



The Committee Of Theydon Bois Pre School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	404638
Inspection date	06 December 2006
Inspector	Cheryl Langley
Setting Address	Scout Headquarters, Loughton Lane, THEYDON BOIS, Essex, CM16 7JY
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Registered person	Theydon Bois 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?

Theydon Bois Pre-School has been established for over thirty years. In 1999 they changed their registration from sessional to full day care, this was to provide extended sessions for the older pre-school children. They operate from a large hall and one smaller room, within the Scout Headquarters at Theydon Bois. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding areas.

They are registered to care for a maximum of 26 children at any one time and there are currently 52 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 26 children funded for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with learning and or physical disabilities and welcomes those who speak English as an additional language. The group opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45, with extended days on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday until 14:45.

There are 13 part time staff working with the children, 11 of whom have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2, 3 and 4. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and are members of the Preschool Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the staff have good routines in place to ensure the hall and equipment are clean and hygienic for them to use. They learn the importance of good personal hygiene through organised routines, discussions and activities. Children wash their hands at appropriate times and blow their nose and cover their mouth when they cough to prevent the spread of germs. Procedures are in place to protect the children from infection and meet their individual health and dietary needs so that they do not come to any harm. All of the required documentation and policies have been devised to support the staff and enable them to act in the children's best interests if they require medical attention.

Children are nourished. They enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks which they often help to prepare. Children are beginning to learn about the benefits of healthy food through discussions at snack time and topic based activities, such as cooking. They understand that they need to drink regularly, particularly after exercise or if they are hot. Children have free access to water throughout the day to encourage drinking and promote their independence.

Children have fun taking part in a wide range of activities and using various resources which develop and enhance their physical skills. They develop control of their bodies to climb up, over and down the large equipment, pedal tricycles or throw and catch bean bags. Children become adept at making marks and using tools and utensils. They cut paper to decorate hats, draw around stencils and manipulate play dough into shapes using their fingers, rolling pins and cutters. Children enthusiastically complete small and large jigsaws or connect train carriages together to push along the track and floor. The daily routine is organised so that children have a balance of active play as well as quiet and rest so that they do not become over-tired and restless.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children's safety is important to the staff. Risk assessments are carried out frequently on the buildings, outside play area and equipment to make sure there are no hazards to cause them harm. Children move around the hall freely to play and access appropriate resources safely. The children have a sense of belonging and feel welcome because their art work and creations are displayed in the hall and they often initiate the resources set out. Such as, the 'home corner' which may become a camp for those children who like to pretend to be explorers. Staff are deployed to supervise the children in all areas inside and outside to maintain their safety. High ratios of adults attend outings and parental consents are obtained to support the children's safety.

Children are learning to protect themselves and others. They are aware to take turns on the large play equipment to avoid accidents and to move around carefully on the sit-on rides. Through activities and visitors to the preschool they learn about people who help us to stay safe. For example, the road safety officer and fire officers. Children know about the dangers of fire. They learn about handling fireworks with care, the hazards when using an oven and practise the fire drill regularly so that they know how to escape quickly in an emergency.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection. This ensures the children's welfare is effectively safeguarded. There is a designated member of staff responsible for this area, two members of staff have had current training and all of the team have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard the children and follow the correct procedures if they have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in this supportive and caring environment. They make positive relationships with the other children and staff which helps them to develop important social skills for later life. They enjoy their time at the preschool and take part in a broad range of interesting and stimulating activities. The staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support their planning and assessment for the under three year olds.

All of the children acquire new knowledge and skills. They are confident to speak in a group and take turns to talk and listen. For example, they are keen to change the calendar and weather chart, they pick out the correct words and symbols in front of the whole group to put on display. Staff show an interest in what they do and ask them questions to make them think and extend their play. For example, when requested children recognise and match colour cards and pick out red items around the room or link letter sounds to objects. They feel relaxed with the staff who have a sense of fun. Children are excited and animated. They use their arms to make toy frogs move around on the parachute and to fall into the centre. Children count how many are left as they disappear down the hole. They begin to learn about words and meaning through stories, rhymes and songs and have fun singing at each session to greet their friends and remind each other to be kind. Children are beginning to understand that print carries meaning, they hold books correctly and follow the pages from left to right. They become adept at using different tools and technology: children cut bananas to prepare food for snack or use a hole punch or mechanical pencil sharpener independently.

