



Springhill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119741
Inspection date	13 November 2006
Inspector	Lisa Jane Cupples
Setting Address	Millfield Avenue, East Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO32 6AS
Telephone number	01983 299 500
E-mail	
Registered person	Spring Hill Pre-School
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 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?

Springhill Pre-school is a community group managed by a voluntary committee. It first opened in 1999 and operates from mobile premises in the grounds of the Convent of the Cross, in East Cowes, a residential area on the Isle of Wight. A maximum of 22 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 15:00 during school term-time only. Children are able to attend a variety of sessions. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 34 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for early education. It is the setting's normal practice to accept children from two years and six months due to the available facilities. Children attend from the surrounding area. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties, disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The outdoor area is used exceptionally well, allowing the children to experience a whole range of activities from treasure hunts to map making, ensuring they benefit from the fresh air and burn off their energy, enabling them to concentrate well during more focused activities inside. Children are beginning to learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle, talking about going outside for some exercise. They are able to free-flow between the indoor playroom and the outdoor play area during most of the session. This increases the children's independence as they learn to make decisions. Children practise their climbing and balancing skills on the climbing frame and are developing their hand to eye co-ordination well during ball games. They enjoy running and racing games with each other and the staff. Children are learning to work together when using the see-saw and take part in many obstacle courses and sports days during their time in the group. Children also have to use of the neighbouring school hall twice a week, enabling them to complete physical activities in different environments, building their confidence.

Children are protected and enjoy a healthy environment because the staff implement stringent hygiene procedures to help prevent the possible spread of infection. For example, staff ensure the tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray before and after snack and lunch time. Staff wear gloves when nappy changing and ensure the nappy changing area is clean and well-maintained providing a safe environment. Children learn the importance of personal hygiene and are developing good self care skills through daily routines and discussions. For example, they talk about washing off the germs before snack time.

The staff have a very clear understanding of the procedures to record all accidents that occur on the premises and parents sign to acknowledge that they have been informed, helping to keep children healthy. Clear medication records are maintained well and children will receive appropriate treatment if an accident occurs because all members of staff hold a current first aid certificate. Fully stocked first aid kits are in place and are easily accessible in an emergency.

Children benefit from a nutritious diet because the staff team have a clear understanding of healthy eating. They provide a wide range of fruit for snacks and discuss the needs of each child with the parents in detail and record the information on their registration forms. Children are beginning to understand about healthy eating through daily discussions and talk openly about which food is good for them 'helping them to grow big and strong'. Staff work closely with the parents to ensure the children's lunch boxes are in line with the groups healthy eating policy. Staff find out about each child's allergies, medical, cultural needs and parental preferences through discussion, ensuring that their practice reflects the needs of the children and their families.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are brightly decorated and provide a warm and welcoming environment for the children and their families. Children's work is clearly displayed, making them feel valued and enabling them to share what they have been doing with their parents. The premises are clean and well-maintained, providing a safe environment for the children to play and learn throughout the day. Space is used effectively and the main playroom is set up into various zones and areas of learning. Children are able to move around freely choosing from the extensive range of planned activities and resources that are stored at a low-level making them easily accessible for all the children.

Children are protected because access to the building is monitored. All visitors have to ring a door bell to gain access and are required to sign in and out of the visitors' book, providing an accurate record of all people who come into contact with the children. The premises are in the grounds of a school and no public pathways are near the building, therefore any visitors wandering past are challenged and asked why they are in the vicinity of the pre-school and school, helping to ensure a secure environment is provided for the children.

Children are beginning to learn about the importance of keeping themselves safe. For example, they wear safety helmets when riding the tricycles in the garden area and are able to explain why they have to wear them. Children are protected and enjoy a safe environment because staff are vigilant and remove any possible hazards to the children. Daily risk assessments are completed each morning before the children arrive to ensure the premises are safe for them. The setting has clear fire procedures in place, although they are not practised often enough because children are not fully aware of the evacuation procedures at this time. This could lead to a delay in evacuating the building in an emergency.

Comprehensive child protection policies are in place and are implemented effectively by the whole staff team to safeguard the children effectively. They are fully aware of the procedures to follow and a poster covering the process is displayed in the office for staff information. They would recognise the possible signs of abuse and would act immediately to ensure the relevant parties were informed to protect the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the group. They have fun and continually laugh and giggle with each other and the staff during the stimulating activities that are provided. They separate easily from their carers and come into the setting full of enthusiasm and excitement. When asked what the children enjoy most about the pre-school they said playing outside and being with their friends. Staff have a clear understanding of the developmental needs of the children and ensure the activities are differentiated effectively for all ages. For example, younger children are supported while trying to recognise numerals, while older children are encouraged to begin simple calculation with groups of objects, helping them all to make good progress.

