



Ickwell Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219263
Inspection date	14 December 2006
Inspector	Anne Schurek
Setting Address	Ickwell Village Hall, Ickwell Green, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 9EE
Telephone number	01767 627742
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Registered person	Ickwell Preschool
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?

Ickwell Pre-school originally opened in the 1960's. It is a committee run group and operates from two rooms in the village clubhouse, situated in the heart of Ickwell, Bedfordshire. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:20 until 11:50 term time only with an additional option to stay for lunch club until 12:30 on variable days. The group currently offers one afternoon session from 12:50 until 15:20 on a Wednesday. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 49 children from two years to five years on roll. Of these, 30 receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area which includes surrounding villages and towns. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff. Three staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school also employ a member of staff who assists children on a one to one basis when required, she holds a recognised early years qualification. The remaining staff remain unqualified although they have experience of working with young children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised, clean and comfortable environment. They are learning good health and personal hygiene practices which prevent the spread of infection, such as, children wash their hands before snack time and after messy activities. Children demonstrate high levels of independence in their personal care, for example, helping themselves to drinks and visiting the bathroom independently. Children's health is further promoted because staff have attended appropriate first aid training. However, the group does not have written permission from parents to the seeking of any necessary emergency advice or treatment to ensure that the welfare of children is promoted and appropriate health care is sought according to parents wishes.

Children's physical health is consistently promoted as they are offered a wide range of activities. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities such as action rhymes. They sing and join in excitedly with the action rhymes where they stamp their feet, march, up and down and rock from side to side. Children show skill and dexterity in the use of small tools and equipment, for example, very young children competently and safely use scissors, sticky tape with dispenser and manipulate smaller pieces when involved in playing with play dough using rolling pins and cutters. They also regularly use the outdoor play area where they ride tricycles and balance on scooters developing control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination.

Children are offered healthy and nutritious snacks which promote their growth and development. The group operates a 'snack bar'. They help themselves to food and drinks, tidying their plates and cups afterwards, therefore promoting their independence, social and communication skills. Children's individual dietary needs are well documented and adhered to by all staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure environment where they feel valued and welcome because there are colourful displays of their work. Their safety is given high priority because staff carry out daily safety checks identifying hazards and taking steps to minimise these. This helps to ensure that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently in all areas of the setting, for example stair gates are fitted to door openings and radiators fitted with covers.

Children's safety is positively promoted with the daily implementation of practical policies and procedures which ensures that staff are able to support safety in all areas. There is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised regularly to enable children

to become familiar with the routine. Children are developing a good understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are constantly given explanations by staff and understand the importance of listening to instructions in order to prevent accidents.

Children are cared for in an environment where highly motivated staff's attention to detail ensure that children are cared for in a welcoming setting where resources are well organised and easily accessible. Children's safety is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment appropriate for their size and developmental stages. Children independently select toys and activities from a wide range of high quality resources, such as dressing up clothes, puzzles and varied role play areas. Staff check these regularly to ensure that they are clean and safe.

Children's welfare is appropriately promoted because some staff members have attended additional training and all staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. However, the child protection procedure contains information which conflicts with the child protection policy on who they report any concerns to, which compromises children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They are enthusiastic and enjoy their time at pre-school which enables them to respond to new challenges. They settle eagerly to spaces at the tables and invite staff to join imaginative play, such as play with the post office where they talk about wrapping presents. They are confident in their relationships with each other and with staff. Their personal development and self-esteem are consistently promoted because staff treat all children as individuals, interacting and offering appropriate support. Staff always remember to sit at the children's level joining in enthusiastically with their play and conversations, showing their genuine interest and further enhancing children's confidence. An example of this is a staff member joining in with snack time, talking with children to reflect on their time at pre-school.

Children's interest is maintained and their natural curiosity encouraged because staff ensure that a wide range of activities and play resources are easily accessible for children to choose from. This ensures that there is always something new to try and children are purposefully occupied. Assessment of children's progress is detailed and purposeful. They ensure that assessments support planning so that all children are offered challenging opportunities and activities which are adapted to suit individuals. This effectively means that all children are able to realise their full potential.

Children settle quickly due to staff's knowledge and understanding. They ensure that they have all the essential information about children. Parents profiles assist staff in both the separation process and the initial developmental support for children in their play. The planning for the younger children is based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework which staff use confidently to ensure that a wide range of activities and play experiences are provided to aid children's holistic development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a good knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and recognise how children learn most effectively. This ensures that children make good progress in their individual learning. Children spend their time purposefully because staff are skilled in monitoring them throughout the session, allowing them to develop their own ideas but quickly noticing when they need encouragement and direction. Children's progress in all areas is well-balanced because staff use clear methods for assessing them. However, there is minimal assessment of children's starting points, which could result in a delay in highlighting potential areas of concern and in monitoring their initial progress. Information from assessments are used formally to determine future planning to promote individual developmental needs and strengths.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the extensive well-balanced range of activities. These include regular opportunities to engage in role play scenarios, the exploration of natural substances such as sand and cooking, the use of books and stories and a wide assortment of crafts and construction. Children show great skill in handling small tools and implements such as scissors, sticky tape, paint brushes and dough cutters, and persist at activities with initial encouragement from staff showing their satisfaction for their own end product. Children interact well with others, confidently initiating conversations and using language to explain their thoughts and negotiate plans and activities. An example of this is a group of children role playing in the post office, discussing the size of their boxes and how much paper they would need to wrap it in and how much sticky tape to use, passing each other pieces and proudly showing each other their finished presents.

