



RAF Wyton Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221830
Inspection date	16 October 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	Wyton Childcare Centre, Wiltshire Road, Wyton Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 2EX
Telephone number	01480 435471
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Registered person	Wyton 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?

RAF Wyton Pre-school is managed by a voluntary management committee. It opened in 1969 and operates from a single storey, purpose-built building which is situated on the base at RAF Wyton, Cambridgeshire. The group predominantly serves the families of the RAF personnel who live on the base and has some places for residents living in the local area. A maximum of 25 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open each weekday during term-time only and sessions are from 09:10 to 12:10 and 13:00 to 15:30. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and is able to support children who have disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. The spread of infection is minimised and their health is promoted because there are clear policies regarding the exclusion of children who are unwell, with information regarding this available to all parents. There are good daily hygiene practices in place which prevent the spread of infection, for example, children wash their hands before snack times and cooking activities, and staff wear appropriate protective clothing when handling body fluids. Children's understanding of the relevance of hygiene practices and the importance of a healthy diet is promoted because staff discuss these issues with them. For example, children discuss 'washing the germs away' and talk about 'milk and fruit keeping us healthy'. Children's health is further promoted because staff have attended appropriate first aid training and keep all records up to date, such as medication and accident records.

Children enjoy a wide variety of physical activities which contribute to the promotion of their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities such as music and movement sessions and action rhymes. For example, they sing and join in enthusiastically with the actions to rhymes where they wriggle and count their fingers, stamp their feet, march, and move up and down and side-to-side. They also regularly use the outdoor play area where they climb and balance on the climbing frames and slides, run, roll hoops and kick footballs, showing their enjoyment as they learn new skills such as throwing and catching a ball.

Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are well documented and observed. They are offered healthy and nutritious snacks which promote their growth and development. Snack times are viewed as social events and an opportunity for children to acquire valuable skills as they pour their own drinks and put away their cups when finished. However, children's understanding of social expectations is not consistently promoted because they do not always use plates at snack time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where they are easily able to access resources. They feel valued and welcome because there are colourful displays of their work and photos. Their daily safety is given a high priority because staff have a good understanding of this area. They carry out daily safety checks of both the indoor and outdoor areas, ensuring that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. The daily implementation of practical policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety in all areas, for example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised regularly to enable children to become familiar with the routine.

This area is further supported because staff have planned for additional emergency situations, for example, there is a 'Critical Incident Policy' which covers areas such as safe gathering areas and possible overnight stays.

Children's understanding of their own personal safety is well promoted. They are given clear explanations by staff to help them appreciate the relevance of this, for example, they understand why it is important to listen carefully and ensure everyone's name is taken at register time. Children use toys and resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. Many of these are stored in low storage containers so that children are able to see what is available and make choices about their play. Staff check the play resources and equipment to ensure that they are clean and safe, for example, checking all outdoor toys before children go outside each day. Children's welfare is well promoted because staff have attended child protection training and renew this on a regular basis to ensure that they have a good knowledge of current child protection procedures. This enables them to act promptly to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They are eager to explore the resources and participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. Their confidence and self-esteem are consistently promoted because staff are experienced and are sensitive to each child, offering appropriate support and encouragement whenever needed. Children's sense of belonging and self-value are promoted because their work and photos are displayed throughout the setting. New children settle quickly and become secure in their relationships with staff because staff make good use of the keyworker system. They know the children well and can engage in their interests in order to promote their learning. For example, a child shows an interest in dinosaurs and a member of staff fetches additional resources and sits with the child to look at these. When the child asks the names of the dinosaurs, the staff member remembers that another child likes dinosaurs and so involves this child in the discussion. They all sit together and discuss which dinosaurs fly, which ones live close to the ground and which are in the same family. The staff member gently moves away and the children carry on playing and naming the dinosaurs.

The clear and detailed planning of activities ensures that children are consistently offered a range of opportunities which are linked to their individual needs and capabilities. Staff have a good understanding of child development, enabling them to recognise and promote the next stage of development for individual children and ensure that their play is purposeful. Staff are skilled in providing a balanced range of activities. For example, children are encouraged to play with the full range of resources through short, structured sessions during the week where they work in keyworker groups and move from one activity to another. However, they are also given plenty of time to choose their own resources and determine their play and learning. They are well supported in this as staff make good judgements about when to intervene. For example, a member of staff notices a child sitting unoccupied for a time and encourages her to look at a book. The child enjoys this and goes to join a small group of children listening to a story.