Staff in the pre-school use the Birth to Three Matters framework to support and encourage the youngest children; introducing opportunities for them to explore and investigate during a broad range of activities. The children's experiences are enriched because the staff interaction is very good. They know when to stand back and let play develop naturally and when to step in and help to focus the children helping them to achieve their goals. Children benefit from an exciting and vibrant environment as staff work hard to make the activities attractive and inviting. For example, story time is often accompanied by props to make it real and the sand tray has glitter in, children enjoy watching it sparkle as they move it around. The outside play area is full of the children's work hanging from the trees and fences. They have made wind chimes and mobiles that catch the sun, twinkling in the trees. Children proudly show what they have been doing as they run around the garden.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The whole staff team have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and stepping stones. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Key workers observe the children's achievements and clearly record what they can do in their individual records. This information is collated and the children's next steps are identified, but this information is not used effectively to plan the overall curriculum to meet the children's individual needs at this time. However, staff are able to incorporate the needs of their key worker children through incidental learning opportunities and some independently planned activities which run alongside the main curriculum. Staff interact extremely well with the children and have a clear understanding of the aims and learning objectives of each activity. This enables them to question the children effectively, asking open-ended questions and giving the children time to think about their responses. Staff all play an active role in the planning of the curriculum and this enables them to feel valued and part of the team. They work well together and take responsibility for all that they do, owning every aspect of their work. They are motivated and keen to try new activities, introducing the children to many new experiences.

Children show high levels of independence throughout the session and have many opportunities to make their own decisions. They choose when they want to go outside, when they want snack time and choose from the extensive range of low-level, clearly labelled resources around the room. Children follow simple instructions and are beginning to take responsibility for their surroundings, for example they remind each other to help at tidy-up time and they understand how to share and take turns fairly. They are building strong relationships with the staff and their peers, sharing their own experiences and talking about their families with confidence in small group situations. Children make good use of the comfortable book corner. They self-select the books and pretend to read to each other, tracing their fingers along the lines of words, showing that they understand that text has meaning. They are able to concentrate well, listening carefully to the reader during story-time. Children have ample opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills during free-play and practical activities. For example, they are encouraged to attempt to write their names on their art work and use the mark-making area with confidence, often writing letters or menus for their role-play games.

Children recognise numerals as they see them throughout the day, on number lines and during games. For example, they have to park their 'vehicles' in corresponding parking spaces after

riding them outside, helping them to learn the numbers without realising it, making it fun for all. They count with confidence and use mathematical language well to describe size, position, quantity and shape. Children take part in a wide range of activities about similarities and differences. They look at the patterns on pine cones and conkers during their nature walk and take them inside to look more closely with the magnifying glasses. Staff ask open-ended questions and encourage the children to try new words, such as horse chestnuts during the activity, extending their vocabulary. Children use everyday technology with confidence and ease, and they are developing a good sense of time and know what to expect during the daily routines, often telling others what will happen next. Children learn about their own environment through innovative and exciting activities. They make maps of their garden and include features such as the tent, the boat and the carwash. They use the maps to hunt for treasure, expanding their ideas and working together effectively.

Children have many opportunities to develop their large muscle skills as they free flow in and out of the pre-school. They can use the large climbing frame and slide to practise their climbing and balancing skills. They ride wheeled toys and balance competently on scooters. Children use an extensive range of materials to create and extend their own ideas during art and craft. They talk about the colours and textures of the materials and enjoy experimenting as they learn about the different properties. Children sing a good range of songs from memory and confidently match actions to rhymes during circle time. They use their imaginations exceptionally well throughout the day, as they dress up during role-play and negotiate characters and roles, and develop their own stories with construction and miniature world toys.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a clear understanding of equal opportunities and the settings policies are implemented effectively, ensuring children's individual needs are being met. Children are treated as individuals because staff take the time to get to know them and their families well. They learn about the children's likes and dislikes and plan activities to engage and interest them, helping them to feel valued and settle easily in the group. Children are beginning to show respect for the toys and resources as they tidy up one thing before selecting another. The children say they do this so other children can play with them afterwards, showing consideration for others. They have access to a wide range of multi-cultural resources, helping to develop their understanding of the wider world. They celebrate festivals from other cultures, listening to music and stories, making art work and trying different fruit and foods, enriching their experiences and helping them to see that everyone is different. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. The group special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has a clear understanding of the Code of Practice and her role in supporting the children and their families. The setting works closely with other agencies to support the children in their care, although no children with identified special needs attend the setting at this time. The paperwork and procedures are in place to show how children are supported fully.

Children behave exceptionally well because clear rules and boundaries are implemented consistently by the whole staff team. So children know exactly what is expected of them, helping them to learn right from wrong. Staff use praise and encouragement to recognise positive

behaviour and distract the children when possible from unwanted behaviour. Staff give clear explanations to the children, reflecting their age and understanding. Staff are extremely positive role models, always using their manners and encouraging the children to do the same. When they speak to the children they listen carefully and respond quickly and appropriately to their needs, showing that their opinions and needs are important. Children also have the opportunity to free-flow in and out of the main play room to enjoy the benefits of plenty of fresh air. This has a very positive impact on their behaviour because they can run and jump, skip and climb, giving them a real sense of freedom, in a safe and secure environment.