Children's individual needs are met. The staff respond to their ideas and experiences, sharing stories to help them manage changes, such as the birth of a new sibling. The children use their imaginations, initiating role play with their peers and the adults. They enjoy preparing meals in the home play corner. The children feel relaxed and able to try new experiences, such as putting their hands in the 'bowl of gunk' for the first time. Staff understand and meet all children's needs well because they have a good understanding of their different stages of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children progress well through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They are supported by staff that have a competent understanding of the Foundation Stage. Plans cover all six areas of learning and there is a good observation and assessment system in place. Both the plans and children's assessments link closely to the stepping stones and early learning goals of the Foundation Stage and are used to inform the next steps required for each individual child's development. The level of challenge is sufficient to interest all of the children and more able children's learning is extended. There are effective systems in place to support children with learning and or physical disabilities.

Children are involved and enthusiastic about their play. They play the musical instruments with zeal, making soft and loud sounds to match the rhythm of the songs. Children express and communicate their thoughts and ideas using clear language. For example, they describe how they are feeling and things that make them happy or sad to the whole group. Their vocabulary is extended by sharing stories, singing songs or through activities to describe what they feel. For example, they use words such as, "rough", "crinkly" and "smooth" as they touch pieces of fabric, plastic and shiny coated paper. Children are beginning to write clear letters to form their name, with more able children writing the letters clearly without adult guidance. They know that writing is a form of communication which can be used for different purposes. Children write in cards for anniversaries, put Chinese script onto rice plates or to make lists and notes in the play post office. They are also aware that there are other forms of communication. Such as, facial expressions or sign language and that people speak using different languages.

Children count in sequence and use number names in familiar contexts. They count their peers at registration beyond ten and match the correct number of buttons on the snowman's hat to the numerals. Children have an understanding of 'less than' and 'more than' as they compare two lines of children. They are beginning to carry out simple addition and subtraction as they use linking cubes to add one more or take one away. Children use fractions to share bananas, apples or biscuits cut in halves or quarters. They match patterns to pair flags from different countries and learn simple phrases in foreign languages. Children begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people. They celebrate a wide range of different festivals and share stories and have discussions about children living in other countries. Children are learning songs to celebrate Christmas. They have fun following the actions and singing to 'Santa got stuck up the chimney'.

The staff make the most of their natural surroundings to encourage the children to find out and identify living creatures and look at similarities and change. They observe the ducks and ducklings and woodpeckers in the outside area or tadpoles and frogs when they go pond dipping. Children are keen to look at a caterpillar found in the hall and discuss how they change into a butterfly. They monitor the changes to melting ice and change the consistency of icing sugar with water. Children build and construct with various objects and materials to develop their design and makings skills. They use glue spreaders to fix cotton wool and coloured paper to make collage pictures of snowmen. However, there are few opportunities for more able children to select appropriate resources, tools and use different techniques to shape, assemble and join materials independently. Working in small groups they build and construct with small and large connecting or non-connecting bricks to create roads, tunnels and houses. They take turns and negotiate how they can put the parts together.

Children learn to control and co-ordinate their bodies. They climb, balance and go up, over and down the large climbing frame and slide and more able children pedal the sit-on rides competently whilst negotiating space safely. Children are aware of the meaning of positional language, they sit "by the side" of the cones to catch the bean bags and move the parachute "up" and "down". Children's hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills are developed using a range of craft, mark making equipment, toys and puzzles. They are keen to rise to the challenge and complete large and small jigsaw puzzles unaided. Children concentrate to cut small pictures out of magazines or make shapes to decorate their Christmas hats or the tree.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All of the children benefit from the strong partnership between the parents and staff. Through the initial details gathered, the settling in procedures and systems to share information on a regular basis, children receive support and consistency in their care. The prospectus, parent notice board and newsletters keep parents up-to-date with the provision and the activities and routine available for the children. Parents are made aware of all the policies and procedures in place to care for their children. However, the complaints procedure has not been updated to inform them that any complainants should receive notification of the outcome within 28 days and that the record kept of all complaints will be shared with them upon request. This is to ensure parents are fully informed of factors that potentially impact on the children's well-being.'