The well-planned environment and staff deployment mean that children's play experiences are enhanced and staff are able to play alongside the children, ensuring that their play has meaning.

For example, a member of staff sits with children who are playing with cars and encourages them to look at the differences between bigger and smaller vehicles and the concept of fast and slow, encouraging them to describe the imaginary journeys that they are making.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their development in all areas is promoted because staff have a thorough knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, enabling them to plan and adapt activities appropriately. Children's progress is well balanced because staff use clear methods for assessing them, using information gained from this to progress individual children's development by carrying it forward into the planning of future work. Children further benefit from the clear assessments because these are also used to determine the work and activities to be carried out in the regular keyworker group sessions. For example, it was noted that a child enjoys colouring so these sessions were used to introduce more complicated pictures to colour, linking these to early writing skills.

Children are offered a wide range of activities which ensures that their play is fun, purposeful and stimulating. They are offered familiar activities which enable them to become confident in their play and in the setting. These include regular opportunities such as sand play, reading, role play and a wide variety of crafts and construction. Children's knowledge and learning are further extended as they participate in a variety of topics, which are changed regularly and are clearly linked to the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. This enables them to look more closely at subjects such as 'Senses', where they explore textured books and 'feely bags', take part in food tasting, look at the qualities of hard, soft and rough textures, play with scented play dough and participate in experiments about music and vibration.

Children are motivated to learn because they are consistently offered interesting activities, for example, they explore which objects sink and float and talk about the reasons for this. They are developing their self-confidence and self-esteem and are beginning to learn right from wrong because they are given meaningful praise from staff, for example, children happily take turns at the sand tray, putting on their 'sand wristbands' to signify their turn and passing these on to others when they have finished. They demonstrate good communication skills as they listen and speak to each other in small groups and on a one-to-one basis. Children enjoy books and show a good understanding of elements such as sequencing and how stories are put together. This is supported by appropriate activities such as using story cards to work out the sequence of the story. They are beginning to use writing as a means of recording and communication, for example, they write menus and take down orders when playing in the role play café.

Children are beginning to see connections and relationships in numbers and to use these in a meaningful context. For example, children discuss how many there are in their keyworker group, working out who is absent and adding this number to their total. They are becoming confident in simple mathematics such as adding or subtracting two numbers. An example of this is a child completing a number puzzle; the child reads out the numerals and adds these together by counting the total number of cars on the puzzle piece, accurately fitting the correct pieces together. Children confidently use mathematical and positional language in their daily play and

understand the meaning of this vocabulary, for example, children playing with cars talk about big and bigger, heaviest and underneath.

Children are consistently offered opportunities to observe, explore and question in a broad range of activities which then form the base of their later learning in subjects such as geography, science and technology. For example, they talk about water and what is found in a pond, discuss water conservation, and enjoy a visit where they learn about different animals and are able to handle a selection of these. They are becoming confident in the use of information and communication technology equipment, understanding its uses and handling it with care. They regularly use equipment such as the computer, cash registers, toy washing machine and vacuum cleaner and programmable robots. Children's understanding of their local community and different family situations is promoted through activities such as local walks, visits to the lower school, and the use of 'Thomas Bear', a teddy bear which is taken home by a different child each weekend, accompanied by a book where children and parents write about what Thomas Bear has been doing. Children's knowledge of other cultures and ways of life is promoted through activities linked to celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, Chinese New Year and Harvest Festival. However, these do not represent a full range of diversity to encourage children's acceptance and promote their understanding.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills when using large and small apparatus, tools and equipment. They are developing a positive attitude towards physical exercise and an awareness of how to keep themselves healthy. For example, they have looked at how their heart rate increases after exercise, and regularly discuss why it is important to drink more in hot weather and after exercise. Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form. An example of this is children involved in a craft activity where they intently explore the colour and textures of the coloured rice, rolling it on the table and in the trays before spreading glue and sticking the rice onto card. They are offered an imaginative variety of activities which enable them to express their thoughts and ideas through role play. For example, children in the role play café write down orders, serve each other food and pretend to wash up.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are able to feel welcome and valued because staff respect their individuality and have a good understanding of the issues which may affect children's lives and their ability to play and learn whilst at the group. This ensures that staff are able to work appropriately with all children, including them in the daily activities, opportunities and routines. Children's individual needs and special requirements are discussed in detail with parents. Special needs of children are recognised and met sensitively and staff have a genuine understanding of the concept of 'inclusion', carefully considering all aspects of their practice to ensure that all children are offered appropriate opportunities. They have attended additional training to ensure that they are able to communicate effectively with children and to give them a good understanding of appropriate strategies to use when working with individual children. The good levels of support mean that all children are included and receive appropriate attention so that their needs are consistently met and their development promoted.