Children benefit greatly from the strong relationships that have been built between the staff and their parents. The clear and open lines of communication enable staff and parents to freely share information about the children, ensuring their needs are always being met in the best possible way. Customer care surveys have been completed to assess the parents feelings about the setting and enable the group to address any shortfall. For example, the parents said they would like more information about the curriculum and the type of activities provided. As a result the staff organised an open day and prepared wall displays covering the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage and Birth to Three Matters. Parents receive detailed newsletters once a week, helping to keep them fully up-to-date with forthcoming events and changes to practice, policies or procedures. Parents are extremely happy with the care their children receive in the pre-school, they feel the staff are happy, friendly and approachable, always willing to listen and share information about the children. They know they can talk to the staff at any time, and the office is available if it needs to be confidential, helping to build trusting relationships between the pre-school and home.

Partnership with parents of children who receive funding for nursery education is good. Parents receive a comprehensive prospectus about the setting, which includes the pre-schools aims and objectives and the curriculum offered to the children. The parents are able to talk to their children's key workers at any time to discuss their progress in the pre-school and their learning at home. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children through discussion and they have the opportunity to make written comments in their children's records of achievement if they wish. This helps to ensure a consistent approach towards the children's next steps of learning and keeps the parents fully informed. Parents can spend as long or as little time as they wish in the setting and enjoy open days, helping to further involve them in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are safe and well protected because the setting implements robust recruitment and vetting procedures. The committee and the manager work together to ensure all new staff are checked thoroughly and are suitable to work with the children. The daily routines are extremely well organised and allow the children to take part in large and small group activities as well as working alone if they wish. The staff organise the activities and resources effectively ensuring that children are fully occupied and stimulated throughout the sessions. The sessions run smoothly and children are familiar with them, talking about what they will be doing next. They are never left waiting around for the next thing to happen, this has a very positive effect on

their behaviour. The whole staff team and the committee have a clear understanding of the registration and inspection process, ensuring that each children's health, safety and general well-being is catered for at all times. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The ratios are maintained at all times and registers are accurate. Children's full names and times of arrival and departure are recorded clearly. Staffing ratios are high, enabling the staff to provide high quality support and supervision for all the children. The manager of the pre-school is extremely organised and all the paperwork is well-maintained and accurate. It is all stored in the office and is easily accessible for inspection at anytime.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The strong committee employs a fully qualified staff team to work directly with the children and a manager to oversee the administration of the setting effectively. Clear roles and responsibilities are defined enabling the children to benefit from the well-organised setting. The manager and the room leader have been in post for just over a year and have established strong working practice and procedures to meet the needs of the children and their families.

Daily activities and routines are effectively evaluated and adapted as necessary to ensure the children achieve the learning objectives, helping them to make good progress in all areas. Staff appraisals monitor staff performance and overall contribution to the setting ensuring the whole team works well together.

The staff team have a clear vision for the future of the setting and continually attend training and workshops to further develop their knowledge and understanding in all areas. They meet regularly with other providers, sharing their ideas and expertise for the benefit of the children and the ongoing development of the pre-school. All the staff are fully committed and are extremely proud of the work they do. They strive to improve the quality of care and education for all children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked: - to ensure the attendance register is updated throughout the session to reflect how many children are present and their exact times of arrival and departure; to put place procedures for regularly checking toys and resources, to ensure they are of suitable quality and maintained in good working order so children's development in all areas is supported and they make progress; to carry out a risk assessment of all electrical appliances and equipment, to ensure they are safe to be used and do not pose a risk to children and staff and to further enhance existing resources to reflect positive images of culture and disability to support children's awareness of the society in which they live. The daily attendance registers are updated throughout the sessions, recording if children leave early or arrive late, maintaining an accurate record of who is present at any time. Procedures have been implemented to ensure toys and resources are cleaned and replaced or repaired as necessary, providing high quality resources and play materials for the children. The pre-school have ensured that all electrical appliances have been tested and are suitable and safe for use in the pre-school. Children now have access to a wide range of multi-cultural resources, activities and positive images during daily sessions. This helps to further develop their understanding of the world around them.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked: - to provide more opportunities for children's learning and understanding of number, calculation and language; to provide more opportunities for children to use information technology to support their learning and improve the organisation of large group activities, so all children have sufficient resources to be able to join in, get the most from the activity and sustain their interest. Children now count confidently at every opportunity and numbers are used during free-play and focused activities to consolidate their learning. Children are beginning to calculate using groups of objects, for example, working out how many cups they need. They have access to the pre-school computer on a daily basis, which they use competently, controlling the mouse and using the keyboard with skill. The daily routines have been re-organised to ensure children take part fully in a range of small and large group activities. Staff plan the activities in advance, ensuring there are sufficient resources for all the children, keeping them occupied and engaged throughout.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 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.

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 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):

- practise the fire drills more frequently to ensure all children are aware of the fire evacuation procedures

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):

- ensure the curriculum planning reflects the needs of the children who attend and incorporates the comprehensive information gathered by the key workers to help the children reach their full potential

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