Children benefit from a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase children's awareness of diversity. They celebrate different cultures and festivals through art and craft activities, food tasting and sharing stories. All children receive a warm welcome to the group and take part in the full range of activities. This is to ensure they have the opportunity to make progress and develop as individuals. There is very good support in place for children with learning and or physical disabilities. Children work harmoniously together. They share, take turns and are polite. The staff are positive role models and use effective strategies to monitor behaviour. For example, they offer lots of praise and encouragement and value children's achievements. As a consequence the children are well behaved, are beginning to find solutions to conflict and develop caring and cooperative relationships. They have a sense of belonging which makes them feel secure and relaxed at the setting. Staff respect and value the children. They respond positively to their ideas which promotes their self esteem and confidence. Children are becoming independent. For example, they are keen to help at snack time to lay the table or help tidy up.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive high quality information about the provision, including the six areas of learning which are detailed in the prospectus. They are informed about current topics, through the regular newsletter, letters and notice board. Parents are invited to attend consultations or informal discussions to share their children's progress and achievements. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning by sharing topic related items and giving feedback in the diaries written up by the staff. Parents have the opportunity to exchange information about their children on a daily basis with the experienced and friendly staff. Procedures are in place so that all necessary information about the children can be shared to promote their welfare and meet their individual

needs. Ofsted has received complimentary and positive comments from parents about the care and education that their children receive. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are good recruitment and vetting procedures in place to make sure the children are protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Effective systems ensure they are not left alone with anyone who has not undergone the required checks or released to anyone not authorised to collect them. Comprehensive policies and procedures support the effective running of the preschool and help to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Children enjoy a combination of whole group times, such as snack and story times, when they join in an experience together, small group activities or one to one support. They each have a key worker who provides a point of contact for parents and an adult responsible for making sure they have consistency in their care and learning. The deployment of staff and organisation of space contributes to the children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Throughout the session they benefit from a range of planned activities and free play which is stimulating and challenging. Overall, the range of children's needs are met.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The Chairperson and committee value the staff. They have regular appraisals to acknowledge their individual strengths and training needs and encourage self-development. The staff are keen to update their knowledge and understanding of childcare and nursery education through external and in-house training. They work well together as a team and all of them have some involvement in the planning for nursery education. The plans are monitored and evaluated regularly to make sure all six areas of learning are covered in a balanced way. They are committed to continual improvement to the benefit of all the children and have an on-going action plan to this end. For example, staff are currently forging closely links with the local primary school, they attend regular meetings and organise visits from school staff. This is to help the children settle quickly and feel secure and relaxed about the change in their routine when they move on to school. They are also introducing simple French phrases and words so that the children have some experience of this when they move on to primary school as this will be part of the curriculum.

Children benefit from this organised setting. The dedicated committee and staff team work effectively together to achieve their aim of enhancing the development and education of the children. They have developed positive working relationships and are committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which children become independent, happy and confident.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection Theydon Bois Preschool agreed to a number of recommendations to improve the care of the children. Incident records are kept separately from accident records. This is to monitor the children's behaviour and share information confidentially with parents so that consistency in behaviour management is promoted. The complaints procedure was updated after the previous inspection to include the role of the regulatory body to make parents

aware of the options open to them if they have any concerns. The special educational needs co-ordinator has completed relevant training to support children with learning and or physical disabilities. This is to ensure their individual needs are met and enable them to have an equal opportunity to take part in the activities provided. The children's independence skills are encouraged at snack times. They help handout cups and plates to their peers and prepare soft fruits.

The preschool also agreed to improve the nursery education, such as providing more opportunities for older children to observe the alphabet and write their own names, for children to explore mathematical concepts, to recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active and to provide sufficient challenges and ensure that curriculum plans and assessment records are used to inform future planning for individual needs. To meet these recommendations older and more able children take part in a variety of activities and have access to a good range of resources which encourage them to write their names and link sounds to letters. Children explore mathematical concepts such as calculation and simple problem solving through practical experiences and increase their knowledge of numbers for example, through displays, matching numbers of items to numerals and feeling and drawing around stencils or three dimensional number shapes. Children recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. They feel their hearts after running, discuss how they feel hot and thirsty and what they need to do to cool down.

The grouping of the children is organised to ensure they are working at the right level and being challenged sufficiently. Children experience a range of whole group times, small group and one to one support. Longer sessions are available to more able children. Children's assessment records are used to inform future planning for individual needs to ensure the children make progress. Parents are encouraged to be a part of the assessment process and contribute towards their children's future learning opportunities. They are encouraged to communicate with staff in various ways to support the children's learning and are made aware of the activities that their children cover and how they are progressing towards the early learning goals.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection one complaint has been received. Following a subsequent visit on 17 May 2005 the provider was given one recommendation under Standard 14 to ensure Ofsted is notified of any changes in members of staff and committee, including staff roles (this relates to changes in group supervisors). The provider remains qualified for registration. 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):

- inform parents that complainants should be notified of the outcome of any complaints within 28 days and that a record of all complaints is maintained and appropriate information from that record shared with parents on request.

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):

- provide further opportunities for children to fully develop their ability in design and making, to build and construct using a wide range of skills.

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