Children are developing a good understanding of their community through activities such as attending local school plays and walking in the local area. Their understanding of wider society is effectively promoted through their involvement in activities associated with festivals such as Christmas, Easter, Halloween, Harvest Festival and Diwali. However, this selection does not represent the diversity of society and therefore does not fully extend children's knowledge of this area.

Children's behaviour is good throughout the sessions and they are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. Their understanding of the implications of their behaviour is developed because they are always given clear explanations by staff, enabling them to understand this and begin to make decisions. They are learning about sharing and turn-taking and show good levels of care and concern for each other. For example, a child notices that another child is upset and pauses by the child to gently pat his arm and give him a cuddle. Children listen and respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents needs are well understood by the staff who offer appropriate support whilst maintaining professional relationships. Parents are welcomed and staff ensure that they are always available to discuss any issues or concerns. They are kept well informed of their children's progress through newsletters, regular discussions with staff, parents' evenings and the use of home communication books. There are informative notice boards containing information about a number of issues including child development, health and safety. Parents are given some information about the curriculum for the Foundation Stage but this is not sufficiently detailed to enable parents to understand the relevance of this and continue their children's learning at home.

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 the experienced staff team who use their knowledge and experience daily to support their work and ensure that they are meeting the individual needs of all children. Their care and safety are consistently promoted because there are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children, for example, there is a detailed information pack regarding the recruitment and employment of new staff. A comprehensive staff induction process and ongoing monitoring ensure that the setting's policies and procedures are understood by all and are applied on a daily basis. This is further supported by a clear procedure for the induction of students in the setting, ensuring that they are aware of their role and are able to work appropriately and safely.

Children's daily activities and play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space within the setting. The room is well laid out to accommodate a wide range of activities such as messy play, floor play, construction, role play and reading. This ensures that children are able to choose their activities and move safely and freely between different areas. Good forward-planning ensures that staff are aware of daily activities and prepare these in advance so that children's routines are uninterrupted. The well-planned daily routine allows time for children to choose their own activities, play outdoors, participate in group sessions and stories,

and play independently. The clear organisation of all paperwork means that it is accessible and enables staff to check that children's needs are met and to promote their safety and welfare.

Leadership and management is good. The manager has a clear understanding of her role and responsibilities, ensuring that children's learning and development are enhanced and their overall welfare is promoted. She regularly reviews the setting's work against the National Standards to ensure that these are consistently met. The manager acts as a good role model to staff and children, attending additional training and demonstrating her enjoyment of her work and her genuine care and concern for the staff and children she works with. Staff therefore feel valued and this creates a positive atmosphere within the setting, in which children can learn and develop. The manager and staff have a positive attitude to reviewing their practice, checking through all areas of work and seeking ideas and feedback to enable them to further improve the service they offer.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the group was asked to ensure that medication records are signed by parents. These are now consistently signed, thus promoting children's health. They were asked to implement procedures for the employment of new staff. An 'application pack' has now been introduced which contains all relevant information to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and staff are suitable to work with children, promoting their health, safety and welfare. The group was also asked to update the child protection policy. This has been reviewed and updated so that it contains relevant information to enable staff to promote children's welfare.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the group was asked to link children's assessments with the future planning of activities. This is now carried out at regular planning meetings where keyworkers ensure that individual needs are included within planning for both group activities and keyworker group time, ensuring that children's learning and development is consistently promoted. They were asked to develop children's awareness of staying healthy and the effects of exercise on the body. This area is now included in activity planning and children participate in topic work where they look at issues such as increased heart rate after exercise and the need to drink more in hot weather and after exercise. The subject is also covered in daily discussions with the children, ensuring that their understanding of a healthy lifestyle is promoted.

The group was also asked to encourage children's spontaneous use of books and the development of their understanding of calculation. The books have now been made more accessible and there is a defined reading area which has comfortable seating. With regard to calculation, children participate in structured activities and are given daily opportunities to use mathematics, for example, counting the number of children in the line. These measures ensure that children are able to access and enjoy books and increase their understanding of the use of mathematics.

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):

- further develop the routine at snack time to promote children's understanding of social expectations
- further develop children's opportunities so that they regularly access activities to promote their understanding of equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice – also applies to nursery education.

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 that parents have access to sufficient information about the curriculum for the Foundation Stage so that they are able to understand this and continue their children's learning at home.

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