Children are given opportunities to explore language with support, for example when playing in the 'post office' their language skills are developing well, they confidently negotiate with others whilst playing, for example, when sharing the scissors and wrapping paper, children passed the wrapping paper between them with some discussion about sharing; 'here's the paper, you can have it'. Children demonstrated name recognition as they selected their own name cards on arrival and at snack time. They are encouraged to write their name or make their own mark on their art work. There are numerous opportunities for children to use pens, crayons and pencils for mark making throughout the session.

Children count confidently and use mathematical language and concepts throughout their daily play, such as counting how many children are in their group for story time. They sort objects according to size and colour, noting the differences in the composition of the groups. They understand and use positional and size language, for example, when involved in physical play with wooden blocks, children confidently recognise concepts such as bigger, smaller, longer and shorter. They explore addition and subtraction independently and are aware of making informed guesses at totals, showing early prediction skill. This is shown as they predict the quantities of materials needed to wrap various size boxes with wrapping paper.

Children are highly motivated and fully engage in their play and activities. Children are gaining a comprehensive knowledge of their own community and the wider world through innovative activities and regular access to a wide range of resources such as dressing-up clothes, books and puzzles, which provide both information and positive images.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and explore their surroundings with confidence and growing independence. They are valued and respected as individuals and ensure that specific needs are clearly identified and consistently met. Children relate well to each other and socialise with others as they play in groups participating in a range of stimulating activities. They are becoming good communicators and they chat confidently between themselves and the staff.

Children are developing a good understanding of their community through activities such as attending the local maypole and walking in the local area. They increase their awareness of the wider world as they explore celebrations connected with Chinese New Year, Diwali, Fathers Day, Easter and Christmas. Children's understanding is further increased by staff inviting parents to join the children in the celebrations to pass on their personal knowledge and understanding. For example, to celebrate Diwali a parent joined the children and provided a celebratory rice dish and traditional clothing for children to try on.

Children's behaviour is good throughout the sessions and they are kind and considerate to each other and to staff, confidently choosing their activities and organising turn taking and sharing. For example, two children helping each other build a tower with wooden bricks, happily pass from one to the other. They are able to understand their behaviour and take responsibility for this because staff consistently give them clear explanations. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children respond well to the positive approach and good staff role models offering consistent clear explanations so that children are able to take responsibility for their own actions.

Children who have special needs have their individual needs clearly identified and met as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff have a thorough understanding of it, ensuring that it is implemented daily. Some staff members have attended additional training and are experienced in identifying needs and in working with parents and other professionals to ensure that children are offered the most appropriate care and support. The effective implementation of individual education plans, good teaching methods and a clear understanding of inclusion means that children are able to participate meaningfully in all activities and routines.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. They are actively encouraged to become involved in the setting. There is a parents prospectus and information pack which ensures that they are fully aware of all policies and procedures, enabling them to feel confident in the staff, and in turn, passing this confidence onto their children. They are kept well informed of their children's progress through monthly newsletters and regular daily discussions with staff. There are informative notice boards containing information about a number of issues including information about current themes and activities, term dates and health and safety. Parents have access to their child's individual development folder and this is a good record of the child's time at the setting. This positive attitude ensures that parents views are valued, standards maintained and good quality care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. They benefit from the care provided by experienced and skilled staff who are deployed effectively to meet individual needs. Children's varying needs are consistently met and they are offered a broad, planned range of activities and a wealth of play opportunities. The setting is divided into two rooms children are able to move safely and independently from one area to another, confidently initiating their own play and learning.

Children's welfare and safety are promoted through the setting's policies and procedures and the staff's practical knowledge and daily implementation of these. There is an induction process for new staff, providing information and support. This continues through the staff development and appraisal system, which ensures that all training needs are identified and staff are able to work appropriately with all children. Most documentation is in place, however, some policies have not been updated to personally reflect the management of the group. Consequently children's welfare is not fully protected.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the very good understanding that the play leader has of her role and responsibilities and her awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. She ensures that she is aware of all regulations, carrying out her assessments and reviews to implement any changes and carefully studying the implications of these to both children and staff. She acts as a positive role model and staff are highly motivated, acquiring qualifications and regularly attending additional training.

All daily sessions are very well planned, with a balanced range of opportunities throughout the day. Staff pay attention to what children are doing and ensure that they are given sufficient time and resources to complete their activities and tasks. Staff meet weekly to plan future work, and thereby ensure that the needs of individual children are met, however the development of all children is promoted for example through observations and staff meetings. The positive attitude ensures that parent's views are valued, standards are maintained and good quality care can be provided for each child.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the provider was asked to amend the parents prospectus in line with the pre-school's admission and equal opportunities policy and ensure that good hygiene procedures are in place regarding children's hand washing. The parents prospectus has been updated and good hygiene practices are in place ensuring that children are treated equally and their overall well being is fully supported.

At the previous education inspection the pre-school agreed to improve the planning of activities to ensure that children are suitable challenged and all children make good progress, improve planning to develop children's mathematical problem skills and encourage children in recording their findings and provide opportunities for parents to share in their children's progress so that appropriate targets are set. Children are provided with a wide range of resources and activities

to ensure that they are suitable challenged and use language to describe mathematical ideas and methods to solve problems. Parents have access to their children's individual development folder and kept well informed of their progress through monthly newsletters and regular daily discussions with staff ensuring that they can work together to share in children's progress and set appropriate targets.

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):

- obtain written parental permission for children to receive emergency medical treatment or advice
- review the operational plan and policies to reflect current practice

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):

- continue to develop the methods for assessing children's progress so that this includes an initial assessment to enable children's progress to be tracked and any issues highlighted at an early stage.

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