members are particularly confident in their roles. This enables all to ensure the very smooth running of the group at all times, maximising children's access to

effective adult support for their learning and play. Furthermore, ratios of well qualified staff to children are high, and deployment plans are sensible and effective. Policies are in very good order, meeting the requirements of the National Standards in full, and all documentation is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains appropriate and relevant.

The leadership and management is outstanding. There is a very positive team ethos in evidence within the setting. Every practitioner is enabled, through effective peer review and appraisal systems, to bring their strengths and talents to their work, giving children access to a variety of teaching styles. The experienced and proactive play leader has a clear vision and commitment to quality, which permeates throughout the setting. All members of staff are involved in very regular evaluations of the provision, and any minor weaknesses, such as a recent issue with managing behaviour in the after school provision, are dealt with quickly and effectively. Broader evaluations of the provision are regularly carried out, and are used as a tool for identifying new ways in which to meet children's and families' needs. A commitment to continuous improvement also means that opportunities to further improve links with the neighbouring school and other local agencies and organisations are fully taken up. Each committee member receives substantial support in order to understand their role, and as a consequence, the committee is able to offer practitioners the appropriate level of support they need in order to concentrate on working with the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to revise their complaints policy and to further involve parents in their children's learning. The complaints policy is now fully in line with the requirements of the National Standards, and can be seen to be working well in practice as a result of being particularly accessible to parents. Parents now have greater opportunities to be involved in their child's learning as a result of attending regular sessions through the parents' rota, and through accessing and contributing to their child's individual learning plan.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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